

KENYAN COUPLES IN THE AMERICAN DIASPORA:
MARITAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY
KENYAN IMMIGRANT COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

A PROJECT REPORT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
BY
BISHOP JUSTUS KYALO MUSYOKA

WINEBRENNER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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APPROVED BY:

Kefa Otiso, Ph.D.

Project Mentor

July 10, 2014

Date

Donald Godfrey, Ph.D.

External Reader

July 10, 2014

Date

James Davison, DMin.

Writing Stylist

July 10, 2014

Date

M. John Nissley, DMin.

Doctor of Ministry Director

July 10, 2014

Date

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¹ Acts 17:28 (Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations will be taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.).

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ABSTRACT

This research was born out of a concern for the marriages of fellow Kenyan immigrant spouses and parents in the US. Many Kenyan couples in the American diaspora had lost their marriages and others were struggling in their marital relationships. Initial research indicated possible reasons for the couples' marital problems.

Many Kenyan immigrant spouses reportedly found a number of US cultural tenets to be difficult for them to adopt. Where one spouse accepted cultural tenets that his or her partner felt uncomfortable adopting, friction resulted. Many Kenyan immigrant men, for instance, reportedly found it unbearable to begin performing house chores, as those were generally women's responsibilities in Kenya. Likewise, many of the women were said to be unwilling to submit to their husbands' chauvinistic control, as they had culturally been forced to do while the couples were living in Kenya. There were also claims that Kenyan immigrant parents were not free in the US to assertively discipline their children, including spanking them, as they had been while they were living in Kenya.

Consequently, the study explored various marital problems experienced by the Kenyan immigrant couples, established the factors causing them, and made some recommendations to help the couples to maintain stronger marriages. The study's hypothesis was that marital problems among Kenyan immigrant couples in the US were caused by the couples' experiences of cultural dissonance occasioned by cultural

differences between Kenya and the US. Library research, field interviews, and case studies were utilized.

The research verified most of the cultural conflicts experienced by the Kenyan immigrant couples. However, the study also established that some of the marital problems might have had nothing to do with Kenya-US cultural differences, as seen, for instance, in the younger couples' willingness to adapt to US culture, unlike their older counterparts. Based on the study's findings, it was recommended to Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to maintain stronger marriages by resolving to remain in their marriages, conserving the good aspects of the African culture, rejecting the unacceptable tenets of US culture, and strengthening their spiritual, marital, and family lives. The study also made some recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

This project has been motivated by reports that Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States have been experiencing marital problems. Presuming that these marital problems are the results of cultural dissonance due to the immigrant couples' exposure to a new cultural set up, this project seeks to establish the kinds of marital problems that these couples experience and the factors causing them. The project then intends to make recommendations to the couples to maintain stronger marriages. This first chapter of the project will define the context of the problem, state the problem itself, and explain the purpose of the research. The chapter will also list the research methodologies that the study will utilize, state the questions that will guide it, and explain the significance of the research as well as its assumptions and limitations. The chapter will then conclude by defining key terms that will be used and outlining the study's organization by chapters.

This chapter is the first of a total of six chapters that will make up the research project. The second chapter will be a theological discussion of the major themes of the study while the third chapter will solicit the contributions of available literature to the major arguments of the study. The fourth chapter will articulate and describe the study's research methodologies, the fifth chapter will analyze, document and organize the research data, and the sixth and last chapter will summarize the study's findings as well as make conclusions and recommendations.

Context of the Problem

There are many Kenyan immigrants in the United States. The greater majority of the immigrants enter the country as students, refugees and asylum seekers, diplomatic workers, and spouses of American citizens. Many others come through the Diversity Lottery Program commonly known as the Green Card Lottery, run by the U.S. Department of State. "The congressionally mandated Diversity Immigrant Visa Program makes available up to 55,000 diversity visas (DVs) annually, drawn from random selection among all entries to persons who meet strict eligibility requirements from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States."²

Many Kenyan immigrants to the United States have preserved some of their own cultural traits including domestic rules of relationship, marriage celebration customs, languages, and forms of worship. In addition, most of the immigrants have maintained contacts with their family members and friends back in Kenya. But despite these cultural and relational attachments to Kenya, many Kenyan couples immigrating to the United States appear to be overwhelmed as they grapple with marital and family issues often occasioned by the new environment. Having been isolated from their Kenyan cultural environment, the immigrant couples lack the marital checks and balances that made their marriages work before they immigrated and apparently fail to maintain their traditional ways as the host culture impacts their lifestyles and worldviews. After living in the United States for a number of years, hence, many Kenyan immigrant couples eventually succumb to the influence of American culture in positive and negative ways.

² U.S. Department of State, Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery Program, "Overview." http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1322.html#overview [accessed July 27, 2011].

For instance, upon encountering unfamiliar marital customs, practices, and tenets, the Kenyan immigrant couples begin to contend with disillusionment as their deep-rooted convictions about the marital union become challenged and uprooted by the new cultural norms. In addition, the immigrant couples undergo tremendous shifts in their living standards, working conditions, and exposure to a more permissive society. Unable to cope, some of the couples start to experience disappointment and disorientation as traditional assumptions fade and familiar mutual expectations change, giving rise to new relational difficulties in these couples' marriages. Engulfed by such high degrees of cultural dissonance and virtual separation from their home culture, many of these Kenyan couples reportedly start to experience a whole new set of marital problems that, as this next section will reveal, they are not always able to with.

Statement of the Problem

Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States are effectively isolated from their familiar African cultural environment and exposed to new cultural beliefs and practices. This abrupt cultural paradigm shift results in initial cultural shock and, subsequently, cultural dissonance. Hugo Kanya observes:

The relocation involved in immigration typically produces depression and insecurity along with excitement and hope (Baker, 1999; Luthke & Cropley, 1990; Magwaza & Bhana, 1991; Ritsner, Ponizovsky, Chemelevsky, & Zetser, 1996). Immigrants must adjust both attitudinally and behaviorally to a new culture and environment (Kim, 1978; Padilla, 1980). They often have difficulty in locating housing and jobs, and poverty and unfamiliarity with American society sometimes leaves them vulnerable to crime.³

³ Hugo Kanya, "African Immigrant Families," in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, ed. Monica McGoldrick, Joseph Giordano, and Nydia Garcia-Preto (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 104. http://books.google.com/books?id=6A11kB_6GyMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed October 4, 2011].

It is not therefore unexpected that Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States are reported to experience marital problems upon entering American society.

This happens as spouses begin to disagree over issues that they either did not disagree on while in Kenya or had resolved in a manner that is untenable in the US, all the while lacking the Kenyan communal support systems that helped them to address many of these issues in Kenya. Pressed on the one hand by the enticement of being acculturated and socialized into American society and on the other by their own Kenyan cultural biases, the Kenyan immigrant couples begin to be overwhelmed and to experience mutual relational problems that often end up in divorce. The major initial shockers that these immigrant couples encounter in the US include emphasis on gender equality and women's rights, children's rights and protections, and the ease with which divorce takes place in America. Kenyan/African cultural concepts and practices with respect to these areas are often opposite from their American and European counterparts.

The African woman has, for instance, traditionally been subjected to male supremacy and domination. Many African women often accept this as their destined way of life until they come to the United States where women have more rights and privileges and then they begin to be assertive thereby upsetting their existing family orders. As John Arthur says, "In America, however, the women redefine their roles to assert a measure of autonomy and independence from their husbands. The women avail themselves of the wide range of opportunities that America offers. Work outside the home, a major way to seek autonomy, is undertaken to supplement family income."⁴

⁴ John A. Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 112.

Part of the reason for the unequal power relations between African men and women is the misconception and misuse of the African practice of the bridal gift. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, the bridal gift consists of money or other wealth paid at marriage by the groom or his parents to the parents of the bride. Some men have often used the payment of the bride price as a defense for their beastly actions against their wives. These kinds of men think that through the bride price, they purchased their wives and thus have the right to molest them.

Some men also view women as gardens that they acquire for the purpose of producing children. Respect for the wife, hence, does not arise since no one is under obligation to respect his garden. The garden is there for the man to use, and has no rights of its own. The man has the right to put his garden into whatever use he chooses while the garden is not in any position to question its owner about anything he does.

Kenyan men have admittedly also been violently victimized by their wives but cases where the wife has been the victim exceed by far those involving the husband as the victim. Furthermore, women have turned to violence against their husbands primarily after continued oppression by their husbands. Kenyan media reports of women abusing their ineffective husbands in the Central Kenya region have grown in recent decades.⁵ As Kenyan scholar, Professor Kefa Otiso of Bowling Green State University, Ohio, observes, Kenyan “women also excel in emotional abuse and get away with it because men seldom report such cases for fear of being seen to be weak.”⁶

⁵ Francis Mureithi, “Men’s Failure Cause of Husband Battery – MP,” *The East African*, 2 March 2012, Available online at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201203021092.html> [accessed July 31, 2012].

⁶ Otiso, Kefa M., editorial note to author, Bowling Green, OH, July 27, 2012.

Another injustice against women in Africa is a colonial legacy that has resulted in gender inequality in economic production. Many African societies confine women to household chores while giving males free socioeconomic reign. While much change has taken place in this area as women have become increasingly educated and active in the broader marketplace, the situation for most women remains largely unchanged. As April A. Gordon argues in her book, *Transforming Capitalism and Patriarchy*, while African patriarchy and capitalism are incompatible, “African patriarchal relations” have been “benefiting both capitalism and men.”⁷ As she further notes:

During the colonial period in Africa, capitalist penetration meant for the most part exploiting the familiar mode of production to produce cheap commodities or extract minerals for export. Mostly men migrated to cities to seek wage work or produced cash crops, while women typically remained in rural areas producing food However, the African “housewife” was often compelled by a combination of economic hardship and women’s customary productive roles to supplement household income through petty commodity production, trade, or occasional paid work in addition to her work on her own fields and often on her husband’s cash crop fields as well.⁸

Africans in various quarters, however, have been rejecting the traditional misconceptions and practices that have subjected women to violence and other forms of injustice in African society. Thus, activist organizations have been formed that oppose injustice against women, such as Kenya’s Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA).

According to their website:

The Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya (FIDA Kenya) was established in 1985 after the 3rd UN Conference on Women which was held in Nairobi. Until

⁷ April A. Gordon, *Transforming Capitalism And Patriarchy: Gender And Development in Africa*. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 60, http://books.google.com/books?id=k50W7Z3aZIsC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed January 07, 2012].

⁸ Ibid.

1993, FIDA Kenya was affiliated to *Federation International De Abogadas* (The International Federation of Women Lawyers – FIDA) which was formed in 1944 in Mexico by a group of women lawyers with the aim of promoting women’s rights globally.

FIDA Kenya is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization committed to the creation of a society that is free from all forms of discrimination against women. This is done through the provision of legal aid to indigent women, engagement on legal, policy and legislative reform, treaty monitoring and research among other programmatic interventions.

Membership to FIDA Kenya is open to Kenyan women lawyers and women law students. Currently FIDA Kenya membership stands at over 600 registered members.⁹

A number of African countries in addition have been undergoing notable social and cultural change in the area of women’s rights in recent decades. In 2005 Liberia’s Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female president in the continent’s history. In Kenya, there has been increased participation by women in the country’s political leadership; the ordination of more women to positions of leadership in Kenyan churches; and a new constitution that gives much attention to women’s rights. According to the country’s current constitution, for instance, “women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres” and “the State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.”¹⁰ This latter part is protective of women in that men have dominated Kenya’s politics since the nation’s independence from Britain in 1963.

⁹ Federation of Women Lawyers - Kenya (FIDA Kenya). <http://fidakenya.org/about-fida/> [accessed January 12, 2012].

¹⁰ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 4, part 2, sec. 27, cl. 3. (National Council For Law Reporting, 2010), 24, 25. <http://kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/The%20Constitution%20of%20Kenya.pdf> [accessed January 07, 2012].

Despite these encouraging developments the Kenyan and African woman is nevertheless still not entirely free from male domination, stigmatization, and violence. The African cultural mindset depicts the woman as being subordinate to the man. The struggle for the liberation of the African woman hence still continues.

The other issue concerns the rights of children. Kenyan and African cultural ideals in general uphold the high value, delicacy, and significance of the child but also maintain that the child must be brought up under strict discipline. To the African, disciplining a child often involves spanking him or her, a practice that conforms to biblical teaching, “Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him” and “Do not withhold correction from a child, for *if* you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.”¹¹ This means ensuring the child follows the parent’s or teacher’s instructions and follows the right way. It is for these same reasons that African parents and teachers administer on the children other appropriate forms of punishment. Tiony says, “In Africa, sensible smacking in the rear is allowed as long as it is not frequent, does not physically bruise, break the bones or hurt the child emotionally.”¹²

Child discipline, however, has regrettably often been abused in African society with children often subjected to oppression. Thus, some Kenyan parents and teachers have in the past caned or spanked children excessively on the rear, legs, and hands prompting protests from other sections of Kenyan society on the need to curb the abuse

¹¹ Prov. 22:15 and 23:13-14.

¹² Genevieve Tiony, *Wounded Africa: The Cultural Differences Between Africa and America; A Book Written With an African Tone* (Bloomington, IN: Genevieve Tiony, 2009), 99.

and mistreatment of children at home and in school. Accordingly, the newly enacted Constitution of Kenya requires the following about children:

- (1) Every child has the right—
 - (a) to a name and nationality from birth;
 - (b) to free and compulsory basic education;
 - (c) to basic nutrition, shelter and health care;
 - (d) to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour;
 - (e) to parental care and protection, which includes equal responsibility of the mother and father to provide for the child, whether they are married to each other or not; and
 - (f) not to be detained, except as a measure of last resort, and when detained, to be held –
 - (i) for the shortest appropriate period of time; and
 - (ii) separate from adults and in conditions that take account of the child's sex and age.
- (2) A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.¹³

This part of Kenya's new constitution clearly promotes responsible parenthood.

Brutality and other forms of inhumane treatment of children are not acceptable in Kenyan and other African societies. African children nevertheless are not allowed to be independent but are guided, directed, and molded by their parents. Mbiti explains:

At home there are duties which the children are expected to do as their share in the life of the family. They are taught obedience and respect towards their parents and other older people. They help in the work around the house and in the fields, in looking after cattle, fishing and hunting, building houses, going on errands, learning the trade or skills of their parent, and in many other ways. As they grow older they gradually acquire a different social status and their responsibilities increase, so that they take greater share in the life of the family. When the parents become old and weak it is the duty of the children, especially

¹³ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 4, part 3, sec. 53. (National Council For Law Reporting, 2010), 24, 25. <http://kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/The%20Constitution%20of%20Kenya.pdf> [accessed January 08, 2012].

the heirs or sons, to look after the parents and affairs of the family. Finally when the parents die it is the duty of their surviving children to bury them properly, to remember them, to look after their graves, to give bits of food and pour libations to them where this is the custom, and to keep a good relationship with their departed parents who are now spirits of the living dead.¹⁴

In the Kenyan traditional cultural environment, therefore, the men generally run the show in their homes and lord it over their wives in every aspect of domestic life while the children do not manage their own lives as they wish but live under the careful direction and strict discipline of their parents and teachers. With this kind of background, it is easy to see why Kenyan couples experience cultural shock when they enter the United States. Some American laws regarding, especially women and children may be seen in information conveyed to the country's immigrants. The *United States Citizenship and Immigration Services*, an arm of the *Department of Homeland Security*, provides the following information regarding the legal rights of spouses and children in the United States in cases of domestic violence (The citation incorporates only the first two parts in "Questions and Answers"):

Introduction

Immigrants are particularly vulnerable because many may not speak English, are often separated from family and friends, and may not understand the laws of the United States. For these reasons, immigrants are often afraid to report acts of domestic violence to the police or to seek other forms of assistance. Such fear causes many immigrants to remain in abusive relationships.

This fact sheet will explain domestic violence and inform you of your legal rights in the United States. Also, this fact sheet provides the same information as the pamphlet titled, "Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa." The International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA) requires that the U.S. government provide foreign fiancé(e)s and spouses immigrating to the United States information about their legal rights as

¹⁴ John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd., 1992), 115.

well as criminal or domestic violence histories of their U.S. citizen fiancé(e)s and spouses. One of IMBRA's goals is to provide accurate information to immigrating fiancé(e)s and spouses about the immigration process and how to access help if their relationship becomes abusive.

Questions & Answers

Q1. What is domestic violence?

A1. Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior when one intimate partner or spouse threatens or abuses the other partner. Abuse may include physical harm, forced sexual relations, emotional manipulation (including isolation or intimidation), and economic and/or immigration-related threats. While most recorded incidents of domestic violence involve men abusing women or children, men can also be victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence may include sexual assault, child abuse and other violent crimes. Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity that you do not agree to, even with your spouse, and can be committed by anyone. Child abuse includes: physical abuse (any injury that does not happen by accident, including excessive punishment), physical neglect (failure to provide food, shelter, medical care or supervision), sexual abuse, and emotional abuse (threats, withholding love, support or guidance).

Under all circumstances, domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse are illegal in the United States. All people in the United States (regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status) are guaranteed protection from abuse under the law. Any victim of domestic violence – regardless of immigration or citizenship status – can seek help. An immigrant victim of domestic violence may also be eligible for immigration related protections.

If you are experiencing domestic violence in your home, you are not alone. This fact sheet is intended to help you understand U.S. laws and know how to get help if you need it.

Q2. What are the legal rights for victims of domestic violence in the US?

A2. All people in the United States, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, are guaranteed basic protections under both civil and criminal law. Laws governing families provide you with:

- The right to obtain a protection order for you and your child(ren).
- The right to legal separation or divorce without the consent of your spouse.
- The right to share certain marital property. In cases of divorce, the court will divide any property or financial assets you and your spouse have together.
- The right to ask for custody of your child(ren) and financial support. Parents of children under the age of 21 often are required to pay child support for any child not living with them.

Consult a family lawyer who works with immigrants to discuss how any of these family law options may affect or assist you.

Under U.S. law, any crime victim, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, can call the police for help or obtain a protection order.

Call the police at 911 if you or your child(ren) are in danger. The police may arrest your fiancé(e), spouse, partner, or another person if they believe that person has committed a crime. You should tell the police about any abuse that has happened, even in the past, and show any injuries. Anyone, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, may report a crime.

Likewise, if you are a victim of domestic violence you can apply to a court for a protection order. A court-issued protection order or restraining order may tell your abuser not to call, contact or hurt you, your child(ren), or other family members. If your abuser violates the protection order, you can call the police. Applications for protection orders are available at most courthouses, police stations, women's shelters and legal service offices.

If your abuser accuses you of a crime, you have basic rights, regardless of your immigration or citizenship status, including: the right to talk to a lawyer; the right to not answer questions without a lawyer present; the right to speak in your defense. It is important to talk with both an immigration lawyer and a criminal lawyer.¹⁵

In the Kenyans' mindset these laws are not, as protective domestic measures, necessarily wrong but are often seen as strange. Kenyan and African couples, for instance, normally settle many of their domestic differences without calling the police or involving the administrative or legal authorities. As shown above, moreover, African society has not emphasized the rights of women and children to the extent evidenced in these laws from the US. These meaningful and well-intentioned laws consequently have been abused by some Kenyan immigrant couples to victimize each other and by children

¹⁵U.S. Department of Homeland Security. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa Fact Sheet*. <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=8707936ba657d210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=8a2f6d26d17df110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD> [accessed January 08, 2012].

to victimize their own parents. But on the other hand, the African woman immigrant in the United States feels liberated from male domination. As Arthur explains:

No longer do the women define their marital roles exclusively in terms of providing maximum satisfaction and happiness to their husbands. A sense of collective egalitarianism enters the world of the women, especially in their relationships with their husbands. The dominance of husbands and brothers is considerably diminished. The majority of the women no longer allow their husbands to claim the rights of dominance that the patriarchal system confers on males in Africa.¹⁶

There is then the matter of easy divorce in the United States. Chapter Two will unveil the fact that due to the communal existence and life of African society and the ceremonial solemnity and covenantal sanctity surrounding marriage in Africa, divorce, whether for acceptable or unacceptable reasons, is a sharp departure from African traditional practice. It is a practice that has begun taking root in Kenya only recently with the advent of escalated globalization and the attendant break-up of the communal culture of traditional society that ensured the survival of the vast majority of marriages. In some cases, marital conflicts are solved through polygamy, with the man marrying a second wife without divorcing the first.¹⁷

Admittedly, marital differences are, however, not the major cause of polygamy in Africa. Other more important causes include the use of polygamy as a means 1) of getting more hands to help with farm work, 2) family planning since the husband can spread his energies to many partners, 3) of dealing with the natural excess of females in society, 4) of dealing with infertility, 5) of dealing with disability in the children or one of the

¹⁶ Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners*, 112.

¹⁷Theological Advisory Group, *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa* (Machakos, Kenya: Scott Theological College, 1994), 171.

spouses, 6) getting large families that add to one's social prestige. Moreover, other men become polygamous due to their societies' wife inheritance customs.¹⁸ Mbiti albeit observes that "there are problems connected with polygamy and it would be utterly wrong to pretend that everything runs smoothly in polygamous families." He says, for instance that "quarrels and fights among the wives and among the children are not infrequent" like when a husband neglects "some wives because he favors others."¹⁹

Divorces admittedly do happen also in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa for various good or bad reasons. As Mbiti says, "there are African societies where divorce is reported to be both common and easy. But there are others where, in the traditional set up, divorce is either completely unknown or very rare. Most peoples are between these two positions."²⁰ African marriages, nevertheless, do not normally break down unless there has been, for instance, very profound abuse of the relationship. Mbiti explains: "Once the full contract of marriage has been executed, it is extremely hard to dissolve it. If dissolution does come about then it creates a great scar in the community concerned."²¹ Kenyan and African couples normally survive the most deplorable domestic squabbles. As one Kenyan immigrant to the United States, Eucabeth A. Kilonzo, explains:

For centuries, divorce was not a welcome aspect of life in Africa and not as rampant as in the Western cultures, where people marry for a couple of months, days, or hours and then are separated or divorced. Even in crumbling

¹⁸ Kefa M. Otiso, *Culture and Customs of Uganda* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2006), 83-84.

¹⁹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Hailey Court, Jordan Hill, Oxford: Heinemann, 1990), 140. <http://books.google.com/books?id=eTUpo9Lhyc&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> [accessed August 4, 2012].

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

²¹ *Ibid.*

relationships, the couple held on for fear of embarrassment in the community as well as for the consideration of the sanctity of marriage.

It was a major fight, quarreling, or beatings that drove the woman back to her parents to stay there for a while before returning to and reuniting with the abusive husband or not returning at all, a conflict resolution or strategy similar to separation in most Western culture. Otherwise, couples did not divorce over petty issues such as “Well, baby, you’ve grown so fat?”²²

Unlike in the United States, therefore, the great majority of marriages in Africa have traditionally lasted for life, and divorces have been rare. In the United States, the causes and process of divorce have been made unbelievably simple. Commenting for CBS News Sunday Morning novelist and biographer Susan Cheever observes:

It's easy to get married in the United States. All it takes is a license and a trip to the marriage bureau.

But it's even easier to get divorced; a few visits to a lawyer, and your friends are congratulating you on a new life.

Divorce court has become as much a part of the American scene as health food stores, or baseball diamonds, or college campuses. As a country, we have the highest divorce rate in the world.

Marriage laws are the oldest laws in existence. The first were carved in stone in the marketplaces of Babylon by King Hammurabi thousands of years ago. Each society makes marriage laws that favor its needs. In a society that needs soldiers, the marriage laws favor the production of male children. In a society based on property, the marriage laws are engineered to protect property. In a society where women are regarded as possessions, the marriage laws reflect that.

Our laws for marriage and divorce, which we adopted from the British laws, clearly do not work anymore. Our laws have collided with our culture.

This wonderful country of ours is all about a new start. The pilgrims came to Massachusetts looking for a new start. The founding fathers fought a bloody war to earn a new start. The Frontier was a thousand new starts.

We love stories about starting over, about redemption, about our realizing our mistakes and beginning a new life. We understand perfectly when a friend says her marriage ended because she and her husband grew apart. But we give little credit to people who stay married against the odds. This is bad for wives and good for divorce lawyers.

I have left three marriages myself, each time with the unconditional blessings of my friends. There was always a good reason to leave. Later, when I saw my

²² Eucabeth A. Kilonzo, *From Africa to America: An Immigrant's Story* (Charleston, SC: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2009), 73.

children's hearts break, I was sorry. Not only sorry that I hadn't stayed married, but that I lived in a world where there seemed to be so few alternatives.

For many of us, divorce feels like a liberation instead of the tragedy that it is. Until we change our attitudes, marriage and divorce will stay right here in the same neighborhood.²³

The Barna Group's survey conducted in recent years says: "Among adults who have been married, the study discovered that one-third (33%) have experienced at least one divorce." The report continues:

George Barna, who directed the study, noted that Americans have grown comfortable with divorce as a natural part of life.

"There no longer seems to be much of a stigma attached to divorce; it is now seen as an unavoidable rite of passage," the researcher indicated. "Interviews with young adults suggest that they want their initial marriage to last, but are not particularly optimistic about that possibility. There is also evidence that many young people are moving toward embracing the idea of serial marriage, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life."²⁴

Divorce rates are increasing and divorce becoming normal practice in the United States, such that the average person getting into marriage expects to get divorced and remarry. Following are statistics of marriage and divorce in the United SA from the National Vital Statistics System and the National Center for Health Statistics for the years 2000-2010.²⁵

²³ CBS Sunday Morning, "Divorce Made (Too) Easy," <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2001/03/01/sunday/main275502.shtml?tag=mncol;lst;1> [accessed January 08, 2012].

²⁴ Barna Group, "New Marriage And Divorce Statistics Released," <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released> [accessed January 08, 2012].

²⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Marriage and Divorce Rate Trends," http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage_divorce_tables.htm [accessed July 19, 2012].

National Marriage and Divorce Rate Trends

Provisional Number of Marriages and Marriage Rate: United States, 2000-2010

Year	Marriages	Population	Rate per 1,000 total pop.
2010	2,096,000	308,745,538	6.8
2009	2,080,000	306,803,000	6.8
2008	2,157,000	304,483,000	7.1
2007	2,197,000	302,226,000	7.3
2006 ¹	2,193,000	294,527,000	7.4
2005	2,249,000	296,497,000	7.6
2004	2,279,000	293,623,000	7.8
2003	2,245,000	291,384,000	7.7
2002	2,290,000	288,369,000	7.9
2001	2,326,000	285,318,000	8.2
2000	2,315,000	281,422,000	8.2

¹Excludes data for Louisiana.

Note: Rates for 2001-2009 have been revised and are based on intercensal population estimates from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Populations for 2010 rates are based on the 2010 census.

Source: CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System.

Provisional Number of Divorces and Annulments and Rate: United States, 2000-2010

Year	Divorces & annulments	Population	Rate per 1,000 total pop.
2010 ¹	872,000	244,122,529	3.6
2009 ¹	840,000	242,497,000	3.5
2008 ¹	844,000	240,663,000	3.5
2007 ¹	856,000	238,759,000	3.6
2006 ¹	872,000	236,172,000	3.7
2005 ¹	847,000	234,114,000	3.6
2004 ²	879,000	237,042,000	3.7
2003 ³	927,000	245,200,000	3.8
2002 ⁴	955,000	243,600,000	3.9
2001 ⁵	940,000	236,650,000	4.0
2000 ⁵	944,000	233,550,000	4.0

¹ Excludes data for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, and Minnesota.

² Excludes data for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, and Louisiana.

³ Excludes data for California, Hawaii, Indiana, and Oklahoma.

⁴ Excludes data for California, Indiana, and Oklahoma.

⁵ Excludes data for California, Indiana, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.

Note: Rates for 2001-2009 have been revised and are based on intercensal population estimates from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Populations for 2010 rates are based on the 2010 census.

Source: CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System.

These statistics indicate that the average divorce rate in the United States is rising as well as the fact that the number of marriages is decreasing. In 2001, for instance, the rate of the number of marriages per 1,000 total population in most of the U.S. was 8.2 while the rate of divorces and annulments was 4.0 which was less than half that of marriages. By the year 2009 the rate for marriages was 6.8 and the rate for divorces and annulments, 3.5 which was more than half that of marriages. Marriage is under serious threat in American society and Cheever's warning is timely, that for many Americans "divorce feels like liberation instead of the tragedy that it is," and until this attitude changes "marriage and divorce will stay right here in the same neighborhood."²⁶

Given the backdrop of African cultural traditions, concepts, and practices from which Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States emerge, these cultural differences constitute an enormous amount of cultural dissonance facing the immigrant couples. These immigrant couples have to adjust themselves to the levels of protection accorded women in the country. The immigrant spouses must each reaffirm their commitment to the other in efforts to resist the effects of rampant divorces in a country where the process of divorce has been made so easy.

The couples also find themselves learning new tactics of dealing with their children in a society where most African methods of child discipline will be deemed illegal. As Kamya observes, "Having to renegotiate their African culture in the United States can leave Africans highly vulnerable to emotional stress. Worrying about how they will fare in a foreign land, they often manifest social anxiety and mistrust of others."²⁷

²⁶ CBS Sunday Morning, "Divorce Made (Too) Easy."

²⁷ Kamya, "African Immigrant Families," 106.

The immigrant couples, moreover, having been detached from the corporate lifestyle of African society, live under little or no communal accountability. Otiso rightly notes that “some couples fail because they can’t handle freedom.”²⁸ The African cultural checks and balances also gradually fade from their minds as the couples progressively embrace American cultural tenets.

In addition, the Kenyan immigrant couples’ cultural disorientation intensifies as their own children, who easily assimilate into the new culture, begin to become estranged from them, by among other things, behaving like other American children and speaking perfect American English unlike their parents who often speak Kenyan English. Otiso says “this is mostly true of younger children.”²⁹ Despite the fact most Kenyan immigrants to the United States enter the country with high English proficiency and have little trouble adjusting to American English, the need to communicate effectively with their “Americanized children” hence often keeps many of them on their toes and increases the immigrant couples’ vulnerability in their mutual relationships. As Kamya notes:

African immigrants encounter many stressors as they begin to adapt to American life...

Africans, like other immigrants, experience a deep sense of loss of their culture, which is partly associated with loss of a common language with their children. Parents lament their inability to communicate with their sons and daughters, as they could in their home countries, and are pained when their ‘Americanized children fail to learn their language.’³⁰

It is therefore the presumption and premise of this study that marital problems experienced by Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States are the result

²⁸ Otiso, editorial note to author, July 27, 2012.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Kamya, “African Immigrant Families,” 103.

of this profound cultural dissonance and the immigrant couples' dislocation from the African cultural environment. This study holds that these are the reasons many Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States have become engulfed in marital brawls some of which have escalated into domestic violence and eventually culminated in separation or divorce. Such cases have been rampant and are on the increase. As *Mwakilishi.com*, a website dedicated to "Kenyan Diaspora News and Entertainment," reports:

Divorce rate, domestic violence and cases of murder among Kenyan couples in the Diaspora, and especially those living in the United States, have reached alarming levels. The crisis cannot be ignored anymore. It is the big elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about. Kenyans are silently asking many questions. What is ailing the Diaspora couple? What has gone wrong and how can we fix it? Lately, cases of Kenyan men hitting their wives with blunt objects and often killing them have been prevalent. What is even more worrying is the fact that there are many similar incidents that go unreported. . . .

Diaspora Marriages are going through very tough times. The attacks on this institution have been so intense that we can no longer keep quiet! These attacks have intensified to the extent that many couples have ended up in separation or divorce, while some others languish in jails because of domestic issues. Others have even killed each other! This has destabilized the family unit that was once the pride of the African in the Diaspora.³¹

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project hence is threefold and may be summarized as follows: to explore marital problems experienced by Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States, to identify factors contributing to marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples, and to make recommendations for Kenyan immigrant couples to maintain stronger marriages.

³¹ Mwakilishi.com, "What is Ailing Diaspora Marriages?" <http://www.mwakilishi.com/content/blogs/2011/05/27/what-is-ailing-diaspora-marriages.html> [accessed October 4, 2011].

This study is premised upon the assumption that marital problems experienced by Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States are caused by cultural dissonance due to the immigrant couples' exposure to new cultural values and practices.

Referring to African immigrants in the United States Moses O. Biney says:

Like all immigrants, a crucial question that confronts these Africans is, "How should we live (in this new and strange land)? This is less of an ethical question than it is a philosophical, theological, and sociological one. Not only does it raise the issue of moral goodness – how to live morally good life – but more important, it is about how to adjust to the sociocultural life of their new country in order to attain the good they seek both for themselves and their families without losing who they are. The question to a large extent is about survival – economic, social, and cultural. It may be posed thus: 'How shall we order our lives and interact with persons and institutions in our new environment so as to attain our goals without losing the very essence of who we are?'"³²

This study, therefore, will explore those marital problems among Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States and their cultural causes and how they arise. The project will identify individual factors, especially those related to cultural changes, causing marital problems among the immigrant couples.

The research will examine the differences that exist, especially with respect to the marriage institution, between the African culture in general and Kenyan culture specifically, and that of the United States. The project will explore certain aspects of the African/Kenyan and United States cultures with a view to unveiling the level of cultural dissonance and shock experienced by the couples.

This study will also make recommendations that should help Kenyan immigrant couples to maintain stronger marriages. To do this, the research will explore the pros and

³² Moses O. Biney, *From Africa to America: Religion and Adaptation Among Ghanaian Immigrants in New York* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011), 2.

cons of the cultural changes experienced by these couples in order to identify helpful dynamics to use in conserving constructive African cultural tenets and adopting worthy cultural tenets from their host culture. As R.K. Harrison says:

While changes may occur to customs as a result of new trends in social life, such changes may actually be harmful to morals, a situation that confronted the Jews when Hellenism swept across the Near East in the fourth century B.C. Customs which are generally conducive to law and order are important for stability of individual and community life.³³

Lastly, this project is expected to advance knowledge in the field of marriage and recent African immigration to the United States. The author brings into this study much valuable experience. He and his wife of thirty five years have been marriage counselors for the last thirty years and have lived in the United States since the year 2007. They have over the years organized and taught many couples' seminars in Kenya and the United States. Hence, part of the author's motivation to engage in this study is the desire he and his wife have to strengthen the marriages of fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States.

Research Methodology to Study the Problem

Research will rely mainly on secondary research methods e.g. library research, documented case studies, media reports, and internet sources as well as primary research methods such as interviews and fieldwork case studies in of communities in the United States with high numbers of Kenyan immigrant couples. Because of limited existing work on this subject, primary research methods will constitute a major component of this study. All secondary material will be documented by use of footnotes.

³³ R.K. Harrison, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 99.

Due to financial and time limitations, the researcher will interview ten Kenyan immigrant couples in the South Bend/Mishawaka/Elkhart area in Indiana. The interviews will incorporate two groupings of Kenyan immigrant couples that have been married for various durations of time ranging from less than five to more than twenty years. In one group will be couples who have lived in the United States for less than seven years and in the other couples that have lived in the country for more than seven years.

The researcher having lived in the United States for five years will consider seven years an average minimum duration of stay in the United States before one can make a fair assessment of the impact of cultural changes he or she has experienced. The research has deemed Kenyan immigrant couples who have lived in the United States for more than seven years to be in a position to provide more conclusive observations with respect to the marital problems they and other Kenyan couples in the country are experiencing. A comparison of the views provided by both groups of couples will help to establish more authoritatively the answers to the research questions. The two groups of couples to be interviewed will serve as controls to each other.

In the selection, it will also not be considered whether or not the couples interviewed will be experiencing marital problems. It will be expected that all Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States, irrespective of the conditions of their marriages, have perceived the kinds of problems and their causes that are ailing diaspora marriages. It will be a premise in these interviews that both the couples that have overcome the pressures of cultural changes and those that have succumbed to the same should be able to provide adequate answers to the questions that the research seeks to answer, hence the indiscriminate selections for the interviews. Couples whose marriages have been strong

will in addition be able to provide helpful recommendations that this study will utilize to help their fellow immigrant couples. Selection will be made in accordance with the following table:

Intended Selection of Couples for Field Interviews

Number of years couple has been married	Number of couples who have lived in the United States less than 7 years	Number of couples who have lived in the United States more than 7 years	Number of couples that will be interviewed
Under 5 years	1	1	2
6 - 10 years	1	1	2
11 - 15 years	1	1	2
15 -20 years	1	1	2
Over 20 years	1	1	2
Total	5	5	10

With this mode of selection, it is believed that the views of the couples that will be interviewed will be representative of views of Kenyan immigrant couples across the United States. As the condition of the marriage of the individual couple will not be a consideration, divorced or separated couples may also be interviewed.

Research Questions to Guide the Research Project

This research will answer three questions with respect to marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. These are:

- a. What marital problems do Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States experience?

- b. What factors contribute to marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States?
- c. What recommendations based on the study's findings may help Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States to maintain stronger marriages?

Significance of the Research Project for the Broader Church

Through its findings, discussions, and recommendations, this research project will be useful to the body of Christ universally in quite a number of ways, both individually and corporately. First, the study's findings will help Kenyan couples in the United States who are experiencing strains in their marriages or are separated or divorced to evaluate their own marriages in the hope of rebuilding them. Hopefully, these findings will also help other African and non-African immigrant couples in the United States since certain marital problems are universal. These will all be desirable outcomes because stronger immigrant families will further strengthen the church and society in the United States.

The research moreover will be useful to the immigrant Kenyan church in the United States and to the church in Kenya by cautioning and enlightening Kenyans intending to immigrate to the United States as to how to better prepare themselves for life in the United States. The project moreover will draw the attention of Kenyan church members, ministers, and leaders to the serious effects of cultural changes upon the marriages of Kenyan couples immigrating to the United States.

In addition, marriage counselors and other ministers will be able to use this project's report as a ministry tool in their teaching, counseling sessions, seminars, and other ministry. Particularly, those involved in counseling immigrant couples will find the

research to be so resourceful. Lastly, schools of ministry, colleges, seminaries, and other training institutions will find this study to be a useful course text for teaching or training in subjects such as marriage and the family, missiology, cross-cultural marital counseling, cross-cultural communication.

Assumptions/Limitations in the Research Project

This research project assumes marital problems experienced by Kenyan couples immigrating to the United States are caused by cultural dissonance. The project further assumes it will be possible for these couples to still maintain stronger marriages and that the project's findings, discussions, and recommendations will be helpful to them.

The possibility that few or no books have been written on the subject of this research and the extent to which interviewees will co-operate in divulging authentic issues which they are experiencing, however, are expected to be real limitations to the research project. Other limitations will be the limited percentage of Kenyan immigrant couples that will be interviewed as well as the possibility that certain types of documented information may not be accessible.

Finally, the research project will be undertaken also under certain delimitations. There will be no detailed studies of the various fields that will be consulted and the focus of the research will be on Kenyan couples who have immigrated to the United States and the marital problems these couples experience.

Definition of Terms

“Acculturation” in this project means the adoption by an individual or group of the cultural patterns of another group in a process of social change over a period of time.

“African community” refers to all the present and past inhabitants of the continent of Africa who share the traditional beliefs, values, and practices unique to the continent.

“African culture” is used in this study to mean the civilization, in other words, customs, arts, and conveniences of the past and present people of the continent of Africa.

“African society” in this research refers to the social order, general public, culture, or civilization of the peoples inhabiting the continent of Africa.

“America” and “United States” in this research project are used in reference to the country/nation of the United States of America.

“American culture” is used in this study to mean the civilization, in other words, customs, arts, and conveniences of the people of the United States of America.

“American society” in this research refers to the social order, general public, culture, or civilization of the United States of America.

“Bride price,” “bridal gift,” or “dowry” is an amount of money or wealth paid by the groom or his family to a woman’s parents upon the groom marrying the woman.

“Communal life” refers to the life style in which all members of a group or community jointly participate and get involved in the affairs of the community.

“Cultural dissonance” is used in this research in reference to discomfort, discord, disharmony, confusion, or conflicts experienced in encounters with cultural differences.

“Cultural shock” is the anxiety, feelings of frustration, alienation and anger that may occur when a person or group of persons enters into or settles in a new culture.

“Diversity Lottery Program” is the immigrant visa program mandated by the United States Congress for acquiring Permanent Residence.

“Domestic violence” in this project is used in reference to any pattern of abusive behavior by one or both partners in the marital relationship.

“Extended family” is used in this project to refer to the wider family that includes in a household near relatives in addition to the nuclear family.

“Individualism” in this study means absence of cooperation; desire for separate existence for oneself; and the pursuit of one's own ends or ideas as a principle of life.

“Kenyan Constitution” in this study means the document containing the fundamental principles according to which the nation of Kenya is governed.

“Kenyan culture” means the values, principles, beliefs, philosophies, and folkways that are generally embraced within the Kenyan society.

“Kenyan Diaspora” in this study refers to the numbers of Kenyans who have emigrated from their homeland of Kenya and are living in the United States of America.

“Kenyan English” is used in this research to refer to the form of the English language commonly used in the nation and society of Kenya.

“Kenyan immigrant couple or couple who has immigrated to the United States” in this study means a Kenyan man and woman married to each other who live in America.

“Marital problem” may be said to be an interpersonal, personal, or interactive difficulty, hitch, or complication between two persons married to each other.

“Socialization” is used in this research to refer to the process by which a society's customs and ideologies are inherited and disseminated.

“Traditional customs” are the beliefs, opinions, stories, and accepted ways of acting that have been handed down to successive generations in a community or group.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One will define the problem, unveil the project's background, and present the research methodology. It will argue the research's significance for the broader church, outline its assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, and clarify meanings of terms.

Chapter Two will be a theological discussion of the sanctity and permanence of marriage in the context of culture. It will argue from biblical and practical theology how cultural diversity, both theoretical and practical, impacts marriage.

Chapter Three will review literature on similar subjects, cultural differences, and culture and marriage. References will be made to literature on Kenyan/African cultural marital customs and marital trends in the United States.

Chapter Four will outline the data acquisition process, including an inventory of available libraries, subjects, description and documentation of interviews, and case studies. The project's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations will also be articulated.

Chapter Five will present the study data, consisting of case studies, library, interviews, and Internet sources, with emphasis on authenticity and credibility. Diagrams, pictures, maps, and other illustrations may be used.

Chapter Six will be a summary of the findings of the research and a presentation of recommendations and insights to Kenyan couples immigrating to the United States. The chapter will also suggest a number of related subjects or topics for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SANCTITY AND PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE

Introduction

This study assumes that marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples to the United States are caused by cultural dissonance due to their exposure to a new cultural experience. The study seeks to establish what the marital problems are and the factors causing them in order to make recommendations to help the couples to maintain and strengthen their marriages. According to this study, marriage is sacred and permanent and marital problems leading to divorce are regrettable. The negative effects of divorce also demand emphasis on the sanctity and permanence of marriage. The study acknowledges that God in his love and grace granted humans concessions to divorce and that certain conditions in marriage could reasonably justify divorce.

The second chapter is a theologically based discussion of marriage that utilizes biblical fundamentals, logical reflections, historical witness, and experiential evidence in support of the sanctity of marriage. The study uses selected passages of Scripture on marriage, illustrations of acceptable logical conclusions on marital issues, early views of marriage, and practical examples of marriage in society. In a combined employment of Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience, therefore, the chapter will seek to affirm the sanctity and permanence of marriage, highlight biblically and logically acceptable grounds for divorce, affirm the significance of marriage in society, and examine historical

witness as well as experiential evidence with respect to the marriage institution. First to be explored will be the witness of Scripture.

Biblical Fundamentals

This first section is dedicated to a discussion of the teaching of Scripture on the issues of marriage and divorce. Discussion will focus on the sacredness of marriage, its centrality in human civilization, its significance in the divine economy, and the divine concessions to its dissolution. This is important because this study is founded on the belief that clear biblical teaching on any subject is fundamental to human life and practice. Renowned American statesman Daniel Webster made the following profound statement about the Bible:

If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.³⁴

This researcher will therefore endeavor to articulate the biblical position on the sacredness of marriage as God's ideal as well as point out the fact that divorce was a concession that God made only because of the feebleness of man.

The Divine Ideal

The sacred beginning of marriage as well as its centrality within human civilization goes back to the account of the institution's creation by God. God also uses

³⁴ Daniel Webster, quoted in Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook: An Abbreviated Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965), 18, http://www.amazon.com/Halleys-Bible-Handbook-Abbreviated-Commentary/dp/0310257204#reader_0310257204 [accessed September 11, 2012].

marriage to symbolize the relationship between him and his people of Israel as being one between a husband and his wife and the relationship between Christ and his church as being one between a bridegroom and his bride.

Sacred Beginnings

The sanctity and permanence of marriage becomes clear as one examines the scriptural testimony to the institution's beginnings. Genesis 1:31 reads: "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day."³⁵ Genesis 2:18 reads: "And the Lord God said, '*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" After he had said these words, God then made the woman from one of the man's ribs and presented her to the man in the first marriage in history (Gen. 2:21-24). The words of Genesis 2:18 provide the context for the words of Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

As Jay E. Adams says:

Contrary to much contemporary thought and teaching, marriage is not a human expedience. It wasn't devised by man, somewhere along the way in the course of human history, as a convenient way of sorting out responsibilities for children, etc. Instead, God tells us that He Himself established instituted and ordained marriage at the *beginning* of human history (Gen. 2, 3).

God designed marriage as the foundational element of all human society. Before there was (formally speaking) a church, a school, a business instituted, God formally instituted marriage, declaring, "A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." It is important to teach this fact to young people.³⁶

³⁵ All Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* unless otherwise noted.

³⁶ Jay E. Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 3-4.

Marriage was not designed by mankind nor is it the result of some imaginary evolutionary process. The institution was part of God's creation from the beginning. In addition, it is clear from the Genesis account that marriage was the context for man's creation as male and female. These scriptural passages are also foundational in establishing the centrality and significance of marriage in human society. The Creator himself virtually declared human society to be "not good" without marriage. Everything God had made was good but it was "not good for man to be alone." In other words, it was not good for humans to exist in singleness, which deficiency, God rectified by creating the female to complement the male. God's declaration of man's single state as being "not good" and his subsequent making of "a helper comparable to him," virtually established marriage as intrinsically essential to human civilization. According to John McArthur:

Therefore God's final act of creation on day six--the crowning step that made everything in the universe perfect--was accomplished by the forming of Eve from Adam's rib. Then "He brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22).

By that act, God established the family for all time. The Genesis narrative says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (v. 24). Jesus quoted that verse in Matthew 19:5 to underscore the sanctity and permanence of marriage as an institution. The same verse is quoted practically every time two believers are united in a Christian marriage ceremony. It is a reminder that marriage and the family are ordained by God and therefore sacred in His sight.

So it is no mere accident of history that family relationships have always been the very nucleus of all human civilization. According to Scripture, that is precisely the way God designed it to be. And therefore, if the family crumbles as an institution, all of civilization will ultimately crumble along with it.

Over the past few generations, we have seen that destructive process taking place before our eyes. It seems contemporary secular society has declared war on the family. Casual sex is expected. Divorce is epidemic. Marriage itself is in decline, as multitudes of men and women have decided it's preferable to live together without making a covenant or formally constituting a family.³⁷

³⁷ John McArthur, "The Nucleus of Civilization," Grace to You, <http://www.gty.org/resources/articles/a297> [accessed June 23, 2012].

In other words, the deterioration of marriage will inevitably lead to the deterioration of human civilization. Increased divorce rates, hence, are a threat to the existence of organized human society. God's ideal from the beginning of creation was for marriage to be a lifelong covenant. It will be argued later in this section that the exception of sexual immorality stated by Jesus permits but does not make divorce mandatory. God originally had no intention of allowing divorce but did so only due to the hardness of human hearts. Deuteronomy 24:1 reads: "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house ..."

When the Pharisees asked Jesus whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife, Jesus responded that God's ideal from the beginning was for the two to be joined together into "one flesh" and not to be separated, for "they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:6). The Pharisees then sought to know why Moses gave this instruction. Jesus responded: "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). As Gary Collins says:

From the beginning, the Bible presents marriage as a permanent, intimate union between a man and a woman. This is God's unchanging ideal, but since the Fall, human beings have lived on a less than ideal level. The Bible recognizes this, and so in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 there are brief guidelines that govern the practice of divorce – a practice that is tolerated but never commanded or divinely encouraged. According to the Old Testament, divorce was to be legal (with a written document), permanent, and permissible only when "uncleanness" was involved. Regrettably, the meaning of "uncleanness" has become a subject of debate. Some have maintained that it includes any inappropriate behavior; others

have restricted the term and argued that uncleanness refers only to sexual infidelity. Jesus seems to have agreed with this second view.³⁸

Sacred Symbolisms

Scripture, moreover, uses marriage in very sacred symbolisms. The Old Testament repeatedly depicts the Jewish people as God's unfaithful wife who goes out and commits adultery with many lovers. God repeatedly calls her back and admonishes her for her unfaithfulness. Despite Israel's unfaithfulness and harlotry, however, God bears with her and continues to keep her as a wife and promises her a future deliverer, the Messiah, and spiritual renewal. Encouraging his people and referring to himself as their "husband," God says in Isaiah 54:5-8:

⁴“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.

⁵For your Maker *is* your husband,
The Lord of hosts *is* His name;
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth.

⁶For the Lord has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were refused,”
Says your God.

⁷“For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies I will gather you.

⁸With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,”
Says the Lord, your Redeemer.

God cherished Israel, sent prophets to rebuke her, raised kings to rule over her, and sustained his relationship with Israel for centuries despite the nation's rebellion and

³⁸ Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed. (Thomas Nelson: 2007), 609-610.

spiritual waywardness. God instead finally sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to Israel to redeem her and the world and says of her in Romans 11:25-27:

²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
²⁷ For this *is* My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins.”

God chose marriage to symbolize his troubled relationship with Israel in which he had to repeatedly pursue them in their rebellion, admonish, forgive, and restore them. That marriage is the symbol representing God’s relationship to Israel points to its sacredness and speaks of the covenantal sanctity of matrimony, which embodies lasting unconditional love and forgiveness. In Isaiah 50:1, Scripture says:

Thus says the Lord:
“Where *is* the certificate of your mother’s divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you?
For your iniquities you have sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.

Commenting on this passage, Matthew Henry says: “A challenge given them to prove that the quarrel began on God’s side, v. 1. He had been a husband to them; and husbands were then allowed a power to put away their wives upon any little disgust, Deut. Xxiv. 1; Matt. Xix.7. But they could not say that God had so dealt with them.”³⁹ There would be no reason to deny that God, in his dealings with Israel, was setting for men an example of patience and perseverance in dealing with their wives.

³⁹ *Matthew Henry’s Commentary: In One Volume* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 902.

In the New Testament, marriage is depicted as the symbol of the relationship between Christ and the church, likening the church to Christ's bride whom he, the Bridegroom, cherishes and faithfully cares for and whom he will marry in a glorious future wedding. John the Baptist said: "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled."⁴⁰ Teaching about the relationship between husbands and wives, Paul says:

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.⁴¹

Once again, the sacredness of marriage may be seen in both the union and relationship between Christ and the church. Jesus Christ sanctifies, nourishes, and cherishes his bride and looks forward to his future marriage to her in glory, again another example of sacrificial love. This marriage will commence an eternal existence in heaven of Christ and his church. Once again God here uses marriage in divine symbolism to visualize this glorious and eternal relationship.

⁴⁰ John 3:29.

⁴¹ Eph. 5:22-33.

God's use of marriage in these divine and lasting relationships between him and humans clearly points to the fact that he meant marriage to be a lifelong covenant between husband and wife. God never instituted divorce and "from the beginning it was not so" (Matt 19:8). Indeed, God does proclaim in Malachi 2:6 that he "hates divorce." The almighty God, nevertheless, in his gracious and merciful consideration of human weakness, did provide humanity some acceptable grounds for the dissolution of marriage, as this next sub-section will reveal.

The Divine Concessions

It is apparent in Scripture that although God essentially hates divorce, he definitely "does not hate all divorces," as the TAG concludes.⁴² This second subsection examines certain clear divine concessions to divorce. The first concession to be discussed will be our Lord's declaration that divorce was permissible in the case of sexual immorality. The section then will go on and examine the apostle Paul's teaching that the desertion of a believer by a non-believer for the reason of the former's faith constituted a biblically acceptable ground for divorce.

Divorce for Sexual Immorality

Sexual immorality appears to be a biblically acceptable and valid ground for the dissolution of a marriage. Jesus made the statement, "except for sexual immorality," at least two times (Matthew 5:32 and 19:9). Elsewhere also, Scripture condemns sexual immorality in the strongest terms. The sexually immoral, for example, shall not inherit

⁴² The Theological Advisory Group (TAG), *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa* (Machakos, Kenya: Scott Theological College, 1994), 11.

the kingdom of God (Gal 5:21) and fornication, unlike every other sin, is a sin also “against” the body (I Cor. 6:18). God concedes, hence, that in case of sexual immorality the marriage may be dissolved. God appears to so hate adultery that despite having stated plainly in Malachi 2:16 that he hated divorce, He was, in the case of this sin, willing to permit a compromise. Collins puts it well:

This only may be a one-time, spur-of-the-moment occurrence, but this can have a huge impact on families, even when the infidelity is confessed and discussed together by the couple. Whereas the offender may experience regret or guilt, the innocent partner feels betrayed, rejected, hurt, and sometimes self-condemning because he or she was not able to satisfy the wayward mate. It becomes more difficult to believe that one’s spouse can be trusted in the future, and often there is anger, threat, and lowered self-esteem.⁴³

Jesus stated clearly in the above mentioned Matthean passages that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except “sexual immorality” commits adultery himself and causes her as well to commit adultery. Likewise, whoever marries her who has been divorced commits adultery. A close look at these passages will be appropriate:

Matthew 5:31, 32

³¹Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Matthew 19:3-9

³The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?”

⁴And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

⁷They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?”

⁴³ Collins, 2007, 612.

⁸ He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”⁴⁴

By saying, “except for sexual immorality,” our Lord did in fact give a provision for divorce by means of this clause. However, it is worth noting, as John Stott says, that Jesus’ purpose was not “to encourage divorce for this reason, but rather to forbid it for every other reason.”⁴⁵ Clearly, Jesus’ statement was aimed not at instituting divorce, but rather forbidding the same. The Lord did actually forbid divorce in this passage, but gave sexual immorality as an exception. For this reason, Jesus’ words, “except for sexual immorality,” do not constitute instruction to spouses to divorce each other in case of immorality. Rather, as Stott concludes, Jesus’ meant that “divorce for immorality is permissible, not mandatory.”⁴⁶ Gary Collins agrees:

In the New Testament, Jesus reaffirmed the permanent nature of marriage, pointed out that divine permission for divorce was given only because of human sinfulness (and not because it was God’s ideal), stated that sexual immorality was the only legitimate cause of divorce, and taught that the one who divorces a sexually faithful spouse and marries another commits adultery. There has been some debate about the meaning of “unless she (or he) has been unfaithful” in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. The Greek word for unfaithfulness is *porneia*, which refers to all sexual intercourse apart from marriage. This ... violates the one-flesh concept that is so basic to biblical marriage. Even when unfaithfulness is involved, however, divorce is not commanded; it merely is permitted. Forgiveness and reconciliation still are preferable to divorce.⁴⁷

Stott laments that “marital breakdown is always a tragedy” that “contradicts God’s will, frustrates his purpose, brings to husband and wife the acute pains of

⁴⁴ Matt. 5:31-32; Mt 19: 3-9.

⁴⁵ John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (London: Marshals, 1984), 267.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Collins, 2007, 610.

alienation, disillusion, recrimination and guilt, and precipitates in any children of the marriage a crisis of bewilderment, insecurity and often anger” and concludes that divorce, “even if biblically justified ...remains a sad and sinful declension from the divine ideal.”⁴⁸

Divorce was never God’s will from the beginning. Jesus’ concession for divorce, therefore, was not an expression of God’s ideal or the divine standard for marriage but a gracious consideration of human weakness and need for mercy. It is also notable that Mark and Luke do not contain this exception:

Mark 10:2-12

²The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” testing Him.

³And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

⁴They said, “Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*.”

⁵And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. ⁶But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

¹⁰In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter*. ¹¹So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. ¹²And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Luke 16:18

¹⁸“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced...commits adultery.”⁴⁹

Some Bible scholars do not even view this clause as an exception and interpret it to mean that Jesus was simply saying sexual immorality would not be a subject for discussion. However, to R.H. Stein this interpretation is difficult to defend:

⁴⁸ Stott, 259

⁴⁹ Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18.

Unchastity Is Not an Exception. This unusual interpretation is called ‘the preteritive view. According to this view the exception clause is not to be interpreted as an exception at all. It is to be interpreted ‘completely apart from the question of unchastity.’ In other words, Jesus is maintaining that all divorce and remarriage is adultery and that he simply does not want to discuss the case of unchastity. It is irrelevant to the issue. Thus the term *except* is understood as prescinding adultery from consideration. According to this view the Matthean exceptions are not exceptions at all, so that Matthew holds the same view on divorce as found in Mark and Luke. The result is a harmonization of all four Gospel accounts.

Grammatically, however, this is a very difficult interpretation to defend. The ‘except’ (*me epi*) found in Matthew 19:9 usually means “except for” and separates something from a larger entity. The natural way of interpreting *me epi* is ‘X is ... except in the case of Y.’ Thus, the most natural way of interpreting Matthew 19:9 is ‘divorce and remarriage (X) is adultery except in the case of unchastity (Y).’ It is most unnatural to interpret *me epi* in the preteritive sense, and no one would favour such an interpretation if exegetical rather than harmonistic considerations were the primary concern.⁵⁰

In the light of Jesus’ words “except for sexual immorality,” however, it may be difficult to forbid divorce where infidelity has been proved. But, since Jesus did not, by means of this exception, command but simply permit divorce, the aggrieved partner should, in such circumstances, be at liberty to decide whether or not to institute a divorce.

Again, the very thought that the creator himself has provided certain grounds for which marriage may break, obviously makes divorce a biblical idea. For this reason, this study considers it intellectually dishonest to argue the sanctity and permanence of marriage without discussing the divine concessions for divorce. Adams opens his book’s fourth chapter, “A Biblical Attitude Toward Divorce,” by saying:

Contrary to some opinions, the concept of divorce is biblical. The Bible recognizes and regulates divorce. Certain provisions are made for it. This must be affirmed clearly and without hesitation. Because divorce is a biblical concept, used and referred to frequently in the pages of the Bible, Christians must do all

⁵⁰ R. H. Stein, “Divorce,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 194.

they can to understand it and to teach what God, in His Word, says about it. Moreover, the Church is required to apply to actual cases the Scriptural principles regarding divorce.⁵¹

The scriptural recognition of divorce notwithstanding, it is essential to place this biblical teaching within its appropriate theological position. The biblical perspective is clearly that God allows divorce only under certain circumstances as a departure from the norm. To say that divorce is biblical, hence, should mean that the Bible recognizes it but not that God approves of marital breakdowns. As Collins notes:

The difficulties of marriage and the pain of divorce have led some compassionate Christians to reinterpret or deemphasize biblical teachings in an effort to make divorce and remarriage seem easier and more acceptable theologically. Ignoring or deemphasizing biblical teaching, however, is neither compassionate nor helpful. If we are to be effective, Christian counselors must have a clear understanding of the scriptural statements about divorce and remarriage.⁵²

Desertion for Faith-Related Reasons

The other divine concession is the desertion of a believer by a non-believer. If a non-believer is unwilling to live with a believer by reason of the latter's faith, then the Bible sets the believing spouse free to quit the marriage. According to the apostle Paul:

¹² But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.¹³ And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.¹⁵ But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*. But God has called us to peace.¹⁶ For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?⁵³

⁵¹ Adams, 23.

⁵² Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, rev. ed. (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988), 451.

⁵³ I Cor. 7:12-16.

This is “a second legitimate grounds for divorce – the departure of one’s unbelieving mate (1 Cor. 7:15),” as the *Logos International Bible Commentary* puts it,⁵⁴ and a biblical ground for divorce “acceptable to the Christian church,” as the TAG notes.⁵⁵ Paul teaches here that in such a case a believer is not “under bondage” for “God has called us to peace.” But it is clear from the text that in order for the divorce to be valid the unbeliever must be unwilling “to live with” the believer and the believer must not initiate the process. Accordingly, as long as the unbeliever is “willing to live with” the believer, divorce is not allowed. According to Stein:

Paul urges the believer to continue the marriage if the unbelieving partner consents, but if the unbeliever desires to separate – that is, to divorce – then so be it. The believer is not ‘bound.’ Thus Paul adds to the ideal of continued marriage the realization that the believer really cannot do anything if his or her unbelieving mate chooses to divorce.⁵⁶

Stott confirms desertion as a valid ground but cautions: “Only if the unbeliever insists on leaving, is the believer not bound.”⁵⁷ Otherwise, the divorce will be biblically unacceptable since the unbeliever must initiate it. Commenting on Paul’s teaching and instructions in 1 Corinthians 7:12-15, Adams puts it this way:

Rather than commanding the believer not to divorce his unsaved partner regardless of what happens, he requires something less: he (or she) must not divorce a partner who is willing to make a go of their marriage. Indeed, the believer is told to do all he/she can to hold the marriage together for the sake of the unbelieving partner (hoping he/she will come to know Christ through continued association with the believer) and for the sake of the children (who if

⁵⁴ Stephen D. Swihart, *Logos International Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark and Luke in one Volume: Featuring New International Version Text*, “Matthew” (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1981), 225.

⁵⁵ The TAG, 177.

⁵⁶ Stein, 192.

⁵⁷ Stott, 272.

taken out of the believer's care would be counted and treated as pagans – i.e., “unclean”). But if, after all has been done by the believer to prevent it, the unbeliever does not agree to go on with the marriage, divorce is an acceptable alternative (v.15).⁵⁸

Paul's teaching in this passage, hence, should not be used as a justification for believers to quit their marriages to non-believers. A believer who desires to divorce his or her unbelieving partner on the basis of this passage will be subverting scriptural teaching. As *Matthew Henry's Commentary in One Volume* puts it, “the Christian calling did not dissolve the marriage covenant, but bind it the faster.”⁵⁹ Saying that “in accordance with the general principle in Romans 12:18, ‘if possible,’ the believer must live ‘in peace’ with his spouse.” Adams footnotes: “Many Christians want to get out of mixed marriages when their spouses have no such desire. This can be neither encouraged nor countenanced. Nor may Christians do anything to provoke their spouses to leave. Everything like that is contrary to the spirit of this passage.”⁶⁰

The scriptural position is clear, as explained above, nevertheless, that the desertion of the believer by his or her unbelieving partner is a biblically acceptable ground for divorce. Nor does the Bible in this passage appear to bind the deserted partner from remarrying. *Matthew Henry's Commentary* continues to say: “Yet, if the unbelieving relative desert the believer, in such a case a brother or sister is not in bondage (v. 15). In such a case the deserted person must be free to marry again.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Adams, 46.

⁵⁹ *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, “1 Corinthians,” 1813.

⁶⁰ Adams, 46-7.

⁶¹ *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, “1 Corinthians,” 1813.

Other than the two divine concessions discussed in this section, namely divorce for sexual immorality and desertion for faith-related reasons, the Scripture is otherwise clear that God's ideal is the sanctity and permanence of marriage. Nowhere in his Word does God institute, command, or encourage divorce. He concedes to divorce only in the cases of those unusual circumstances. While all of God's gracious provisions must be received thankfully, therefore, adequate care must be taken not to misunderstand or misuse them. The believer, hence, must not convert God's Word into a legalistic set of regulations by seeking all possible ways he or she may apply it to justify divorce. In the case of sexual unfaithfulness, for example, Collins advises:

While divorce is permitted biblically under such circumstances, forgiveness and reconciliation are to be preferred. This is difficult because the innocent partner often feels betrayed, rejected, and hurt. It becomes more difficult to believe that one's spouse can be trusted in the future. Often there is anger, threat, and lowered self-esteem. Yet separation and divorce can be even more painful. The believer knows that all things are possible with God, even the restoration and growth of a marital relationship that has been ruptured by infidelity.⁶²

On the other hand, however, the church as the temple of the Holy Spirit and the custodian of God's oracles has the advantage of the Spirit's continued guidance, revelation of God's wisdom, and enlightenment of believers' minds. This next section therefore seeks to unveil certain logical conclusions about marriage and divorce that, though not stated in Scripture, are nevertheless biblically reasonable and acceptable.

Logical Reflections

The apostle Paul effectively justifies believers' judgments on issues when he says in 1 Corinthians 7:25: "I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment."

⁶² Collins, 1988, 454.

Certain issues demand such judgments as the Bible is silent on the areas concerned. Human rationality affirms certain concessions to divorce that though not stated in Scripture are logically justifiable and have been deemed by a majority of evangelical Christians to be biblically acceptable. Similarly, human civilization abounds with reasonable and logical evidence of the central role that marriage plays in society. This section discusses two logically acceptable concessions to divorce as well as some evident significances of marriage in society.

Human Concessions to Divorce

According to Collins, “there is no one cause of divorce” since “every marriage is different, and each divorce comes because of a unique combination of causes and circumstances.” Saying that when marital problems “are not resolved, divorce is more likely,” Collins lists sexual unfaithfulness and desertion, which he says are “the two biblically sanctioned reasons for divorce,” along with escalating incompatibility, social sanctions, immature attitudes, and persisting stresses, as the “influences” that “motivate one or both of the spouses to initiate divorce action.”⁶³ This sub-section combines all these causes of divorce into two main causes for which a believer may be justified in initiating or participating in a divorce, namely desertion for reasons not related to the faith and divorce due to excessive abuse of the marriage. The first to be examined is desertion by one’s partner.

⁶³ Collins, 1988, 454-455.

Desertion or Divorce by the Other Spouse

There have been cases when desertion has taken place for reasons other than the deserted spouse's faith. One spouse deserts his or her partner for such a long period that the separation almost amounts to divorce. In such a case the deserted spouse has no control over the situation and it may be reasonable to assume, as Paul taught concerning the desertion of a believer by an unbeliever, that the person is also "not bound." There may be no logical or scriptural grounds for the deserted partner to continue clinging to such a marriage. As Collins says:

To the words of Moses and Jesus, Paul added desertion as a second legitimate reason for divorce. When an unbelieving partner leaves, the believer is free to divorce. Suppose, however, that a believer forsakes the marriage. Does that justify divorce? The New Testament word for "depart" (*koridzetai*) is used thirteen times, and in no case does it imply divorce. The word means "to depart or separate." If the departed spouse, Christian or non-Christian, has been involved in sexual immorality or if the departure is so prolonged that there is little prospect of reconciliation, then perhaps an informal divorce has taken place whether it was sought or legally sanctioned. Probably, there is no value in denying that the marriage has, in fact, been dissolved.⁶⁴

Collins' remarks are reasonable and acceptable. Some spouses have suffered long years of loneliness and anguish while awaiting their departed partners to return. In the majority of these cases such spouses never come back to the marriage. Many deserting partners enter informally into other marriages, which becomes a clear indication that they are not planning to return to their former marriages. Hence, as Collins observes, once one partner has isolated himself or herself from the other for a prolonged period, divorce by means of desertion may be deemed to have taken place. Adams agrees thus:

⁶⁴ Collins, 2007, 612-613.

Even when a separation by divorce occurs as the result of disobedience that divorce – though sinful, though obtained on illegitimate grounds – broke the marriage. The grounds may be illegitimate; the divorce itself isn't. Believers who wrongly separate by divorce are said to be "unmarried." This point appears in all the Scriptures.

Just as a marriage is made by covenantal, contractual agreement, so too is it dissolved by the breaking of that agreement in divorce. It is quite wrong, then to speak of divorce parties (even in this case) as "still married in God's sight." Here, as elsewhere (Deut. 24:1-4), God calls them "unmarried." The terminology, "still married in God's sight," is extrabiblical, unbiblical and harmful. It finds no support or counterpart anywhere in the Bible. Instead, in God's sight – if we are to believe the Holy Spirit's vocabulary – divorced persons are considered *agamos*; and that is how God deals with them. This terminology was selected not only to inform us but also to guide us in *our* dealings with one another. It is a serious matter to make God's Word of no effect by covering it over with our own teaching in phraseology that contradicts it.⁶⁵

For instance, if a person has been deserted by his or her partner for a period of, say, ten years, there is little or no value in considering either partner to be "still married in God's sight." In addition, if either or both former spouses have since entered informally into marriage with other persons, their separation has further been sealed. In such circumstances, therefore, it would be unbiblical to consider the two former spouses husband and wife.

Similarly, when one's partner has resolved to quit the marriage, there is little that the other can do but to accept the divorce. As much as marital resiliency may be recommended as the best option, it takes the two partners to sustain the marriage by means of perseverance and endurance. It takes both partners, for instance, to weather the boredoms of what Collins calls "escalating incompatibility" or the pressures of what he calls "persisting stresses." As Collins says, "while there is no biblical basis for separations such as this, many couples reach the point of being fed up with their dull, unrewarding, and seemingly incompatible relationships," and again "almost any stress,

⁶⁵ Adams, 42.

when it is severe enough or if it lasts long enough, can put sufficient pressure on a marriage that the couple may drift apart and/or begin thinking about divorce.”⁶⁶ Other partners might simply take advantage of societal permissiveness or act from their personal immaturity and divorce their mates. Although the other partner might have desired to persevere and sustain the marriage, in cases like these he or she can only be justified in accepting and participating in the divorce process.⁶⁷

Psychological or Physical Abuse by the Other Spouse

Another issue widely agreed upon in the majority of Christian circles is that excessive abuse of one spouse by the other constitutes a valid ground for divorce. Some spouses so mistreat their partners that it becomes impossible for the mistreated partner to continue in the marriage. Pat Robertson affirms that “according to the Scripture, a believer can be free of another married partner in the case of adultery, or if the married partner deserts or makes living with them impossible.”⁶⁸ Many spouses have been severely injured or even killed by their brutal partners. When death is in sight, the case becomes one of leave or die. Discussing divorce and remarriage, Collins observes:

Third, all of this appears to overlook those marriages where there is no infidelity or desertion, but where homes are filled with violence, physical and mental abuse, deviant forms of sexual behavior (including forced incest”, foul language, failure to provide for a family’s’ physical needs, alcoholism, a refusal to let other family members worship, or other destructive influences. Emotional and physical harm, along with the fear and mental anguish that they create, can

⁶⁶ Collins, 1988, 455.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Pat Robertson, *Bring it on: Tough Questions. Candid Answers.* (Nashville: Pat Robertson, 2003), 43, http://www.amazon.com/Bring-Tough-Questions-Candid-Answers/dp/B005Q6ID8O/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1354814078&sr=1-2&keywords=pat+robertson+books+answers#reader_B005Q6ID8O [accessed December 06, 2012].

make home a hell rather than a haven. Some mates try to defend themselves and their children, believing that to stay in a marriage and home where there is violence is better than trying to survive and raise children alone in a hostile world. Often, however, there comes a time when the victim either responds with violence in return or decides to separate from the marriage. Is divorce justified in these circumstances?

Here the Scripture appears to be silent. Some might encourage the victims of abuse to stay in their difficult circumstances and to suffer in silence, hoping that this behavior might lead to the mate's conversion or change. However, submitting meekly to physical and mental attack seems to be neither wise nor healthy. The abuser is psychologically and spiritually unhealthy. In addition, he or she is sinning. While such behavior must be forgiven, it cannot be condoned by a mate who passively stands by, says nothing, and lets various family members, including children get hurt. Legally, the mate who allows this to continue could be in violation of the law and seen as an accomplice to child abuse, even though he or she resists it and tries to stop it. Common sense, love for one's family members, and regard for one's personal safety would all indicate that such victims need to get out. The church and the Christian counselor surely have no alternative but to support such a decision and assist victims in finding a place of safety.⁶⁹

As R. K. Harrison agrees, "there is no warranty in Scripture to submit to such evils."⁷⁰ Such reckless partners could be suffering from neurosis through drunkenness or drug abuse. But if a suffering spouse decides to endure the pain and trauma of such a marriage and waits on God to save his or her partner this becomes a matter between the person and God. According to Harrison, "where redemptive steps prove fruitless most Christians understand the scriptures to allow merciful escape from such evils."⁷¹ God's Word upholds the sacredness and permanence of marriage on the one hand and God's love and mercy on the other.

⁶⁹ Collins, 2007, 611-612.

⁷⁰ R.K. Harrison, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 115.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

It is clear that severing the rules for marriage must not become the norm for the church. God's ideal is lasting marriage. The church should normally discourage divorce and encourage couples to work on sustaining their marriages rather than expecting or looking forward to divorce. God created marriage as a gift to mankind. Every form of suffering and oppression that has been associated with marriage is, from God's point of view, regrettable. God meant marriage to be a productive rather than destructive union in human society. He never intended for husband and wife to cause harm, pain, or discomfort to each other. Instead, God gave marriage to humanity to be a source of enjoyment and happiness, a means for procreation, and an environment for spiritual formation, as this next subsection unveils.

Human Need for Marriage

Despite the failure of many humans to perceive this truth, it is philosophically and logically affirmable that human civilization depends on marriage. Most discussions and teachings about marriage are centered on marriage as a gift of God for man's happiness and procreation. Some people even view marriage as something they may take or leave depending on their priorities. Not many social ideologies, hence, embrace the necessity of marriage for the thriving of human civilization. Yet it is agreeable, that marriage is essential both for the corporate social well-being of humanity and the individual spiritual fulfillment of the human person.

Societal Welfare

Human civilization would be unimaginable without marriage because human society demands the institutions of marriage and the family for its survival. Marriage is

the social fabric without which human communality would disintegrate into lonely and desolate individuals and human civilization would effectively become obsolete. This would happen because, as Adams rightly says, marriage is the fundamental building material of human society. He observes:

Marriage is not only the principal building block of society in general and of the church in particular, but it also occupies a key place in human life.

Genesis 2:24 has other important facets. Everyone who has done any counseling at all soon becomes aware of the fact that there are more family and marriage problems than all the rest put together. This demonstrates its central focus in human affairs. He also discovers, by looking more closely, that great difficulties arise when a man or woman puts activities, things or other persons in the places that God has accorded to his spouse and his family. We are told that a man must ‘leave’ his father and mother and ‘cleave’ to his wife.

God did not put a parent and child into the garden. Adam and Eve were man and wife. That shows that the primary human relationship (and family relationship) is husband and wife. That is why a man must *leave* father mother and *cleave* to his wife. The first relationship is temporary and must be broken; the second is permanent, and must not be broken. Divorce always is the result of sin, therefore.⁷²

In 2003, the Honorable Rick Santorum, a United States senator from Pennsylvania, gave a speech at the Heritage Foundation entitled “The Necessity of Marriage.” Introducing the senator’s speech on its website, the foundation says:

For many years, research has shown that the most effective way to reduce child poverty and increase child wellbeing is to increase the number of stable, productive marriages. Given the ocean of data that proves the importance of marriage for the good of individuals and society government can’t afford to be neutral. Senator Rick Santorum advocates for public policy that promotes marriage as a beneficial societal benefit.⁷³

In his speech, Senator Santorum answers questions such as why marriage is so important, so foundational, and so necessary. The senator’s speech represents the

⁷²Adams, 19.

⁷³ The Heritage Foundation, “The Necessity of Marriage,” Marriage and Family, <http://heritage.org/research/lecture/the-necessity-of-marriage> [accessed July 03, 2012].

theological foundations of this study—that marriage is sacrosanct, permanent, and essential to human civilization. Saying that marriage “is important for the foundation of any healthy society,” Senator Santorum describes a number ways in which marriage is important to society. The senator begins by describing the role of marriage as “a countercultural institution” in which a person gives “oneself to somebody else” and becomes one with them, contrary to today’s culture of individualism and selfishness also demonstrated by the selfish demands for the “right to privacy.”

Santorum then explains how the institution “promotes the common good by building families and raising children.” And last, the senator unveils how marriage benefits children by providing them with the best environment under which to grow and become healthy adults, women by facilitating their protection against poor health, high mortality rates, financial disabilities, and domestic violence, and men by enabling them to maximize their potentials domestically and financially and lead better and healthier lives.⁷⁴ The senator then concludes his speech by saying:

We need to promote and protect marriage to secure a healthier society. Therefore, the public policy implications are clear: The government must promote marriage as a fundamental societal benefit. President George W. Bush understands the necessity of marriage and has said he will support an amendment to the Constitution that defends marriage against the threats from the cultural breakdown. Marriage must remain the standard for family life in the society. Both for its intrinsic good and for its benefits for society, we need marriage. And just as important, we need public leaders to communicate to the American public why it is necessary.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The Honorable Rick Santorum, “The Necessity of Marriage,” Family and Marriage, The Heritage Foundation, October 20, 2003, <http://heritage.org/research/lecture/the-necessity-of-marriage> [accessed July 03, 2012].

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Spiritual Formation

Equally essential to humanity, also, is the role of marriage in meeting man's spiritual needs. Gary Thomas views marriage as a means of spiritual formation and asks: "What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?"⁷⁶ Thomas sees in marriage a spiritual tutor that teaches the couples deep truths about God; promotes their growth in interpersonal relationships; and grants them opportunities for spiritual formation and self-discipline in the things of God. Moreover, marriage spiritually cleanses and prepares the couple to be best used of God to further his Kingdom in the world. Thomas profoundly unveils the sacrosanctity of the institution of marriage. His book, *Sacred Marriage*, handles the following chapters:

The greatest challenge in the world: a call to holiness more than happiness; finding God in marriage: marital analogies teach us truths about God; learning to love: how marriage teaches us to love; holy honor: marriage teaches us to respect others; the soul's embrace: good marriage can foster good prayer; the cleansing marriage: how marriage exposes our sin; sacred history: building the spiritual discipline of perseverance; sacred struggle: embracing difficulty in order to build character; falling forward: marriage teaches us to forgive; make a servant: marriage can build in us a servant's heart; sexual saints: marital sexuality can provide spiritual insights and character development; sacred presence: how marriage can make us more aware of God's presence; sacred mission: marriage can develop our spiritual calling, mission, and purpose; epilogue: the holy couple.⁷⁷

The church, as R. K Harrison advises, should encourage believers to stay married, "for their own good, as well as for the good of the family and the community."⁷⁸

Marriage is an asset to human society that must not be carelessly dispensed with. It is through marriage that families are made and exist. Yet there can be no meaningful

⁷⁶ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 13.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 11-265.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

acculturation without the family. The human virtues of love, brotherhood, kindness, and service, among others, are learned from childhood through the family. If society were to exist without the family there would be a total paradigm shift in the processes of socialization and development of the human personality. Human society would lack a basis upon which to define fidelity. Above all, marriage plays the central role in constituting the family and home. The international Bible Dictionary says:

MARRIAGE, the union for life of one man and one woman, is an ordinance of the Creator for the perpetuity and happiness of the human race; instituted in Paradise, Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:18-24, and the foundation of no small part of all that is valuable to human society. By promoting parental love and the sense of responsibility, marriage most effectually promotes the health and happiness of children, and their careful education to virtue, industry, and honor, to right habits and ends, and to all that is included in the idea of *home*.⁷⁹

The church needs to realize that she is more rooted in the institutions of marriage and the family than in the communion of the sanctuary. Spiritually strong or weak homes inevitably mean spiritually strong or weak churches. The most conducive environment for spiritual formation hence is the home. As Kurt Bruner explains:

It is much easier to sit in church listening to a sermon than to bite my tongue during an argument with my wife. The first nourishes my spirit. The second humbles my pride.

I love listening to worship music and reading inspirational books. I hate apologizing to my children after losing my temper. The first reminds me who God is. The second reminds me who I am, a sinner in need of repentance.

Spiritual formation occurs most effectively in those moments when I obediently submit to the Sculptor's chisel and follow the Apostle Paul's admonishment to become like the One who "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. . . . [H]e humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:7-8).

In short, my marriage and family are the first and primary contexts within which I am called to be like Jesus in the lives of others.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *International Bible Dictionary*, "Divorce" (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1977), 273.

⁸⁰ Bruner, Kurt, and Steve Stroope. *It Starts at Home: A Natural Guide to Nurturing Lifelong Faith* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 28-29.

The institution of marriage is not a luxury but a necessity to humanity. God, in his eternal wisdom, ordained human society to consist of marriages and families. The existence and flourishing of human civilization is intrinsically dependent upon the existence and flourishing of marriage and the family as its basic units. Without this intrinsic foundation, human civilization cannot flourish. This next section examines the witness of history from early theological views of marriage.

Historical Considerations

There is no evidence in history that society has ever existed without marriage and the family. Marriage is as old as humanity, dating back to man's creation in Genesis 1 and 2. It is not a human product or "social invention, unique to humans," as Stephanie Coontz asserts.⁸¹ As Helen Oppenheimer explains:

Marriage is a joining of two lives. It is defined in law as the voluntary union for life of a man and a woman. Christianity has no exclusive rights in it. Aristotle said, "Between husband and wife friendship seems to exist by nature; for man is naturally disposed to pairing" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 8.12). There are "pair-bonds" among some animals and birds; but the institution of marriage, recognizable in many different forms, is undoubtedly characteristic of humankind. It has even been suggested that the earliest beginnings of the genus *Homo* were associated with pair-bonding, and that our ancestors were, so to speak, "personal relationship animals" more fundamentally than "toolmaking animals."

From the point of view of the evolution of the race, the role of marriage is to make possible the important long childhood of nurture and learning that a human being needs to grow to maturity.⁸²

⁸¹ Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2005), 34, http://www.amazon.com/Marriage-History-How-Love-Conquered/dp/014303667X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1341533729&sr=1-1&keywords=coontz+marriage+a+history#reader_014303667X [accessed July 05, 2012].

⁸² Helen Oppenheimer, "Marriage," in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. James F. Childress and John Macquarrie (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 366.

Below, this researcher unveils the witness of history regarding the sanctity and permanence of marriage by examining early views of marriage, including views held by the Jews in the Old Testament era; the Early Church Fathers; the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches; and the early Western civilization.

Judaic Views of Marriage

From their earliest beginnings, as narrated in the Bible, the Jewish people have always upheld and practiced marriage as a sacred institution. Lisa Katz presents this Jewish perspective of marriage:

Judaism views marriage as the ideal human state. Both the Torah and the Talmud view a man without a wife, or a woman without a husband, as incomplete. "A man who does not marry is not a complete person." (Lev. 34a) "Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness." (B. Yev. 62b)

In addition, Judaism views marriage as holy, as a sanctification of life. The word *kiddushin*, which means "sanctification", is used in Jewish literature when referring to marriage. Marriage is seen as a spiritual bonding between two people and as the fulfillment of God's commandment.

Furthermore, Judaism views marriage as purposeful. The purposes of marriage are both companionship and procreation. According to the Torah, woman was created because "It is not good for a man to be alone." (Genesis 2:18) In addition, marriage enables fulfillment of the first commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply." (Gen. 1:28)

In addition to being ideal, holy and purposeful, Judaism views marriage as a contractual agreement between two people with legal rights and obligations. The *Ketubah* is the marriage contract.

It should be noted that Judaism's elevation of the institution of marriage has contributed greatly to Jewish survival over the generations. Despite the dispersion of Jews throughout the world and the oppression of Jews by other nations, Jews have succeeded to preserve their religious and cultural heritage for thousands of years partly due to the sanctity of marriage and the resulting stability of the family.⁸³

⁸³ Lisa Katz, "The Jewish View of Marriage," About Marriage and Weddings in Judaism, About.Com: Part of the New York Times Company, http://judaism.about.com/od/weddings/a/all_marriage.htm [accessed July 03, 2012].

Given the harsh historical experiences of the Jews, including their plight under Hitler's hatred and brutality, it is natural to view the long term survival of the Jewish community as a people in the light of their adherence to this view and practice of marriage.

Early Church Fathers' Views of Marriage

The sacredness of marriage was similarly strongly upheld by the Early Church Fathers. This is revealed in the following quotes of some Early Church Fathers excerpted from the *Catholic Answers* website:

Justin Martyr

In regard to chastity, [Jesus] has this to say: 'If anyone look with lust at a woman, he has already before God committed adultery in his heart.' And, 'Whoever marries a woman who has been divorced from another husband, commits adultery.' According to our Teacher, just as they are sinners who contract a second marriage, even though it be in accord with human law, so also are they sinners who look with lustful desire at a woman. He repudiates not only one who actually commits adultery, but even one who wishes to do so; for not only our actions are manifest to God, but even our thoughts (*First Apology* 15 [A.D. 151]).

Clement of Alexandria

That Scripture counsels marriage, however, and never allows any release from the union, is expressly contained in the law: 'You shall not divorce a wife, except for reason of immorality.' And it regards as adultery the marriage of a spouse, while the one from whom a separation was made is still alive. 'Whoever takes a divorced woman as wife commits adultery,' it says; for 'if anyone divorce his wife, he debauches her'; that is, he compels her to commit adultery. And not only does he that divorces her become the cause of this, but also he that takes the woman and gives her the opportunity of sinning; for if he did not take her, she would return to her husband (*Miscellanies* 2:23:145:3 [A.D. 208]).

Origen

Just as a woman is an adulteress, even though she seem to be married to a man, while a former husband yet lives, so also the man who seems to marry her who has been divorced does not marry her, but, according to the declaration of our Savior, he commits adultery with her (*Commentaries on Matthew* 14:24 [A.D. 248]).

Augustine

A woman begins to be the wife of no later husband unless she has ceased to be the wife of a former one. She will cease to be the wife of a former one, however, if that husband should die, not if he commit fornication. A spouse, therefore, is lawfully dismissed for cause of fornication; but the bond of chastity remains. That is why a man is guilty of adultery if he marries a woman . . . dismissed even for this very reason of fornication (*Adulterous Marriages* 2:4:4 [A.D. 419]).⁸⁴

As the website affirms, the views represented in these quotes illustrate that the Early Church Fathers “also recognized the seriousness of Christ’s teaching regarding the indissolubility of marriage.”⁸⁵

Roman Catholic Views of Marriage

The Roman Catholic Church, the earliest-dating church institution, has been exemplary in its traditional perspective of the sanctity and permanence of marriage.

According to the *Catholic Answers* website:

When Jesus came, he elevated matrimony to the same status it had originally possessed between Adam and Eve—the status of a sacrament. Thus, any valid marriage between two baptized people is a sacramental marriage and, once consummated, cannot be dissolved. Jesus . . . taught that if anyone so married divorces and remarries, that person is living in perpetual adultery, a state of mortal sin.

He said, "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18; cf. Mark 10:11–12).

Paul was equally insistent on this fact, declaring, "Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. . . . Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive" (Rom. 7:2–3).

⁸⁴ Catholic Answers, “The Permanence of Matrimony,” Tracts, August 10, 2004, <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/the-permanence-of-matrimony> [accessed July 5, 2012].

⁸⁵ Ibid.

This applied, of course, only to sacramental marriages—those between baptized people. For marriages involving an unbaptized party, a different rule applied (1 Cor. 7:12–15).

In the midst of the Greco-Roman culture, which allowed for easy divorce and remarriage, the early Church Fathers proclaimed Christ’s teaching on the indissolubility of marriage—just as the Catholic Church does today in our modern, secular, easy-divorce culture (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1614–1615). Other denominations have modified their teachings to accommodate the pro-divorce ethos that dominates modern culture, but the Catholic Church preserves the teaching of Jesus and the early Christians.

While their ex-spouses are alive, the only time that a baptized couple can remarry after divorce is when a valid sacramental marriage never existed in the first place. For example, for a marriage to be contracted, the two parties must exchange valid matrimonial consent. If they do not, the marriage is null. If the competent authority (a diocesan marriage tribunal) establishes this fact, a decree of nullity (commonly called an annulment) can be granted, and the parties are free to remarry (CCC 1629). In this case there is no divorce followed by remarriage in God’s eyes because there *was no marriage* before God in the first place, merely a marriage in the eyes of men.

If, however, the parties are genuinely and sacramentally married, then, while in some cases there may be good reasons for them to live apart and even to obtain a legal separation, in God’s eyes they are not free to remarry (CCC 1649).

This is not a commandment of men, but one that comes directly from Jesus Christ. As Paul said, "To the married I give charge, *not I but the Lord*, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife" (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Fortunately, God will ensure that the sacramentally married have the grace necessary to live out their marriage vows and either stay married or live continently. The sacrament of matrimony itself gives this grace. Whenever we face a trial, God ensures that we will have the grace we need. As Paul elsewhere says, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).⁸⁶

The *Roman Catholic Church*, therefore, believes that a genuine marriage may not be dissolved. Once “the two parties” have exchanged “valid matrimonial consent” it

⁸⁶ Catholic Answers.

becomes impossible for the matrimony to be dissolved, except in the context of the church's practice of "annulment" whereby a marriage is declared null. Annulment can happen only if, according to available facts, "there *was no marriage* before God in the first place." Otherwise, even if the two were to separate whether informally or through a divorce, "in God's eyes they are not free to remarry."

Eastern Orthodox Views of Marriage

The Eastern Orthodox Church also views marriage as a spiritual mystery and a picture of the relationship between Christ and his church. Bishop Athenagoras (Peckstadt) of Sinope explains some major differences between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the joining of two persons in marriage. Discussing "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Orthodox Church," Bishop Athenagoras explains:

The question is often asked what the Orthodox position is on marriage. The answer to this question should be sought in the Orthodox teaching on the "mystery or the sacrament" of marriage. We also know that the Roman Catholic Church considers marriage as a sacrament. There is however a very important difference which should be clarified here. In the first place, the Roman Catholic Church holds that the bride and bridegroom execute the marriage themselves, in their vows to each other. In the Orthodox Church it is the priest or the bishop who consecrates the marriage, who calls upon God in the name of the community, and asks that the Holy Spirit be sent down (epiclesis) on the man and woman and in this way make them "*into one flesh*."⁸⁷

The bishop continues to say that marriage is "for the Orthodox Church rather a spiritual path, a seeking after God, the mystery of oneness and love, the preparatory

⁸⁷ Bishop Athenagoras (Peckstadt) of Sinope, "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Orthodox Church," *Economia and Pastoral Guidance*, Orthodox Research Institute, April 18-20, 2005, http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/liturgics/athenagoras_remarriage.htm [accessed July 5, 2012].

portrayal of the Kingdom of God, than a necessity for reproduction.” He discusses in more detail, “The Christian Marriage: Mystery – Sacrament,” and says:

Marriage is a mystery or sacrament that has been instituted with God’s blessing during creation. The chosen people saw it then as a mystery that had its beginnings at the divine creation. This is confirmed by Christ who says: “*But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female’. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and two will become one flesh*”. (Mark 10, 6-8).

According to the Holy Scriptures marriage is built on:

1. the **distinction**, at the first creation of man, **between man and woman** (“*Also God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them*”, Gen. 1:27);
2. the creation of the woman **out of Adam’s rib** (Gen 2:21-24);
3. the blessing of God on the first created with the words: “*be fruitful and increase in number*” (Gen. 1:27-28).

These three elements make marriage a spiritual praxis par excellence, not only due to the simple covenant between two people, but especially due to the fact that it is an expression of God’s will. The natural covenant of marriage becomes as it were also a divine covenant, hence also its fully mystical character which the church emphasizes. The principal and therefore the most essential element of marriage is the joining of each person with one single person of the opposite sex. This element of *one* single person in marriage is maintained even after the fall of the first created creatures in the Old Testament, although this may not always have been adhered to in practise. This element of marriage assumes a resemblance to the relationship between God and the chosen people. This element of one single person in marriage is confirmed by Christ’s teaching on marriage.

Paul is the first to understand the essence of Christ’s teaching on marriage and its sanctity. He describes it as “a great mystery in Christ and in the Church” (Eph. 5, 32) The definition “*in Christ and in the Church*” means, according to Paul, that the spiritual bond of love, of commitment, and of the reciprocal submission of the partners — which is the bond of their complete oneness — only exists when it conforms to the love of Christ for His Church (Eph. 5, 22-33). The relationship of the partners that grows out of marriage is, in other words, so essential, so intense and so spiritual, as the existing relationship between Christ and the Church. The oneness of the Church — as community of the baptised — with Christ, and its maintenance, takes place through the sacrament of the Divine Eucharist. This is the centre of all the sacraments and puts mankind in an eschatological perspective. In this way marriage also “*transfigures*” the oneness of man and wife into a new reality, namely, seen in the perspective of life in Christ. This is why the apostle Paul does not hesitate to call this decisive step in human existence “mystery” (or ... sacrament) in the image of Christ and His Church. This is the only reason why a truly Christian marriage can be unique,

“because it is a Mystery of God’s Kingdom, that introduces mankind to eternal joy and eternal love.” This oneness — brought about with the sacrament of marriage — is no one-sided action of the Church. Man is not called after all to participate passively in the grace of God, but as God’s co-worker. And even when man becomes a co-worker, he remains subject to the weakness and sinfulness of human existence.

In this light even reproduction (1 Tim. 2, 15) is seen as man’s co-operation with creation. The mystery or sacrament of marriage becomes immediately related to the mystery of life, of the birth of human souls, of immortality and of their death.⁸⁸

The Jewish, Early Church Fathers, Catholic, and Orthodox views, therefore, collectively all point to the sacrosanctity and permanence of marriage. Casual attitudes towards marriage and easy breakdowns of marriage are products of today’s humanism and secularism. The marital union as a lifelong bond between a man and a woman, hence, is as old as mankind.

The Reformers Views of Marriage

Even the Reformers, who broke ranks with the traditional church on most theological issues including the view of marriage as a sacrament, could not dismiss the fact that marriage was sacrosanct and permanent. As Michael Gorman narrates:

The Protestant Reformers, claiming to return to biblical teaching, rejected both the sacramental nature and the absolute indissolubility of Christian marriage. According to the Bible, they said, marriage is certainly holy and is in principle indissoluble, but there are certain acts that break the marriage bond and hence permit divorce and remarriage. The Reformers could not agree, however, on the legitimate grounds—scriptural or otherwise—for divorce.

A strong advocate of faithfulness as a chief Christian virtue, Luther was not always sure that the Catholics were wrong about indissolubility, and he once said half seriously that bigamy might be preferable to divorce. He came to see divorce, however, as a permissible last resort in cases of infidelity, impotency, refusal of marital relations, and desertion. He strongly supported remarriage for the offended party. Melancthon, Luther’s colleague, limited the grounds to two,

⁸⁸ Bishop Athenagoras (Peckstadt) of Sinope, “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.”

infidelity and desertion, on the basis of the "Matthean exception" and "Pauline privilege.

"Similarly, Reformers John Calvin and Theodore Beza allowed divorce only for adultery and, more hesitantly, for desertion on grounds of irreconcilable religious differences. In 1561, the Calvinist city of Geneva enacted a law permitting divorce, as a last resort, for these two reasons.

The Radical Reformers, such as the Anabaptists and Hutterites, recognized adultery as legitimate grounds for divorce on the basis of Matthew 5, but they were divided on the Pauline privilege. Unlike the Lutherans and Calvinists, the Radical Reformers generally forbade remarriage following divorce.⁸⁹

The views of the Reformers on marriage and divorce, therefore, did not differ radically from common Protestant views. They upheld the sanctity and permanence of marriage and viewed divorce as permissible only on the grounds of adultery and desertion. The key additions among modern Protestants are the recognition of severe mistreatment and incompatibility as biblically acceptable grounds for divorce.

Western Views of Marriage

Last to be examined is a commentary on the long history of marriage in Western Civilization that significantly unveils notable views of marriage historically held in Western society. Erwin J. Haeberle observes:

Marriage, as we know it in our Western civilization today, has a long history with roots in several very different ancient cultures, of which the Roman, Hebrew, and Germanic are the most important. Western marriage has further been shaped by the doctrines and policies of the medieval Christian church, the demands of the Protestant Reformation, and the social impact of the Industrial Revolution.

When we look at the marriage customs of our ancestors, we discover several striking facts. For example, for the most of Western history, marriage was not a mere personal matter concerning only husband and wife, but rather the business of their two families which brought them together. Most marriages, therefore,

⁸⁹ Michael Gorman, "Divorce and Remarriage from Augustine to Zwingli: How Christian Understanding About Marriage Has Changed—and Stayed the Same—through History," *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/augustweb-only/46.0c.html> [accessed November 20, 2012].

were arranged. Moreover, the wife usually had much fewer rights than her husband and was expected to be subservient to him. To a considerable extent, marriage was also an economic arrangement. There was little room for romantic love, and even simple affection was not considered essential. Procreation and cooperation were the main marital duties.

On the other hand, it may surprise many modern couples to learn that in earlier times divorce was often easily granted. Here again, men usually had the advantage when they could simply dismiss their wives, but in many instances women could also sue for divorce. In ancient Rome couples could even divorce each other by mutual agreement, a possibility that has not yet returned to all European countries. Another notable historical fact is the nearly universal stress on the necessity of marriage and the resulting pressure on single persons to get married. This pressure was partially lifted only under the influence of Christianity which, at least for some time, found a special virtue in celibacy. Christian doctrines have, of course, also had their effects on marriage itself.⁹⁰

This communal participation in marriages by Western families is striking.

Marriage was obviously a vital aspect of Western society. Again, the fact that there was “universal stress on the necessity of marriage and the resulting pressure on single persons to get married” coming from, not the church, but society further underscores the central role of marriage and the family in society. That this pressure was “partially lifted only under the influence of Christianity” does not indicate that Christianity opposed marriage but that it advocated for liberty in Christ. However, the very recognition by society of the need for men and women to enter into marriage is itself testimony to the institution’s divine beginnings, sacrosanct status, and centrality in historical Western societies.

Experiential Instances

The witness of humanity’s practical experience of marriage also effectively attests to the sacredness of the institution of marriage. This section first examines the traditional

⁹⁰ Erwin J. Haeberle, “History of Marriage in Western Civilization,” *The Sex Atlas: New Popular Reference Edition* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company), http://www2.hu-berlin.de/sexology/ATLAS_EN/html/history_of_marriage_in_western.html [accessed July 5, 2012].

experience of marriage in African society where the majority of marriages have traditionally lasted for life. It then discusses the divorce experience by highlighting the effects of divorce upon divorced couples, children of divorce, and the church community.

The African Experience

A comparison of today's African marriages and families with those of earlier times reveals some sharp differences between the two. In the earlier days, there were deeper marital commitments and thus longer lasting marriages, fewer divorces, domestic conflicts, and single parents. Juvenile delinquency, teenage rebellion, and sexual molestations were also far less common and the traditional African family was much stronger than its modern equivalent. Moreover, those African families that continue to uphold the traditions of their fathers have comparatively more marital and social stability. As the Theological Advisory Group observes: "Traditionally in Africa marriages were much more permanent than they are today. . . . But for various reasons the family is breaking down today and divorce is becoming more common."⁹¹

Any elaborate understanding of the African experience of marriage, therefore, must begin with an understanding of key social values in traditional African society. As the Theological Advisory Group notes, "In order to understand Christian marriage in our African context today we need to first understand African customary marriages. Christian marriage in Africa should not be borrowed from the west. Indeed, it cannot be. Christian marriage in our churches should have a distinctive mark of African customs,

⁹¹The TAG, 171.

whenever such customs are not contrary to the teaching of scripture.”⁹² Key tenets and values in traditional African society that have enhanced the African marital experience have been communal involvement, ceremonial solemnity, and covenantal sanctity, which have traditionally surrounded African marriages.

Communal Involvement

African communities exist corporately and enjoy established relationships, especially through marriage and the family. This is because African people have traditionally not valued individualism. Rather, they have traditionally valued and practiced communal living in villages, clans, and extended families. The concept of individualism has been almost non-existent in the African community. Mbiti notes that “the philosophical formula about this says, ‘I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am.’”⁹³ In other words, the individual person is because the other and community are. The African considers his community to be more important than his own interests. The African community hence exists for the individual and the individual for and because of the community.

For this reason, without the community the individual has no right to be and without the individual the community cannot be whole. The interests of the community are the individual’s and the individual should not compromise those interests. Likewise, the interests of the individual are the community’s and the community should not ignore or hinder them. The problems, hardships, or sufferings of the community similarly are the

⁹² The TAG, 11.

⁹³ Mbiti, *IAR*, 108.

individual's and vice versa. No individual should struggle, suffer, or die alone and none should be indifferent to, ignore, or stay away from communal needs. In the same way, the benefits, gains, and losses of the community are the individual's, and the benefits, gains, and losses of the individual the community's. The individual hence is accountable to the community and the community responsible for the individual.

The African thus does not view himself as an entity existing separately from his community, but as a constituent part of community. Extended families, for instance, still exist in Africa whereby domestic ties are not confined to the nuclear family. Terms used in the nuclear family to describe parents, brothers, and sisters, etc., are also used to describe members of the extended family. As Mbiti explains:

Thus, the children are introduced gradually to the physical, economic, social and religious lives of their families. Without them the concept of the family would grind to a halt. For African peoples the family includes children, parents, grandparents, and other relatives such as brothers, sisters, cousins and so on. All relatives have duties and responsibilities towards one another. Everyone knows how he is related to other people in the clan and the neighborhood. ... The individual does not just exist alone: he exists because others exist. He must, therefore, play his full role in that interdependence of existence. In African life, we cannot speak of marriage alone. It is always in terms of marriage and family life. One gets married within the context of family life, and one gets married in order to enlarge that family life. One stands on the roots of family life; and one puts out branches of family life. This idea of the individual in relation to marriage and family life is deeply rooted in African thinking.⁹⁴

In addition, the term "in-laws" does not refer to the groom and bride's immediate families alone but their extended families as well. In many cases, these terms refer to entire villages, clans, and communities. An African marriage, hence, incorporates the couple's nuclear and extended families and other members of the community. As Mbiti again writes:

⁹⁴ Mbiti, *IAR*, 115.

In traditional African marriage customs, the relatives of the wife and of the husband establish a close relationship through the interchange of visits and gifts. This is an important African view of marriage, namely that it is not an affair between two people only but between those two people together with their families and relatives. This has grown out of the African view that a person does not exist all by himself: he exists because of the existence of other people.”⁹⁵

This is the context and environment within which marriage and the family have existed in Africa. Couples and their children have lived in accountability to other members of the community. The condition of an African marriage, whether healthy or unhealthy, has therefore affected not just the couple but also their immediate and extended families, clans, and the community. Every prospective couple in the African community understands that their marriage will establish many relationships. The two spouses expect and prepare themselves for the involvement of the rest of their families and the community in their lives. These traditional African family and communal relationships, though voluntary, are thoroughly binding. Any family that ventures to organize and facilitate the marriage of their children on their own is criticized, booed, and possibly isolated, among other measures. In cases where two individuals elope or enter into marriage on their own, they are expected to rectify this by approaching the relevant social authorities for forgiveness. After which the usual marriage ceremonies are organized for them.

This researcher can hereby confirm, as a member of the African society, that such individualistic moves, (for example eloping), where persons mind only their own welfare and interests, are always frowned upon among the African peoples, who have been conditioned by centuries of corporate or communal as opposed to individualistic living in

⁹⁵ Mbiti, *IAR*, 108.

every area of life. It is, therefore, more uncommon for individuals in African society to carelessly engage in activities such as divorce that are utterly unacceptable to the community. As a matter of fact, forbidden activities like eloping, have to be done in hiding away from the rest of the community or under the cover of darkness. The process of divorce, which is impossible to conceal, hence, has traditionally been difficult to carry out without the involvement of the concerned members of the community. African spouses, therefore, have often held on to otherwise abusive marriages for fear of embarrassment or the community's negative appraisal.

African society also has an elaborate ethical system consisting of laws, taboos, and regulations. This system, though not based on biblical principles of morality, is often similar to it and very effective in maintaining social order and peaceful co-existence because it provides a strong sense of justice and direction in social relationships. Family relationships are well regulated and guarded. Children are, by custom, required to take care of their parents. Respect for parents and the elderly and peaceful co-habitation in the home, among others, are all mandatory. Besides, husbands are under obligation to fend for their wives and children. African society hence requires persons to live orderly lives and normally takes great exception to deviant and antisocial behaviors like divorce, recklessness, robbery, and witchcraft. Under African cultural law, no spouse is at liberty to initiate divorce without consulting the parents and leaders of the extended family. Besides, the ceremonial solemnity and covenantal sanctity that surround marriage in Africa leave little or no room for easy or careless divorce, as will be revealed next.

Ceremonial Solemnity

African marriages are totally engulfed in solemn ceremony. Members of the community always get involved fully in the marital arrangements and ceremonies. The duty of ensuring the success of a marriage ceremony is that of the entire extended family, clan, and community. Magesa observes that “solemn prayers, sacrifices, and blessings are always offered over the marriage by the clan.”⁹⁶ This communicates clearly to the couple that their marital relationship will not be a private affair. It becomes clear that the two are responsible to the community to conduct themselves well and ensure the survival of the marriage. Moreover, the community is also communicating to the couple that, if any problem happens to develop between them, they will need to report it to the family or communal leaders. Both the marriage ceremonies and marital relationships are hence overseen by the community.

As mentioned earlier, because marriage in African society is an affair that belongs to the entire community, no single family may undertake on its own, without involving other related families, to make arrangements for a marriage. The entire extended family and at least many members of the community must participate in the arrangement of marriages. This communal involvement makes African marriages very attractive and impressive socio-cultural activities. As the TAG observes:

One of the most distinctive features of traditional customary marriage in Africa is the family arrangement in preparing for the marriage. Marriage in Africa was not primarily an agreement between a man and a woman but between two families. Only in a secondary sense was marriage a relationship between two individuals.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 127.

⁹⁷ The TAG, 18.

It is this communality of African marriages that necessitates the observance of ceremonies and celebrations in order that all the stakeholders in the new relationships may be involved in the marriage from the very beginning. According to Mbiti:

Marriage in the traditional African view is an affair of more than two people. Therefore through marriage many relationships are established and the married couples are very much in the public eye. For this reason, weddings are carried out with celebrations and festivals, giving an opportunity for everyone to be involved.⁹⁸

On learning of the intended marriage, the community members start preparing themselves for the occasion. This preparation involves the fetching of items to be presented as marital gifts, postponement and cancellation of coinciding activities, and soliciting of needed workers to be deployed in the various duties. The members of the community normally donate their services, food, utensils, tools, children, and domestic workers, among others, for the marriage festivities. It is important to note that all the items and services are free gifts. Mbiti again writes:

Marriage involves many people, and not just the husband and wife, and the transfer of gifts in form of livestock, money or labour. Once the full contract of marriage has been executed, it is extremely hard to dissolve it. If dissolution does come about then it creates a great scar in the community concerned.⁹⁹

Once the family and community members are entirely prepared, then the betrothal commences. The stage of betrothal and negotiations is but the beginning of the long and solemn ceremonial process. African couples do not enter hurriedly into matrimony. It is only after a long process of preparation involving all stakeholders that marriage takes place. As Mbiti says of this stage:

⁹⁸ Mbiti, *IAR*, 108.

⁹⁹ Mbiti, *ARP*, 141.

Then the parents and relatives begin the betrothal and marriage negotiations. Since the individual exists only because the corporate group exists, it is vital that in this most important contract of life, other members of that corporate community must get involved in the marriage of the individual.”¹⁰⁰

During this time the two sides involved interchange visits, inter-family negotiations, and solemn ceremonies. The celebration of marriage in Africa involves many festivities, celebrations, rituals, initiation rites, and ceremonies. There is much eating, drinking, singing, dancing, religious performances, teachings, and prayers.

These activities make African marriage ceremonies entertaining and exciting. Accompanying teachings and prayers make them educational and solemn. The family and community members do not merely enjoy themselves, but take time to prepare the couples for married life. The TAG observes that “before marriage could take place, however, some kind of initiation ceremony was necessary in order to bring about a sociological change in the person from being a child to an adult.”¹⁰¹ In addition to circumcision and other similar rites of passage, this is brought about by lengthy teachings and lessons that the community elders and leaders give to the couple. The teachings center on marriage, sex, romance, combat tactics, and domestic responsibilities and behaviors, among others. Mbiti says of these teachings:

Preparation for marriage is a long process, the key moments of which may be marked with rituals... In addition, and particularly in societies where there are no initiation rites, parents and other relatives gradually educate their children in marital affairs. Girls are taught how to prepare food, how to behave towards men, how to care for children, how to look after the husband and other domestic affairs. The boys are taught what ... concerns men, ... looking after cattle, behaving properly towards one's in-laws, how to acquire wealth which one would give to

¹⁰⁰ Mbiti, *ARP*, 136.

¹⁰¹ The TAG, 11.

the parents of a girl as part of the engagement and marriage contract, and how to be responsible as the “head” of the family.¹⁰²

On graduating from these marital seminars, couples are able to face marital hardships and conflicts with determination, persistence, and endurance, hence the durability of a majority of these marriages. Consequently, African societies have high numbers of lasting marriages. The most stable couples in African communities have significantly embraced certain traditional cultural values. A majority of divorces in Africa involve couples who have abandoned these cultural traditions.

This has not been an exhaustive discussion of all the rites, rituals, and festivities associated with the African marriage before, during, and after the celebrations. In some communities there would also be circumcision rites, sexual dances, solemn sacrifices, and sexual trainings, among others. The objective of this study in this entire sub-section is to unveil cultural values that have preserved marriage and the family in Africa for centuries. The last tenet to be examined is the covenantal sanctity of African marriages through the seal of the bride price.

Covenantal Sanctity

Traditionally, marriage in Africa has been a lasting relationship of covenantal sacrosanctity that has not been expected to break down. The coming together of two persons in matrimony binds the couple together in a covenantal relationship that the members of the African community do not expect to break up. The community normally seals this relationship with the payment of bride wealth, primarily live animals. The African bride price from the groom or his family to the family of the bride is, therefore,

¹⁰² Mbiti, *ARP*, 134-135.

the seal that underscores the sanctity of the marital bond. According to Laurenti Magesa, the bride wealth “forms part of the process that breaks down barriers between clans and peoples and establishes unions of life, love, harmony, peace and security beyond certain frontier...”¹⁰³ and that “marriage solemnised with bridewealth becomes a profoundly sacred reality.”¹⁰⁴

The African bridal gift furthermore is not a commercial “buying” of the African wife as a commodity. The bridal gift is honorable as the one single practice that has traditionally played the most central role in the permanence and sanctity of African marriages. Any understanding of the bride price that does not explore this role or include this concept is incomplete. The TAG clarifies:

Throughout Africa a marriage could not take place without some payment of animals, beer, food or other material goods to the parents and family of the bride. Today we speak of this as “dowry.” Technically, this is not dowry but “bride price.” According to English usage, “dowry” is “the gift of money, goods or both made by the bride or bride’s family toward the establishment of her household.” Whereas, “bride price” is “a marriage payment made by a prospective husband, or more often by his family, to the family of the bride.” However, because the English term “bride price,” suggests a business exchange and the purchase of the wife, this term is not preferred today. The term “dowry,” is preferred. Bride price in traditional Africa was not considered the purchase price for a wife. Rather, it was an exchange of gifts in order to verify in concrete terms that the families had agreed to the marriage of the son and daughter. Traditionally, the evidence that a man and woman were truly and legally married was the payment of the bride price. Even in the law courts today, whenever it can be demonstrated that the bride price was paid, this is sufficient proof of a valid, legal, customary marriage.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Magesa, 125.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 127.

¹⁰⁵ The TAG, 19.

This bridal gift, therefore, is a mandatory seal on every African marriage whose violation the community does not normally allow. As a matter of fact, in most communities the bride price items are well stipulated and known to all. This is why the community will ignore and pressurize any couple that has entered into marriage in violation of the marriage gift until the persons have complied and paid the gift. To traditional Africans, marital authenticity and validity is nonexistent without the payment of the bride price. As Mbiti writes:

All over Africa the custom is observed of exchanging visits and gifts among the members of the two families and their relatives ... They bind the man and the wife together in the sight of their families. They are the symbols of the marriage bond and covenant. They seal up the sacred relationship established through marriage, a relationship which will be worked out over a long period of time.¹⁰⁶

These specific visits and gifts are carried out by selected members of the nuclear and extended family members and the community. They are not mere tokens of generosity or acts of fellowship and eating together but constitute the bride wealth, which is such an important and significant practice in African society. The African marriage gift, also called dowry, bride price, or bride wealth is a significant aspect of the African marriage that contributes profoundly and plays the most central role in the stability and permanence of marriages in traditional African society.

This is the major reason why, in the African community, marrying without the marriage gift is not acceptable. Unless, and until the bridegroom, his parents, or family pay the bride price to the parents of the bride, the marriage is not recognized. Traditional African society considers it an offence, to contract a marriage without the bride price or bride wealth. The bridal wealth is so important that in many cases the parents of the

¹⁰⁶ Mbiti, *IAR*, 107.

prospective couple have rejected or stopped the planned marriage from taking place until the bridal gifts have been presented.

There have been occasions nevertheless where the parents have not been in the position to stop the couple from getting married unofficially. In such cases, the couple will go ahead and enter into marriage, albeit leaving behind them angry parents and relatives. They are given limited time to subsequently rectify this anomaly or be denied their appropriate social status as a couple. Such a couple will still be casually recognized as being “married” and be referred to as “husband and wife” but officially will be considered as unmarried and illegally cohabiting until the issue of the bride price has been settled. This shames and embarrasses the spouses and compromises their status in the community.

Another key function of the marriage gift is to protect the wife from injustices that the husband might commit against her and the children. It is a necessary refuge for the African woman and her children because men in the African community have often subjected their wives to absolute injustice. The payment of the bride price therefore not only seals the marriage but also secures the present and future lives of the wife and children. Magesa warns very strongly:

It is clear then that a marital arrangement without bridewealth is highly irregular and offensive, and that a woman who accepts cohabitation with a man without bridewealth does an injustice to the two clans concerned as well as to any children. Because bridewealth forms part of the process of the covenant that breaks down barriers between clans and peoples and establishes unions of life, love, harmony, peace and security beyond certain frontiers, the woman in question is acutely aware that her situation is shameful. She is in fact a mistress and, as far as her own “spiritual” future is concerned, practically “dead.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Magesa, 125.

Payment of the bride price, for instance, is meant to serve as a protection for the wife where the man might marry a second wife and decide to evict or continually beat and mistreat the first wife. According to the TAG:

Furthermore, dowry cements the agreement and prevents an easy divorce of the marriage. Thus dowry helped to stabilize marriages and protected the wife from unreasonable oppression or rejection by the husband. The dowry was a kind of “seal,” showing that the marriage had been legally and properly contracted.¹⁰⁸

The bride price not only protects the wife from such injustices but also gives her all the rights that her husband has in their new home. She owns the land and all the property together with him and possesses the same inheritance rights he possesses. If the husband decides to start a home with a second wife, it is mandatory for him to build a new home, move to a different portion of the family land or buy new land. The marriage gift is a symbol also attached directly to the wife’s status and esteem as a woman in her new home. It is for her a source of social dignity, self-esteem, and personal pride. It is a token of honor, symbol of eligibility, and source of personal confidence for the married woman. Rather than “buying” and degrading her, the marriage gift actually honors and promotes the African wife. According to Mbiti:

This marriage gift is an important institution in African societies. It is a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom’s people to those of the bride, for their care over her and for allowing her to become his wife.... At marriage she is not stolen but is given away under mutual agreement between the two families. The gift elevates the value attached to her both as a person and as a wife. The gift legalized her value and marriage contract. The institution of this practice is the most concrete symbol of the marriage covenant and security. Under no circumstances is the custom a form of ‘payment,’ as outsiders have so often mistakenly said.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ The TAG, 20.

¹⁰⁹ Mbiti, *ARP*, 140.

The bride price also protects the children by ensuring they inherit the family land and bury their mother there when she dies, for this is where they have always lived with her since their childhood. The children cannot be evicted from the family land, especially in their early ages, by their dad or any family members who might turn malicious, or by a hateful step-mother in case of the death of their mother.

On the other hand, the bride price has also been a means of protection for the husband in a number of ways. In traditional African practice, for example, the parents or family of the wife had the legal right to call her back to their home for specified reasons. This would be either punishment for the husband for possible offences, or a way of making certain demands from him. In this case the marriage gift protected the man against any possible harassment or injustice from unscrupulous parents and family of the wife. A husband who had paid his bride price could not lose his wife to such malicious members of his wife's family who might want to call her back unjustly, merely to settle scores with him. Nor would anyone be in a position to deny him his wife's body or the right to bury her in case she died before him. The bride price is like the marriage certificate. As pointed out in Chapter One, however, the bridal gift has also been misunderstood and misused by some men to oppress their wives, claiming the wives were either properties or gardens that the men had purchased by means of the bridal gift to utilize as they pleased. African marriages, nevertheless, gained from African societies' cultural characteristics.

Marriages in Africa have certainly been held together by these cultural pillars of communal existence, ceremonial solemnity, and matrimonial endorsement. The African family with its extended nature, communal lifestyle, and socializing function has

provided African couples an excellent base for socialization and enculturation; the society's ritualistic foundation for marriages has given the couples such deep senses of commitment to one another; and the bride price has served as a covenantal seal for marriages that African couples have been reluctant to break. It is doubtless these pillars of community, ceremony, and covenant that have traditionally contributed so greatly to the stability and durability of African marriages.

The growing incidence of weak marriages of Kenyan and other African couples, whether living in their home countries or in overseas diasporas is attributable partly to the decline of African cultural values and the consequent moral decadence that has emerged in African communities as they have abandoned the traditional values of their ancestors. The next sub-section will examine the devastating effects of divorce.

The Divorce Experience

This subsection invokes the testimony of the effects of divorce upon the couples, the children, and the church. Even as marriage involves more than just the couple, so does divorce, which affects the divorced persons, their children, and the communities where they live. As Collins observes, "divorce can affect people physically, psychologically, and spiritually long after the divorce. Often, it leads to emotional upheaval, irrational decisions, and interpersonal tensions. It affects the two people involved and their children, but its influence can extend as well to parents, other family members, fellow employees, friends, neighbors, people in the church, and even grandchildren who might be born later."¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Collins, 2007, 616.

The Experience of the Couples

Breaking the matrimonial bond is first costly to the couple. Scripture says husband and wife are one flesh; hence, divorce is tearing apart two persons united by God's power. Two loving spouses who get divorced, first of all, experience emotional stress. They pay the "cost of inner pain," as the TAG observes.¹¹¹ They have feelings of failure and shattered hopes for losing their warmest and most intimate relationship in life. This breeds anger, bitterness, and inward hostility toward all. The TAG continues: "A Christian in particular recognizes that he has broken God's eternal will for marriage."¹¹² The believer, therefore, pays the cost of fighting continuous feelings of guilt. Collins observes that "divorce is accompanied by an almost endless range of emotions including anxiety, guilt, fear, sadness, depression (sometimes accompanied by thoughts of suicide), anger, bitterness, and frustration."¹¹³ Even the "innocent" party might regret and sorrow over lost opportunities for reconciliation. Furthermore, in the cases of divorced persons who have children, Collins says that "when children are involved, the pain is even greater as sensitive parents watch innocent young people suffer because their families have been torn apart."¹¹⁴

Grief and guilt together produce overwhelming emotional stress that causes physical illness. Collins observes that "the body of course cannot maintain a continuing

¹¹¹ The TAG, 179.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Collins, 1988, 457.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 451.

state of tension and vigilance, so psychosomatic illness often follows.”¹¹⁵ The result could even be death. Closely related to emotional stress is the accompanying neurosis that the divorced persons often carry with them. This condition threatens to become a permanent personality trait that mars the person’s original personality. Neurosis in the person’s personality traits is evidenced by malfunctioning temperaments and social maladjustment. Many divorced persons keep revisiting negative memories of their experiences with their former spouses and keep their photos for long periods. Commenting on these conditions, the TAG says that “a first divorce often leads to a quicker second divorce.”¹¹⁶

Divorced persons also develop social behavioral syndromes. A divorced person no longer has someone with whom to share the daily domestic responsibilities. All of a sudden the person has to work as a single parent to provide for the family. These conditions influence the person’s behavior. Collins says “divorce affects how one feels, but it also influences what one does”¹¹⁷ and “divorced people often experience loneliness, insecurity, confusion about whether they should date or remarry.... Most struggle with the issue of sex and self-control.”¹¹⁸ These factors produce an amount of behavioral confusion. Relating with members of the opposite sex, while grappling with unfulfilled sexual urges, moreover, affects the person’s behavior. Many end up succumbing to sexual temptations.

¹¹⁵ Collins, 1988, 457.

¹¹⁶ The TAG, 180.

¹¹⁷ Collins, 1988, 457.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 458.

There is also the burden of financial responsibilities and management that the divorced person has to carry alone. All too often, a divorced spouse has not been able to assume, either voluntarily or through a court order, corporate financial and material care for the children. The person then has had to carry alone the cumbersome burden of caring for the children. R.K. Harrison urges a “fair division of money and property especially where a homemaker, after midlife, is expected to enter the work force, having devoted herself for years to her husband’s career or business and to a family.”¹¹⁹ The divorced spouse who had not been working now may have to look for a job or money. Moreover, the person who, by the time of their divorce, had not taken part normally in the family’s financial management, now has to bear the burden of handling regular payments, budgets, expenditures, and savings on top of handling the issue of dividing the family wealth to the children.

Lastly, the period immediately before and after the episode of divorce is usually one of spiritual instability on the part of the two divorced persons. A divorced person experiences “loneliness, confusion, lowered self-esteem, insecurity, a sense of rejection, and the haunting concern of who was at fault,” as Collins observes.¹²⁰ The divorce experience affects the person’s emotions and social behavior and increases his or her domestic responsibilities. The person might not make time for prayer, the Word of God, or church. Some divorced persons fall into sin during this time. R.K Harrison observes that “in the Eastern rite of marriage, reconsecration includes the words ‘being unable to

¹¹⁹ R.K. Harrison, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 115.

¹²⁰ Collins, 1988, 451.

bear the heat and burden of the day and the hot desires of the flesh, are now entering into the bond of second marriage’.”¹²¹ Other divorced persons get angry against God and his people and end up in spiritual rebellion, “especially if there is rejection and criticism from the Church.”¹²²

The Experience of the Children

Children also share in the effects of the divorce. “It probably is true that no one ever gets divorced alone” because divorce variously affects the family members, supportive friends, opposing critics, married friends, and other single people.¹²³ The effects of divorce are most devastating especially for the children, as Harrison says: “Parents can never divorce their children.” The first effect that divorce causes upon the children is the loss of their parents and home. They will never again see their parents together in one home. The TAG describes this cruel experience as the “cost of a broken home” and comments: “The greatest tragedy in divorce are the innocent children who lose a father or mother and lose the feeling of a loving, warm, secure home. ‘Children of divorce’ often feel hostility, anger, guilt and abandonment.”¹²⁴ Stott laments that “marital breakdown “precipitates in any children of the marriage a crisis of bewilderment, insecurity and often anger.”¹²⁵ Collins says that the effects of divorce are most painful during the first twelve to eighteen months after the divorce and for children under six and

¹²¹ Harrison, 350.

¹²² Collins, 1988, 458.

¹²³ Ibid., 457.

¹²⁴ The TAG, 180.

¹²⁵ Stott, 259.

older than fourteen or fifteen. Such children are “confused, afraid, and insecure” and express their experienced frustration in truancy, fighting, running away, school problems, absences, sickness, nightmares and regression to childish behavior.¹²⁶

Such conditions of frustration, trauma, anger, bitterness, confusion, fear, and insecurity are recipes for spiritual problems. These children might, for example, find it very difficult to justify the love and faithfulness of God. Consequently, they might fail to understand God and rebel against him, the church, and their divorced parents. These little angels are like clay in the hands of the potter. Their parents’ divorce has molded them psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. As Collins observes:

It should not be assumed that divorce only affects younger children. Some couples live together in misery, avoiding divorce until the children are grown and have left home. We can admire the dedication of these parents and their concern for the children, but many fail to realize that adult children also can be hurt deeply by a parental divorce.¹²⁷

The parents have simply set a bad example for their children. The children might question the reality of salvation, their parents’ spiritual experiences, and truthfulness of Scripture. They did not see in their parents’ case the reality of victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, as the Bible testifies in I John 2:15-17, 5:4. Besides, the experience of the children of divorce makes it harder for them to understand the fruit of the Holy Spirit according to the apostle Paul, especially as they wonder about the reality of love, peace, patience, forgiveness, humility, self-control, and other spiritual fruits.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Collins, 1988, 462.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 463.

¹²⁸ Gal. 5:22-23

In addition, spiritual problems and consequences of divorce in the lives of the children are not only present but also future. According to the TAG, the children have been “left with scars for life.”¹²⁹ Marital breakdown sows seeds of breakdown in the souls of the children. Curiously enough, many children of divorce end up in divorce later in their lives. Some believe this is due to generational curses. However, divorced parents also influence their children, who follow in their parents’ footsteps.

Derek Prince maintains that the curse of marital breakdown must be broken in order to set the family free from destruction. Prince lists the “breakdown of marriage and family alienation,” as one of the “seven indications of a curse.”¹³⁰ He then proceeds to describe what he believes to be the causes of rampant breakdowns of marriages and disintegrations of families. Using Malachi 4:5-6 as the basis for his observations on the matter, Prince writes:

Malachi depicts an evil force at work, alienating parents from children and producing a breakdown of family relationships. Unless God intervenes, he warns, this curse that is destroying family life will be extended to the whole earth, bringing disaster in its train.

Malachi has put his finger on the most urgent social problem of our contemporary culture. We need to see it as the out working of a curse, which is responsible for the agonies of strife-torn homes, broken marriages and disintegrated families. Perhaps the most accurate word to describe the force responsible for these results is *alienation*. It comes between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and all others who would be united by the bonds of family. Its goal is the destruction of the family.

Nevertheless for those who will accept God’s counsel, the situation is not hopeless. There is a remedy. First we must face the fact that a curse is at work. Then we must take the steps indicated by Scripture to revoke the curse and release its captives. I have seen families transformed and restored by these means.”¹³¹

¹²⁹ The TAG, 180.

¹³⁰ Derek Prince, *Blessing or Curse You Can Choose* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2006), 53.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

Prince appears to be fully convinced that curses do exist and their presence may lead to marital and family breakdowns. It is needless to contradict Prince or debate the subject of curses. There are many truths in the Word of God that need to be examined with humility and open minds. From even a psychological point of view, for example, it is not difficult to see how the divorcing parents sow the seed of breakdown in their children. The continual actions and mutual hostility of such parents before and after their divorce inculcate firmly in the children's minds the notion of divorce as a possible solution to marital conflicts.

As the Bible teaches in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." The mind of a little child stores up permanently what the child learns, especially from his or her parents. This is another reason why children from divorced and troubled families are more prone to divorce. This is because they have been "trained" by the parents' divorce "in the way they should go" and according to this Scripture even when these children are old they "will not depart from it." This should serve as a stern lesson to parents.

The children of divorce also experience further devastation when they have to go through financial and material lack. This may happen, for instance, if there is no fair division of the couple's wealth, or the children end up living with the impoverished parent. As Harrison advises: "Where divorce occurs, the burden for just dealing is very great. Maintaining communication by divorcing and divorced parents is a moral obligation so that the well-being of the children can be put first, including decisions about

property, maintenance, and access.”¹³² These effects of divorce, and others that this study has not covered, are painful, destructive, and spiritually fatal, as has been unveiled. The last subsection will examine the negative effects of divorce upon the Body of Christ.

The Experience of the Church

“In a day and age when divorce is becoming more common, this is a difficult problem which divides the church. This question needs to be studied more by the church leaders.” That was the conclusion of the TAG after discussing the issue of the status of divorced and/or remarried believers in the fellowship and service of the church.¹³³ The increase of marital breakdowns affects the witness of the church to the world. The church is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt 5:13-16). Unsaved people learn the ways of God through listening to the verbal witness of the church about Christ and by observing the lives of the members of the church.

The church has a divinely ordained responsibility to shine for Jesus Christ in the world. When believers easily break their marriages, the world is left without a witness. The marriage institution can only survive as Christians set the example of its permanence and sanctity. Besides, the church should be on the frontline in demonstrating to the world that God’s ordinances are honorable, timeless, and essential. Furthermore, unsaved people should be able to observe and learn from the saved the virtues of love, patience, humility, forgiveness, etc. Divorce mars the witness of the church and conveys a negative testimony to the heathen.

¹³² Harrison, 115.

¹³³ The TAG, 179.

Divorce also sets wrong precedents for future generations. The apostle Paul exhorted his spiritual children, the Corinthians, "... Be ye followers of me" and again, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1). Paul was able to say these words because he had set a good example to his spiritual children. He was actually telling the church, "Do what you have seen me do." In the same way the church in this generation needs to set a good example for its upcoming generations. Today's children grapple with the abundant presence of divorced adults in the church. Many of them quickly learn to justify their unbiblical lifestyles on the bases of precedents set by the adult believers. By the time the children become adolescents and attain marriageable age, they have already come to view marital breakdowns as inevitable aspects of life.

Escalating breakdowns of marriage are also affecting also fellowship among church members. As noted earlier, the TAG observes that marital breakdowns within the ranks of the church are "a difficult problem which divides the Church."¹³⁴ In the first place, divorce on any ground provokes criticism from Christians who believe the Bible does not allow divorce for any reason. Such believers will not have fellowship with a divorced person notwithstanding the reasons for the divorce.

Then there are those Christians that accept some biblical grounds for divorce and see nothing wrong with those in the church who may have been divorced on biblically acceptable grounds. They, therefore, continue having fellowship with their divorced brethren and ignore the reactions of those more conservative believers. Consequently, gossip, criticism, and stigmatization reign in the fellowship of the church. Collins says

¹³⁴ The TAG, 179.

that “more often, however, church members are inclined to show criticism, subtle rejection, and sometimes avoidance of anyone who is divorced.”¹³⁵

The fellowship of the church cannot be healthy in this kind of an environment. Such an environment affects the free flow of brotherly love and affection, and the free move of the Holy Spirit in the church. Brethren gossip about each other, inwardly reject each other, and subtly avoid each other. This kind of relationship grieves the Holy Spirit. The situation is more complicated when the divorced persons are ministers. Parishioners may not confront such ministers but they complain and suffer quietly and inwardly.

When church ministers, in spite of having committed adultery by abandoning their spouses and remarrying, continue in the ministry, the leadership of the church receives a bad name. According to Davis, “If a minister commits adultery or abandons his family, it is a reproach to the Gospel.”¹³⁶ The qualifications of leadership as laid down in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 require a leader to have a stable marriage and family and be above reproach. As Davis adds “even after repentance” this kind of thing “leaves permanent scars in the Church and often irrevocably damages the preacher’s reputation and credibility.”¹³⁷

Stott decries what he calls the “secularism” of the church in the West. “Even some ministers divorce their spouse and remarry, the while retaining their positions of Christian leadership.”¹³⁸ A minister who has been divorced on biblically unacceptable

¹³⁵ Collins, 1988, 463.

¹³⁶ Loren Davis, *The Paganization of Christianity* (Houston: DPG Publishing, 2003), 236.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Stott, 260.

grounds and continues to lead the church is marring the reputation of the church. Such a minister does not lead the church well because he has feelings of guilt, suspicion, and self-rejection. He might also apply personal ego-defense mechanisms in his leadership and ministry. A leader that is embarrassed cannot shepherd the flock of God effectively. The presence in the church of ministers that have been divorced for biblically unacceptable reasons is affecting the leadership of the church. A man of God should be an example to the church (II Thess. 3:9; 1 Pet. 5:3). Jesus said a blind man cannot lead another blind man, or else both shall fall into a pit (Luke 6:39).

Conclusion

This chapter has established the sanctity and permanence of marriage by means of the witnesses of Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience. The first section examined biblical fundamentals that establish the sanctity and permanence of marriage. The Scripture confirmed that God's ideal from the beginning has always been marriage as a lifelong relationship but that in his divine wisdom God has made some concessions to divorce, namely in the cases of sexual immorality and the desertion of a believer by a nonbeliever because of his or her faith. The section also noted that the divine symbolic use of marriage to depict the relationship between God and Israel, and Christ and the church added to the institution's sacredness.

The second section further unveiled that the Scripture does allow room for human reason and judgment whereby believers may make logical and sensible conclusions on issues where the Scripture is silent. The section's discussion first revealed that there were some logical human concessions to divorce, for instance, desertion or divorce by one's

spouse for reasons other than the faith and the extreme abuse of one spouse by the other. The section then examined humanity's need for marriage and argued that human civilization could not flourish without marriage.

The third section unveiled the witness of history to the sacredness of marriage by presenting the views of marriage historically held by a number of early institutions, including Judaism, the Early Church Fathers, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as reviewing the history of marriage in Western civilization. All these authorities affirm that marriage is a divinely ordained institution of sacramental sacrosanctity that God intends not to be broken but to last for a life-time.

Finally, the last sub-section examined a number of experiential instances relating to marriage and divorce. The section began by discussing the traditional experience of marriage in African society by examining the African cultural pillars that have traditionally contributed to lasting marriages in Africa, namely the corporate involvement of the community in marriage, the ceremonial solemnity engulfing marriage, and the covenantal sanctity of marriage through the endorsement of the marital union by the payment of bridal wealth. The section then investigated the effects of divorce by observing the experiences of divorced couples, the children of divorce, and the church as the custodian of the Gospel witness. Available evidence overwhelmingly points to the fact that divorce was devastating to the couples and their children and harmful to the church. God's Word states that "they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" and "from the beginning it was not so."¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Matt. 19:6, 8.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Three incorporates the contributions of available literature to the theme and contents of this research. In this chapter, hence, information from literary sources will be shown to be relevant and significant to the issues embraced by this study. Literature and specific areas for review will therefore be selected on the basis of their contribution to the research. Selection will be guided by an organized outline and flow of content that will clearly represent the overall theme and major issues addressed by the project.

The chapter will start its review with literature on African cultural ideologies that are the bases of the convictions believed to impact the marriages and family lives of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States, namely, communal existence, gender inequality, and parental assertiveness. Next to be reviewed will be literature highlighting the cultural paradigm shifts believed to be encountered by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States, namely, changed gender roles, unfavorable economic conditions, and diminished parental authority. Finally, the chapter will review literature discussing some theological viewpoints related to this study, especially views that this study considers to be the biblical position on marriage and divorce, whereby the marital union will be reaffirmed, marital breakdown shown to be unfortunate and marital resilience recommended.

**African Cultural Ideologies:
Cultural Beliefs of Kenyan Immigrant Couples in the United States**

Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States are expected to still embrace their African cultural ideologies in many areas of their lives, despite having adopted American socio-cultural and socio-economic tenets to limited extents. This first section will solicit information from available literary sources on three key African cultural ideologies that are believed to impact the marriages of Kenyan immigrants, namely communal existence, gender inequality, and parental assertiveness.

Communal Existence

Discussing the family, the household and the individual in African society, John S. Mbiti says: “In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual, for the individual depends on the corporate group.”¹⁴⁰ Mbiti explains that every African child is incorporated through various stages of ceremonial rites into this social and cultural system because Africans live according to the fact that God creates humanity to exist as a community. He continues:

Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbors and his relatives whether dead or living.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Mbiti, *ARP*, 108.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Mbiti further explains that in marriage and the family the individual is never alone. The wife and the children are not a man's alone but belong to "the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear only their father's name." Mbiti concludes: "The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am'" and emphasizes that "this is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man."¹⁴² Members of the researcher's own community in Kenya, for instance, often use the phrases, "our husband" or "our wife," which sound very confusing from a Western point of view because at least a wife or husband can only belong to one spouse. But these terms do not imply that the wife or husband is shared but that the community enjoys a common identity. Similarly, the use of the phrase, "our children," is not confined to the immediate parents of the children but to all older members of the community. Discussing family and community dynamics among Kenyan immigrants in the United States whom she calls, "Kenyan Americans," Laura C. Rudolf explains:

Kenyans place a high value on family relationships and the importance of kinship. Close attention is paid to the maintenance of ancestry and lineage, particularly along the paternal lines. The individual is considered less important than his or her community, which centers around the extended family. Households normally contain at least one extended family member. Often several generations are present. Children sometimes refer to their cousins as "brother" or "sister," and call their aunts and uncles "mother" and "father." Grandparents and great-grandparents are revered for their wisdom.¹⁴³

These immediate and extended family relationships among the members of the African community are not casual but deep relational connections involving serious

¹⁴² Mbiti, *ARP*, 108.

¹⁴³ Laura C. Rudolf, "Family and Community Dynamics," *Kenyan Americans, Countries and Their Cultures*, <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Kenyan-Americans.html> [accessed August 23, 2012].

mutual friendships and commitments among family and community members. Writing about “Individualism or Disconnection,” Kilonzo narrates:

In the villages back in Africa, your neighbor not only knows you and your children by name but also all the other neighbors, their children, and their grand children. Villagers are never too busy for each other. To some extent, your neighbor is very much your business. You say good morning almost each day and ask about their well-being. If they need help, you step up, too; you are in many ways their 999 [emergency] because the 999 calls in Kenya are made for the offenders only.¹⁴⁴

This kind of neighborliness fosters in each individual member of the family and community a strong sense of belonging and security. Every neighbor and every member of the immediate and extended families and the community becomes a real friend to every other fellow member. Kilonzo continues to explain:

In most Kenyan communities, almost everybody and every child belong[s] to the community. A sense of community and togetherness begins in the household and extends to the community. We have a sense of belonging and friendship that has deep roots throughout so many generations. My parents, for instance, have thousands of friends, and hardly a day goes by without a knock on their door. They are never a lonely pair and there are hardly lonely people.¹⁴⁵

Available literature on the subject affirms that this African world view influences the thinking of many Kenyan immigrants in the United States. As Hugo Kanya says,

Therapists need to understand African immigrants’ sense of obligation to relatives in their country of origin. Family members in Africa may expect relatives in America to support them and so put financial pressure on immigrants. This pressure may be expressed in terms of an appeal to a person’s cultural, family, and community values. These loyalties are often the issues for which families seek therapeutic help.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Eucabeth Kilonzo, *From Africa to America: An Immigrant’s Story* (Charleston, SC: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2009), 87.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁴⁶ Hugo Kanya, “African Immigrant Families,” in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, ed. Monica McGoldrick, Joseph Giordano, and Nydia Garcia-Preto (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 104. http://books.google.com/books?id=6A11kB_6GyMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed August 30, 2011].

John Arthur also observes: “For African immigrants in the United States, the establishment of a cultural community begins with the formation of intra-immigrant relationships. With the increase in the African immigrant population in the United States since the 1970s has come a growth in African immigrant associational networks.”¹⁴⁷ The immigrants’ relocation to a distant country, hence, has not removed the communal bonds between them and their relatives back home as well as fellow immigrants in the US.

In their African mindsets of communal existence, therefore, the Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States continue to live in communality with their family members in Kenya and the United States as well as fellow immigrants in the country. As Arthur further explains: “The immigrant families replicate African kinship structures that are central to their survival in the United States. They tend to cluster in particular neighborhoods for collective security in dealing with the problems of daily living. Bonds are fostered, friendships renewed, and goals and values reaffirmed.”¹⁴⁸

To Mbiti, this African communal existence is the cultural perspective from which African marriage must be viewed. It is because of this communal existence that marriage in Africa features the involvement of parents in the selection of marriage partners, visits, gifts, and customs concerning the bride's change of residence, marriage ceremonies, and celebrations. Every African marriage is, from its very beginning, a communal affair in which the families and relatives of the couple must be involved. Mbiti again says: “All over Africa, the custom is observed of exchanging visits and gifts among the members of the two families and their relatives. This eventually leads to arrangements for exchanging

¹⁴⁷ John A. Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 70.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

marriage gifts that the parents of the girl ask from those of the boy.”¹⁴⁹ He continues to explain that “this is an important African view of marriage, namely that it is not an affair between two people only but between those two people together with their families and relatives” and “this has grown out of the African view that a person does not exist all by himself; he exists because of the existence of other people.”¹⁵⁰

Society in the United States, on the contrary, is individualistic. There is no communal existence for the most part. Kilonzo observes that “individualism is predominant in the developed countries”¹⁵¹ unlike in Kenya where persons are normally willing to offer their last bit of food even to abrupt visitors.¹⁵² African communal existence, hence, is the mentality that contributes to the existence of relationships, associations, and African villages among the immigrant community in the United States. As Arthur observes, “The vitality of African immigrant families originates in the kinship bonds, cultural ethos, and resiliency of the extended family. The sense of the family as a community and the relations that are forged among its members are the main source of adaptability of African immigrant women and their children.”¹⁵³

Gender Inequality

As Pamela Goyan and Kathryn Sucher observe, “African societies are highly patriarchal, and in most cases women are expected to be subservient to men. Marriages

¹⁴⁹ Mbiti, *IAR*, 107.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁵¹ Kilonzo, 86.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁵³ Arthur, 111.

are often arranged by parents, typically with an exchange of property.”¹⁵⁴ African men, hence, are the authority figures in their houses and society, and the women and children are expected to follow and listen to them. Discussing, “The Role of Women,” in Kenya, Rudolf explains that the women were made to stay at home and that married women could not open bank accounts or acquire drivers’ licenses without obtaining permission from their husbands while “families were always traced from the father's line and all children from a marriage ‘belonged’ to the father.”¹⁵⁵ She further adds that the women in Kenya had reduced opportunities to “break out of” these domestic roles because they frequently became pregnant since contraceptives were hard to find and held in suspicion by some communities. Rudolf then concludes:

Kenyan American women are appreciative of the opportunities they find in the United States. Unlike their native-born country, immigrants are able to obtain contraception, driver's licenses, and bank accounts without permission from their husbands. Since Kenyan women are usually well educated, they do not have difficulties finding employment and enjoy the freedom of pursuing a career outside the home.¹⁵⁶

This should not be taken to mean that domestic responsibilities are inferior to jobs done away from home since home-based jobs are as important and noble as any other jobs. Within the African cultural set up, however, those who move to metropolitan areas to work there and bring home their earnings to their families and relatives tend to be accorded higher prestige. According to Arthur, in Africa, “male migration is encouraged,” with mostly the men migrating to large cities, an experience which “raises

¹⁵⁴ Goyan, Pamela, and Kathryn P. Sucher, *Food and Culture*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008), 210.

¹⁵⁵ Rudolf, “The Role of Women,” *Kenyan Americans, Countries and Their Cultures*, <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Kenyan-Americans.html> [accessed August 23, 2012].

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

their social status and prestige, especially when they return home with consumable items, money, and gifts for extended family members and friends,” but that on the other hand “historically, women usually stayed behind to raise children, operate cottage industries, farm the land, and sell goods.”¹⁵⁷

In many African communities, husbands exercise dominance even over working wives. In Kenya for example, working women are in many cases made to surrender their decision making rights to the men who control both theirs and their wives’ earnings, in most cases without involving the wives. The wives’ money power becomes toothless as their husbands dominate the financial affairs of the houses. This experience leads to many African women seizing the nearest opportunities to break loose from this traditional chain of male domination. In most cases such opportunities become available through education and economic independence. Genevieve Tiony says: “The more educated women become, the more they rebel from the chains that have bound them for so many years in a ‘man’s world.’ There are millions of women now on both continents with professional and prestigious jobs just like men.”¹⁵⁸

African society, however, has begun to be sensitive to the rights of women, and the situation has begun to change as new laws are being put in place to protect the rights of the women. In Kenya, for instance, the newly enacted (2010) constitution’s section on “Equality and Freedom from Discrimination” reads:

27. (1) Every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law.

¹⁵⁷ Arthur, 109.

¹⁵⁸ Genevieve Tiony, *Wounded Africa: The Cultural Differences Between Africa and America* (Bloomington, IN: Genevieve Tiony, 2009), 129.

(2) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and fundamental freedoms.

(3) Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres.

(4) The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth.

(5) A person shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against another person on any of the grounds specified or contemplated in clause (4).

(6) To give full effect to the realisation of the rights guaranteed under this Article, the State shall take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programmes and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination.

(7) Any measure taken under clause (6) shall adequately provide for any benefits to be on the basis of genuine need.

(8) In addition to the measures contemplated in clause (6), the State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.¹⁵⁹

But even with these new laws, the African woman still suffers under male dominance and needs to be freed. This is so because male dominance has prevailed in Africa for so long that it is difficult to wipe it out from people's minds within a single generation. It may take several generations before gender equality becomes reality in many African societies.

On the contrary, in the United States, where the laws regulating gender equality have been in place for a longer duration, the rights of women are generally well protected by government agencies including the Department of Homeland Security, for instance,

¹⁵⁹ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 4, part 2, sec. 27 (National Council For Law Reporting, 2010), 24, 25, <http://kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/The%20Constitution%20of%20Kenya.pdf> [accessed August 23, 2012].

which recognizes male, female, and children's rights. On its Citizenship and Immigration Services website, the department states:

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior when one intimate partner or spouse threatens or abuses the other partner. Abuse may include physical harm, forced sexual relations, emotional manipulation (including isolation or intimidation), and economic and/or immigration-related threats. While most recorded incidents of domestic violence involve men abusing women or children, men can also be victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence may include sexual assault, child abuse and other violent crimes.¹⁶⁰

Husbands in the United States know that the easiest way for a man to end up in jail is for his wife to dial 911, begin to scream or sob, and claim the man is harassing her. The

USCIS website continues:

Under U.S. law, any crime victim, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, can call the police for help or obtain a protection order. Call the police at 911 if you or your child(ren) are in danger. The police may arrest your fiancé(e), spouse, partner, or another person if they believe that person has committed a crime. You should tell the police about any abuse that has happened, even in the past, and show any injuries.¹⁶¹

The ongoing paradigm shift, hence, in which African women are gaining more and more economic independence, apparently becomes more profound for the African women immigrants in the United States who, thanks to the country's equal gender rights, acquire unlimited freedom and economic independence, many of them for the first time.

None of the literary sources, however, has pointed out the difference there is between male domination and male leadership, which are different and must not be confused one for the other. Male leadership is a biblical principle enshrined in the Word

¹⁶⁰ U.S. Department of Homeland Security. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa Fact Sheet*. <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=8707936ba657d210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=8a2f6d26d17df110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD> [accessed August 23, 2012].

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

of God: “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God”¹⁶² Commending on “The superiority of the man over the woman,” based on this passage, Matthew Henry’s Commentary says: “Christ is at the head of mankind. In this high office he has a superior, God being his head. And as God is the head of Christ, and Christ the head of the whole human kind, so the man is the head of the two sexes: and the woman should be in subjection and not usurp the man’s place.”¹⁶³ Earl Radmacher, Ron Allen, and H. Wayne House also comment: “The relationship between men and women does not involve inferiority, for, in the parallel clause, Christ is not inferior to God the Father. Just as Christ and God are equally divine, men and women are equal beings. But as Jesus and the Father have different roles in the plan of salvation, so men and women are given different roles.”¹⁶⁴

The established principle in African society that men are the leaders both at home and in the community has not been the subject of discussion in the sources quoted. African men have leadership authority over their wives and children and provide them with leadership and direction. The fact that this male role has been abused and turned into a platform for discrimination against women in African society is regrettable. This is not to say that all African men dominate or abuse their wives. There are many African men who appropriately lead their wives and children and provide them with needed authority and wisdom, just as the Bible states above. Gender inequality or discrimination in Africa,

¹⁶² 1 Cor. 11:3:

¹⁶³ *Matthew Henry’s Commentary: In One Volume*, ed. Rev. Leslie F. Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961).

¹⁶⁴ Earl Radmacher, Ron Allen, and H. Wayne House, *Compact Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004).

hence, is a misinformed cultural attitude that thrives on male chauvinism and suppression of women and must be rejected. Margrethe Silberschmidt rightly observes:

Contemporary and normative concepts of masculinity which most men strive to meet continue to be based on ancient beliefs which – in [the] face of the profound socio-economic change in this century - cannot be legitimized today. They are ‘impractical’ and ‘out of tune’ definitions of masculinity. If these beliefs continue to persist, this reflects a stubborn rigidity of definitions that defies social change. And as long as men conform to such hegemonic masculine values and behaviours their own health is at stake. Attempts to underscore women’s empowerment may be futile, and women are left in an impossible situation with no possibility of negotiating safe sex - unless serious attempts are made to address men and their needs - on equal footing with those of women.¹⁶⁵

Parental Assertiveness

Africans have for centuries aggressively and authoritatively conveyed the society’s virtues and cultural tenets to their young. Mbiti says that “the children are introduced gradually to the physical, economic, social and religious lives of their families” since “without them the concept of the family would grind to a halt” because for the Africans “the family includes children, parents, cousins and so on.”¹⁶⁶ Children in Africa, therefore, until acquiring the ages of maturity, are primarily humble recipients of cultural teachings and parental guidance and discipline. Mbiti again explains:

In addition, and particularly in societies where there are no initiation rites, parents and other relatives gradually educate their children in marital affairs. Girls are taught how to prepare food, how to behave towards men, how to care for children, how to look after the husband and other domestic affairs. The boys are taught what most concerns men, like looking after cattle, behaving properly towards one’s in-laws, how to acquire wealth which one would give to the parents

¹⁶⁵Margrethe Silberschmidt, “Changing Gender Roles And Male Disempowerment In Rural And Urban East Africa: A Neglected Dimension in the Study of Sexual and Reproductive Behaviour in East Africa,” Paper prepared for the XXIV IUSSP General Population Conference, Salvador, Brazil, 18-24 August 2001, 12, http://www.engagingmen.net/files/resources/2010/RaymondBrandes/Changing_gender_roles_and_male_disempowerment.pdf [accessed August 29, 2012].

¹⁶⁶ Mbiti, *IAR*, 115.

of a girl as a part of the engagement and marriage contract, and how to be responsible as the 'head' of the family.¹⁶⁷

The age of maturity for African children, in addition, is not determined in accordance with the children's numerical ages but on the basis of their passage through the cultural rituals and rites of movement from childhood to adulthood. Someone who advances in years without fulfilling the cultural standards for maturity is despised and considered to still be a "child." In African society, hence, some people "mature early" in their ages while others are "late in maturing." Another aspect that makes the maturing process so important is that of the children's responsibility to take the place of their parents in the home and society as well as take care of their aging parents. Mbiti narrates:

At home there are duties which the children are expected to do as their share in the life of the family. They are taught obedience and respect toward their parents and other older people. They help in the work around the house and in the fields, in looking after cattle, fishing and hunting, building houses, going on errands, learning the trade or skills of their parents, and in many other ways. As they grow older they gradually acquire a different social status and their responsibilities increase, so that they take a greater share in the life of the family. When the parents become old and weak it is the duty of the children especially the heirs or sons, to look after the parents and the affairs of the family. Finally when the parents die it is the duty of their surviving children to bury them properly, to remember them, to look after their graves. . . .¹⁶⁸

In the process of leading their children on the journey to maturity, Africans also find it necessary to discipline their children (e.g. through spanking). In much of Africa "sensible smacking in the rear is allowed as long as it is not frequent, does not physically bruise, break the bones or hurt the child emotionally."¹⁶⁹ Kilonzo takes it even further:

I remembered in kindergarten when an adult walked by, we had to standup, or as soon as the teacher walked into the classroom, we would all be on

¹⁶⁷ Mbiti, *ARP*, 135.

¹⁶⁸ Mbiti, *IAR*, 114.

¹⁶⁹ Tiony, 99.

our feet, chorusing, “Good morning, Mrs. Obudho!” The school uniform was mandatory, and the teachers were allowed to discipline kids at school; no one referred to discipline then as abuse.

This modern day thing of kids who are so disrespectful to parents, teachers, and themselves is something I did not see as a youngster, and it is very troubling. We did not call the police when spanked, and spanking in my household meant either your hands or butt was hit once to twice using a relatively thin stick that left no marks or scars. If someone was disciplining me and not abusing me, be it a parent or an administrator, calling 999 in Kenya was unnecessary.¹⁷⁰

The discipline and enculturation of children discussed in the sources quoted, therefore, are not to be confused with reported cases of child abuse. Cases of brutality and violence against children in African society, especially the misuse of spanking and inconsiderate use of corporal punishment, are highly regrettable and unacceptable. The Kenya chapter of the *African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect* (ANPPCAN), for instance, says on its website:

The Ministry of Education decided to ban corporal punishment with the realization that corporal punishment was being indiscriminately applied in schools and children were continuously suffering injuries and even death in some instances at the hands of teachers. Apart from physical injury, the Ministry recognizes that this kind of punishment had overall negative effects on children and adversely affected not only their academic performance, but also their psychological well being. Furthermore, Kenya is a signatory to the UNCRC, the ACWRC and passed the Children Act, all of which require that the child be protected, treated with humanity and respect for their inherent dignity.¹⁷¹

African traditional discipline of children was not malicious but calculated to mold rather than harm the child. Assured Angel protests: “The debate rages on about what constitutes abuse and whether parents should be allowed to smack their children. There have been incidents where kids have called the police when smacked by their parents.

¹⁷⁰ Kilonzo, 57.

¹⁷¹ ANPPCAN, “Capacity Building Programme for Key Stakeholders Towards the Elimination of Corporal Punishment and Adoption of Positive Discipline Methods,” http://www.anppcankenya.co.ke/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=65&Itemid=65 [accessed August 29, 2012].

Although many people may say that there is no difference between abuse and discipline, I believe there is a line and I will tell you why drawing on my own experience.”¹⁷² Angel then continues, first to appreciate the strict discipline she received from her parents through caning and then posts the following article, headed, “Discipline in an African household - a child's perspective,” in which she says:

When I was little, I was quite the brat. I would start arguments, scream blue murder and [terrorize] my younger siblings just because I was the eldest and I could. As a result, I saw the bitter end of the “rod of discipline” more often than I should.... If you asked me if I was subject to some strong discipline, I would say yes. If you asked me if I received the odd smack or caning, I would say yes. Was it deserved? Definitely. Did it mean that I was abused or suffered violence at home? The answer is a categorical no. So what is the difference between discipline and abuse? Where do you draw the line between correction and violence? Having the Bible as a reference makes this distinction easier. As well as the verses listed below, the key verse that is taken into consideration is in Job 5 v17 where it says “*Blessed is the man who God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.*” As it says later on in Hebrews 12 v9-11 . . . “*Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*” The Bible is a foundation many African families use.¹⁷³

Cultural Paradigm Shifts: Cultural Encounters by Kenyan Immigrant Couples in the United States

Available literature affirms that because of the vast differences between the cultures of Kenya and the United States, Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States encounter cultural paradigm shifts and consequent marital problems on entering the

¹⁷² Assured Angel, “Discipline vs Abuse - an African Child's Perspective,” Wikinut, <http://family.wikinut.com/Discipline-vs-Abuse-an-African-child-s-perspective/dalg-ly4/> [accessed August 30, 2012].

¹⁷³ Ibid.

country. This section will utilize literary information on three major areas in which the immigrants encounter cultural paradigm shifts, namely, changed gender roles, unfavorable economic conditions, and diminished parental assertiveness.

Changed Gender Roles

Changes in gender roles and relationships rank highly among the key stressors encountered by Kenyan immigrant couples upon settling in the United States. The couples soon begin to realize that gender roles in the United States are very different from those back in their home country. Yoku Shaw-Taylor and Steven A. Tuch explain:

Among African immigrants in the United States who are married, family conflicts are noted as one of the impediments to their adjustment. Family problems among African immigrants can arise due to attempts to retain premigration ideas of gender roles and family functioning. A married African couple residing in the United States may find it difficult to function in an environment different from the one they were accustomed to in their home country, where African conjugal families, unlike Western nuclear families, are not structural and spatial isolates (Sudarkasa, 2004).¹⁷⁴

Shaw-Taylor and Tuch continue to say: “Also, immigrant couples must submit to the transformation of gendered domestic roles, enhancing the role of women and their capacity to participate as equals in household decision making after immigration (Pedraza 1991; Gabaccia 1994; Gold 1989). Ultimately, immigrant couples recreate or modify their traditional roles to participate fully in the American social milieu.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Yoku Shaw-Taylor and Steven A. Tuch, eds., *The Other African Americans: Contemporary and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 110. In Google Books http://books.google.com/books?id=gVY7Y1b0iXYC&pg=PA110&lpg=PA110&dq=Changed+gender+roles+among+african++immigrants&source=bl&ots=1woDTTfpl_&sig=iWL7wLjTzCqaSsXcKXcDPxaUe3E&hl=en&sa=X&ei=sRA9UNrXLMONygG6-4DIAQ&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Changed%20gender%20roles%20among%20african%20%20immigrants&f=false [accessed August 28, 2012].

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Male dominance over the woman, therefore, becomes irrelevant and impracticable once the couple settles in United States. Discussing, “changes in gender roles,” in his PhD dissertation, Paul Okeyo Orieny reports that “changes in norms, roles, and values within the cultural and family groups create certain ambiguity and fluidity in some immigrant families which were previously hierarchical and structured (Detzner, 2004).”¹⁷⁶ This, Arthur affirms, happens as “the women redefine their roles to assert a measure of autonomy and independence from their husbands.” Further, “the dominance of husbands and brothers is considerably diminished” and “the majority of the women no longer allow their husbands to claim the rights of dominance that the patriarchal system confers on males in Africa,”¹⁷⁷ Arthur again observes:

In the end, decisions about the resolution and reconciliation of work and family relationships are made from the position of financial independence that the women have achieved in the United States. In their relationships with their spouses, the women seek personal development and autonomy to deal with the uncertainties of life in a foreign society. The majority of them recognize that they no longer have to accept the pressures and burdens placed on them by patriarchal structures. An emerging pattern among the women is a willingness to experiment with alternate lifestyles that complement African culture. In this way, the women are able to maintain their African identities and cultures and at the same time embrace new roles and lifestyle. The power and authority in decision-making once held by their husbands have considerably diminished in the United States.¹⁷⁸

This new development in gender roles and relationships, however, does not augur well with a cross-section of African male immigrants in the United States. In the first place, it causes many men, having for many years been the key decision makers in their

¹⁷⁶ Paul Okeyo Orieny, “African Immigrants Stressful Marital and Family Experiences.” PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2008, 70. In Google Books, http://books.google.com/books/about/African_Immigrants_Stressful_Marital_and.html?id=W4_CdMwm-tsC [accessed August 23, 2012].

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁷⁸ Arthur, 122.

houses and controlled their wives while they lived with them back in Africa, to begin to feel humiliated and provoked to take self-defensive postures against them. Goyan and Sucher observe that “in many homes friction between couples is common when women no longer agree to be subservient to their husbands.”¹⁷⁹ Arthur further laments:

Some men, however, try to retain this dominance through physical and psychological abuse. Although the extent of this problem is difficult to assess, some of the women I interviewed, especially well-educated, financially secure women, were willing to volunteer information about their relationship with a current or former spouse. From the perspectives of the women, the strain resulting from changing gender roles is the root cause of spousal abuse.¹⁸⁰

According to Arthur, therefore, some African immigrant men apparently find it difficult to adjust to this paradigm shift in gender roles whereby they can no longer exercise dominance over the women. They apparently become uncomfortable with the idea of their wives attaining such amounts of freedom in the home. Arthur continues:

According to one female immigrant residing in Washington, D.C., “Some of the African men cannot deal with African women who become too Americanized. The men become insecure when you get a good job and start earning some money. They want you to stay at home and become a housewife. If you challenge them, they threaten you with divorce and remind you that they made it possible for you to come to America.”¹⁸¹

It is, however, not easy in the United States for a man to continually abuse his wife and get away with it unless she lets him. Tiony says: “Domestic violence is taken seriously and a lot of men are in trouble for crossing the line. Being abused does not necessarily mean a physical fight, but a verbal and emotional argument can lead to people

¹⁷⁹ Goyan and Sucher, 210.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

¹⁸¹ Arthur, 113.

snapping and doing what was once unthinkable.”¹⁸² Discussing the abuses that many African immigrant wives are at times subjected to by their husbands, Arthur narrates:

An immigrant woman living in the Atlanta metropolitan area was faced with a similar situation. Her ex-husband was finishing his doctorate when he came home to Nigeria and they got married. After completing his studies, he secured a job and green card. He sponsored his wife to come to the United States. They had two children. Initially, the husband was supportive and encouraged his wife to go back to school. A few weeks before she was due to earn her nursing diploma, however, he started abusing her and the children on the grounds that her education was wasteful and incompatible with her status as wife and mother. On two occasions, he violently attacked his wife, who had to be hospitalized. A neighbor called the police and reported both incidents. Six months later, the woman filed for divorce and custody of the two children. For other women, male abuse includes threats of deportation, monitoring of phone calls, cancellation of joint banking accounts, restriction of contacts with other women, and even confiscation of passports and other travel documents.¹⁸³

On the other hand, however, literary sources indicate that once African women settle in the United States and gain economic and domestic freedom and independence, they turn against their husbands and either become adulterous or divorce them. On settling in the United States, African immigrant women realize that the African gender relations that are characterized by male chauvinism and dominance over the woman are irrelevant in the country. Moses O. Biney reports from his interviews of immigrant church members on gender role changes, one of the members explaining:

One thing I have noticed is that when a husband and wife come to the United States the wife gets a job first. In many cases the women even get better paid jobs. This often reverses the power dynamics in the marriage. The African man wants to maintain the leadership position as the breadwinner and head of the family but often, since the woman may be the breadwinner or contributing substantially to the family budget, she demands greater say in the final decisions of the family than she had before. This often creates problems in the marriages. I have seen

¹⁸² Tiony, 129.

¹⁸³ Arthur, 113.

beautiful Christian couples whose marriages have almost ended in divorce after just six months of being in the United States.¹⁸⁴

Some of the immigrant women then become elated as they begin to enjoy, some for the first time, equality with men in society and in the house and the protection of women's rights, thanks to American laws. They then take advantage of these newly found freedoms available to them in the United States to even defraud their husbands of houses, automobiles, and other property. The *allAfrica* website posts an article by Antony Karanja in Dallas, Texas, on February 10, 2012, originally published by the online edition of Kenya's *Daily Nation*, in which Karanja reports a number of incidents involving Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. Karanja says that Kenyan men "feel that some women often misuse the protections offered to them by these laws. Some feel that women use these laws to harass them as well as settle old or new scores."¹⁸⁵

Following is one of the stories in Karanja's article:

This is the story of Kibet, a Kenyan living in Massachusetts in the United States, but also the story of many a male compatriot.

Married for 11 years, he accuses wife, Judy, of throwing him out of their matrimonial home after she started dating someone else.

Kibet says it all began as a row over the remittance of money to his family back home, which his wife was opposed to.

She accused him of being more supportive of his family back home than his wife and their two children, an accusation which Kibet denies.

One day during an argument, she hit him and Kibet grabbed her hands to protect himself. His wife started screaming and when he released her, she called the police. When the police arrived at their home, his wife insisted that she feared for her life as he had tried to kill her, though Kibet maintained he was merely trying to protect himself.

¹⁸⁴ Moses O. Biney, *From Africa to America: Religion and Adaptation Among Ghanaian Immigrants in New York* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011), 128.

¹⁸⁵ Antony Karanja, "Rude Shock for Local Men Facing Strong U.S. Family Law," *Daily Nation on the Web* on February 10, 2012, *allAfrica*, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201202120085.html> [accessed August 30, 2012].

The police advised Kibet to move from the home for a while until they sorted themselves out. He then moved in with his brother.

Judy then filed for divorce in April last year, claiming that she could not continue living in an "abusive marriage." Kibet denied the abuse accusation and maintained that at no time had he assaulted her and that the incident in question was a case of self-defence.

Kibet was then slapped with child support for his two children as well as alimony, which is supposed to restore his former wife to the financial position she enjoyed during their marriage.

That was not all: His wife was also awarded their matrimonial home.¹⁸⁶

It is important to also note at this point, however, that the actions of many of the Kenyan immigrant women could be triggered by long held bitterness resulting from mistreatment by their chauvinistic husbands while the couple was back in their home country. Concluding this story Karanja reports:

According to Judy, however, their marriage started getting abusive in 2005. She says she suffered emotionally as Kibet often disregarded her in matters concerning family finances. "He wanted everything his way," Judy says. "It was either his way or the highway."

Judy insisted that she did not have a problem with him sending money back home, but she resented the fact that she would always have to beg for certain basic needs to be met at home.

"I have never seen a man slash his wife's grocery list, marking some items as unnecessary while he affords to send money home," she lamented. "I just felt neglected and not important enough."

Judy, however, stands by her claim that Kibet abused her and used words that intimidated her.

"Trust me when I tell you he humiliated me in front of the children as if I was a nanny," she continued. "I had been in that marriage for 10 years too long."¹⁸⁷

Taking sides with either Kibet or Judy may not only be uncalled for but could prove to be difficult. In his article Karanja reports conflicting views from Kenyan immigrant couples between the men and the women. From the women he says that "out

¹⁸⁶ Karanja.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

of the 24 Kenyan women interviewed for this story, 21 of them felt that there was some bias in the American law towards women, but that it is necessary to protect them from men,” while the rest felt that “there was unnecessary bias.” Karanja reports one woman to say that “the men ‘feel like they're losing control of who they are, and their families’ and ‘it's threatening when someone has more control and more power.’”¹⁸⁸

On the other hand Karanja says, “Kenyan men, however, feel that some women often misuse the protections offered to them by these laws. Some feel that women use these laws to harass them as well as settle old or new scores.”¹⁸⁹ He notes that “all 26 Kenyan men across the US interviewed felt that the law is biased towards women and that men often get a raw deal, but observes that “as some Kenyan men continue to frown at the ‘biased’ laws, women in the interview pool counter by saying that only men who are abusive find these laws biased.”¹⁹⁰ To the women, hence, “Kenyan men should understand that the days of oppressing women are over and they should shape up.”¹⁹¹

Judy’s sentiments above, nevertheless, are all too familiar and paint a picture that is very similar to that in Karanja’s next story as well as in many other incidents involving Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. Karanja reports:

In a tragic incident in October 2010, Justus Kebabe, a Kenyan immigrant, snapped and took the lives of his wife, Bilha Omare and their two children: son Kinley Ogendi and daughter Ivyn Ogendi, in Minnesota.

During subsequent investigations, it was revealed that Kebabe was abusing Ms Omare while the couple lived in Kenya.

¹⁸⁸ Karanja.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

When they got to the US, the abuse continued and at one time the police were called in.

Kebabe was convicted of the crime and sentenced to supervised probation.

After the incident, Kebabe was bitter with Omare, who he blamed for his unemployment woes saying that if she had not reported him, he would have been holding a job.

In the US, if a pre-employment background check on an applicant reveals prior convictions of any nature, it is difficult to find employment even after rehabilitation.

An already violent relationship boiled over with Kebabe's fears his wife would abandon the marriage once she graduated, as well as his suspicions she was cheating on him.

A family friend claims he was jealous of his wife who was working and was planning to graduate in two months' from a nursing programme.¹⁹²

Economic and domestic independence for the African immigrant woman, hence, in many cases becomes a curse rather than a blessing. Once she realizes that her husband no longer has power over her, unlike what had been the case back in the home country, she decides to do what she wants with her money, time, and many times even her body. To the Kenyan immigrant wife in the US, therefore, her husband's authority, much more his male dominance, over her has been neutered by the American laws and culture. Biney reports yet another story, in this case involving a couple from Ghana that he "heard":

Mr. Z. came to the United States in 1986. In two years he succeeded in getting a green card. Five years later, his wife and ten-year old son joined him. They lived together peacefully for the first year. By the second year the wife had found a job at a shop and was therefore earning some income. Then began the trouble! She would spend all that she earned on shoes, dresses, bags, and so on. This became a source of worry for Mr. Z. and in fact a source of constant conflict between the couple. While Mr. Z wanted her to help pay the bills, she argued that she didn't have to. Mr. Z. was the man, according to her, and had to provide for the family as he did when they were in Ghana. Several attempts to get her to understand that life in America was different and that it would take two incomes for them to survive, did not work. In addition to this, Mrs. Z began a romantic relationship with another man. She would from time to time leave home to be with this person

¹⁹² Karanja.

when the husband had gone to work. Eventually she asked for a divorce and the marriage was dissolved.¹⁹³

Such are some of the woes that Kenyan immigrant couples encounter on settling in the United States. Away from the African cultural tenets that served as restrainers to them while they were in Kenya, the couples find themselves overwhelmed by the new freedoms and opportunities in the new land. The sudden changes in gender roles and relationships, hence, easily plunge the couples into deep pits of marital disagreements and eventual breakdown, as these literary sources have testified.

Unfavorable Economic Conditions

Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States also encounter cultural conflicts in the area of unfavorable work conditions that lead to economic hardships and financial insecurity. Despite the immigrants' initial excitement and hope on immigrating to the United States, the lack of employment, high costs of housing, and what Kanya calls "unfamiliarity with American society" contribute to the immigrants' economic difficulties and produce "depression and insecurity." As Kanya observes:

The relocation involved in immigration typically produces depression and insecurity along with excitement and hope.... Immigrants must adjust both attitudinally and behaviorally to a new culture and environment.... They often have difficulty locating housing and jobs, and poverty and unfamiliarity with American society sometimes leaves them vulnerable to crime.¹⁹⁴

This problem becomes more pronounced especially where immigration has also resulted in the loss of financial status and prestige. Kanya says that "although some

¹⁹³ Biney, 126.

¹⁹⁴ Hugo Kanya, "African Immigrant Families," in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, ed. Monica McGoldrick, Joseph Giordano, and Nydia Garcia-Preto (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 104. [http://books.google.com/books?id=6A11kB_6GyMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage &q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=6A11kB_6GyMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false) [accessed August 30, 2012].

Africans have come to the United States for economic and educational reasons, more have had to flee their homelands, often against their will and under horrific conditions,” and notes that, “when they arrive, they may find that the professional status that assured them economic stability in their home countries is not valued here.”¹⁹⁵ As Orieny says: “Many well educated immigrants face disappointments when their degrees or work experience are not recognized. They end up taking low-paying and less-skilled jobs in parking lots, as taxi cab drivers, and at fast food restaurants, and lose their social status and self-esteem as a result (Arthur, 200; Lee & Westwood, 1996).”¹⁹⁶

This amount of loss of self-esteem affects immigrant couples in very profound ways, and they do not take it lightly. Orieny continues to report that “such a drop in status due to immigration is experienced by immigrants as a significant loss of the professional identity and prestige to which they were previously accustomed (Ritsner, et al., 2000; Suarez-Orozco, 200).”¹⁹⁷ Again, discussing, “Narratives of Privilege,” Orieny reports:

Many of these families tell stories of privileged lives in Africa, lives of high regard in the society and of upper economic class. For instance, Patrick, a Tanzanian man, stated that both he and his wife were employed professionals living in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and that their household was aided by a cook, wash girl, and laundress. They enjoyed a privileged social position. He was an executive in a multinational company and his wife was an administrative secretary in a top government office. All of these accomplishments were destroyed through the process of immigration, and contributed to their struggle in the new context.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Kanya, 103.

¹⁹⁶ Orieny, 28.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 67-68.

The immigrants find that these privileges are unavailable and unaffordable in the United States since the country's house workers, cooks, drivers, etc., are all very costly. The immigrants, hence, have to, for instance, mow their own lawn, clean their own house, and wash their dishes and take care of their laundry. They have to drive themselves around and take care of the condition and cleanliness of their cars, all of which are services that were both available and affordable back in their home countries.

Then there is the issue of working schedules that affect an immigrant couple's family life. Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States often discover that despite living in the same house they are unable, as Kanya reports one Kenyan family to say, to "afford time together." He reports:

A family from Kenya spent several sessions discussing difficulties in providing opportunities for their children to use their native language because "life is so hectic between our four jobs that we cannot afford time together." The prolonged separation of family members also can create gaps in the shared family history and can make family members strangers to each other, which leads to major strains. Most frightening of all for those who have arrived illegally is the fear of deportation.¹⁹⁹

Working schedules in the United States are different from those in Kenya. Kenyan government departments and agencies as well as most other employers in Kenya adhere to an 8-hour work schedule, Monday to Friday, and 5 hours on Saturday, with a limited number of exceptions due to the demands of certain types of jobs.²⁰⁰

On the contrary, as Terence M. McMenamin observes, although "the traditional work schedule for an American employee has long been 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday admittedly through Friday," available data reveals that most employers in the US have

¹⁹⁹ Kanya, 103.

²⁰⁰ People's Parliament/Bunge la Mwananchi, National Labour Law Profile in Kenya, "Working Time and Rest Time." <http://www.peoples-parliament.org/spip.php?article32> [accessed August 23, 2012].

departed from the standard working schedules and resorted to “the use of alternate shifts and flexible work schedules” that are “often determined by the demands of the industry, rather than by workers’ preferences.”²⁰¹ Harriet B. Presser and Brian W. Ward reveal:

High percentages of Americans work nonstandard schedules over the course of their worklife; almost 90 percent of those ages 14 to 18 in 1979 had at least one such experience by age 39, with some marked differences by gender, race or ethnicity, and education.

Large numbers of Americans work nonstandard schedules. Cross-sectional data reveal that one-fifth of all employed Americans work mostly in the evening, at night, or on a rotating shift. Moreover, one-third of all dual-earner couples with children include at least one spouse working one of these shifts. Such widespread employment at nonstandard times is a significant social phenomenon, with important implications for the health and well-being of individuals and their families and for the implementation of social policies. Yet we know so little about this phenomenon. Much attention has been paid to the *number* of hours Americans work, but the issue of *which* hours Americans work has generally gone unnoticed by researchers and policymakers alike. At present, we cannot answer the simple, but important, question of the extent to which Americans work nonstandard schedules over the course of their working lives.²⁰²

The immigrants, in addition, have multiple financial responsibilities for which they need to earn every single cent they can. Many of the immigrants not only cater to their own needs but have to carry the burden of some of their relatives who are living in the United States without sufficient immigration documents. Kamya observes that due to economic hardships family members back home may find it difficult to join their folks in the United States and notes that “families may have to shoulder the burden of bringing

²⁰¹ Terence M. McMenamin, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “A Time to Work: Recent Trends in Shift Work and Flexible Schedules,” <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2007/12/art1full.pdf> [accessed August 23, 2012].

²⁰² Harriet B. Presser and Brian W. Ward, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review Online, “Nonstandard Work Schedules Over the Life Course: A First Look,” <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2011/07/art1exc.htm> [accessed August 23, 2012].

others to this country, who, without appropriate immigration papers, fear deportation.”²⁰³

Such illegal immigrants face difficulties finding employment and have to depend on their immigrant relatives who are often determined to shoulder the burden of sustaining them financially once they are in the country. Kamyia continues to observe that these additional burdens involve the immigrants in long hours of work which may leave parents “little time or energy to pass on the cultural traditions, values, and rituals that traditionally have sustained African families in their homelands.”²⁰⁴

With such tight work schedules occupying them 24/7, the immigrant couples find no time not only for their children but also for each other. Many of the spouses may often go for days without seeing one another due to alternating day and night shifts. To those who have abandoned each other and their children because of being too busy in their work schedules, Voddie Baucham, a busy preacher, extends the following counsel:

As an itinerant preacher I make my living on the road. Hence traveling is not optional for me. There are, however, things I can do to balance out my life. Over the past five years I have traveled about ten to twelve days per month. I have an office at home. I participate fully in my children’s lives. I make a lot less money than I could. And I wouldn’t trade any of it. I have served on several church staffs throughout my years in ministry. However, in recent years I have only taken positions that would allow me to keep my family life balance. Most recently I served as a teaching pastor at a church in the Houston area. I was able to bring my gifts and abilities to bear in the life of the church, but my office was still at my house. In a few years my children will be gone, and I will be free to travel as much as I want. For now I have to realize that plenty of people can preach at events across the country that I choose not to add to my schedule, but no one can replace me as Bridget’s husband and Elijah and Trey and Jasmine’s dad. How dare I pour my life into equipping other families at the expense of my own!²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Kamyia, 103.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Voddie Baucham Jr., *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 162.

Working day and night and having no time for one another and for the children in order to make a living and help family members is a recipe for loss of the marriage and the children. It is not surprising then that many Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States experience marital problems and end up in divorce. Baucham continues to caution: “I can’t tell you what to do with your schedule. That is between you and God. I can, however, say that anything that causes you to sacrifice your family on the altar of prosperity is not of God. Ask the tough question; give honest answers; make hard choices. That’s the only way to walk in obedience in this area.”²⁰⁶

Despite their tedious labors, Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States still often experience profound economic hardships which limit the quality of life, housing, and ability to meet basic needs.²⁰⁷ As was discussed earlier, most of these hardships arise from unemployment, lack of locally acceptable training, high costs of living, or just the very fact of being strangers in America.

Economic hardships among immigrant families become even more profound when families have migrated to the United States leaving behind some close family members who need their help. Extended family members and friends may also exert pressure on them to send them financial help. Leigh Swigart observes: “Immigrants also stay in contact with their families at home by sending remittances or sums of money that they wire abroad using a number of different services. . . . Virtually all African immigrants send money home. Family members at home may depend on these sums for

²⁰⁶ Baucham Jr., 162-163.

²⁰⁷ Orieny, 27.

survival. . . . Remittances help immigrants remain an integral part of their relatives' daily lives though separated by thousands of miles."²⁰⁸

Difficult economic conditions often have adverse impact on marital and family relationships. Examples have been cited in this chapter, for instance, where spouses have disagreed over monies being sent back home to family members in Kenya as one spouse has felt the other was being unfair to the other's relatives (The Kenyan economy is still in its initial stages of development, and a majority of Kenyans find additional funding from their immigrant relatives in the United States to be helpful). In many cases, moreover, immigrants who have needed help have been relatives of one spouse, leaving the other spouse feeling that his or her partner was spending too much money on his or her own people. These and other issues cause much tension and problems between immigrant spouses. Worsening the problem is the fact that the immigrant couples are no longer enjoying the cultural shield of communal existence where family members would have offered them help in counsel, finances, or material things.

Diminished Parental Assertiveness

Another area in which Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States have experienced cultural dissonance, according to the literature on the subject, is that of child upbringing. Kenyan immigrant couples, due to fear that their children might learn American ways and forfeit their Kenyan cultural virtues, become apprehensive about their children's associations in the United States. Goyan and Sucher note that "many

²⁰⁸Leigh Swigart, *Extended Lives: The African Immigrant Experience in Philadelphia* (The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 2001), 6.

Kenyans worry about the loss of traditional values as their children adapt to life in America, and conflict between parents and children is common.”²⁰⁹ As Arthur explains:

African immigrant parents recognize potential problems in replicating African-based expectations in the United States. They can no longer rely on a collective system of socialization and social control. The unfamiliarity with the American cultural terrain makes women become extremely protective of their children, often shielding them from overexposure to American culture.²¹⁰

To the Kenyan immigrant couples, their fear as parents is not unwarranted. As Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco say: “Children of immigrants are likely to learn the rules of the game quickly and easily. These children are drawn into the dominant culture, whereas their parents inevitably struggle with ambivalence. While the parents actively support the acquisition of certain cultural competencies, they fight to ward off the corrupting influences of the new society.”²¹¹ This is because, as already revealed in other parts of this study, African cultural tenets are completely different from those of the US. Again, as Arthur observes, “their teenage children tend to adopt American cultural images and identities” which “can be seen in clothing styles, language, food, music, dating, and sexual behavior.”²¹² Margaret Wambui Njeru says in her PhD dissertation:

My findings led to my expected conclusions, that there were differences in the manner in which the parents and their children had adapted to their environments. While the parents tended to be rather conservative, clinging to their cultures in every way possible, the children were more relaxed and more

²⁰⁹ Goyan and Sucher, 210.

²¹⁰ Arthur, 113.

²¹¹ Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration: The Developing Child Series*, (President and Fellows of Harvard University, 2001), 89. In Google Books, http://books.google.com/books?id=PmypbDvvyA8C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&ad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed August 28, 2012].

²¹² Arthur, 113.

assimilative of the American culture. A generational difference between the two sets of people, that is the parents and their children, was therefore observed.²¹³

According to Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco: “Immigrant parents walk a tightrope; they encourage their children to develop the competencies necessary to function in the new culture, all the while maintaining the traditions and (in many cases) language of home. Hence, children are encouraged to learn English, but at the same time may be asked to keep the new language and cultural ways out of the home.”²¹⁴ As Arthur further notes “the parents stress the necessity of preserving their African heritage and culture among the second generation” because “they all believe that, in an increasingly diverse society like America, the adoption of an African ethnic role is vital for the cultural survival of their children.”²¹⁵

These experiences probably drive Kenyan immigrant families to live close to each other so that they can create mini-African communities for the sakes of their children, to replicate their homeland African communal set up. Arthur continues to say: “Length of stay in the United States does not seem to influence the social interactions of immigrant parents and their children. Irrespective of how long they have been living in the United States, immigrant families tend to confine their relationships and those of their children to other African immigrant families.”²¹⁶ Whatever the case may be, the immigrant parents are seriously concerned about the enculturation of their children. They eagerly expect

²¹³Margaret Wambui Njeru, “Raising Immigrant Kenyan Children in America: How Families Negotiate Academic and Cultural Issues.” PhD diss., University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, 2009, 177. In Google Books, <http://books.google.com/books?id=yXC3dLwKoYMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> [accessed August 28, 2012].

²¹⁴ Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, 89.

²¹⁵ Arthur, 113-114.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 114.

their new generation to inherit and maintain the homeland culture. However, Arthur also cautions the African immigrant parents:

Parental insistence that children adopt African roles and conform to the same expectations as their parents often leads to family schisms.

Immigrant parents strongly desire to preserve their African cultural and ethnic identity. But by restricting the cultural interactions their children have with non-African immigrant families, these parents are also limiting the world view of their children and alienating them.²¹⁷

The problem for the immigrant couples with respect to the upbringing of their children also gets further compounded by the fact that parents are legally restrained by American laws from disciplining their children by means of spanking which, as earlier discussed, is one of the most important traditional methods of disciplining children in Africa. Karanja explains:

Immigrant parents in the US find out that they can no longer punish their children by slapping or even whipping as they used to do in Kenya. These forms of punishment can easily be lumped into a form of child abuse. Children are known to report the cases to their school teachers as well as to the local police. School teachers are trained to look out for signs of child abuse and once a case is detected, they are required to report to school authorities, who may in turn contact the local authorities.

This could lead to serving jail time as well as losing custody of your children to the state authorities.²¹⁸

Tiony also notes that “smacking a child in the USA can land parents in jail.”²¹⁹

This is because in the US child abuse is defined to include “physical abuse (any injury that does not happen by accident, including excessive punishment), physical neglect (failure to provide food, shelter, medical care or supervision), sexual abuse, and

²¹⁷ Arthur, 114.

²¹⁸ Karanja.

²¹⁹ Tiony, 100.

emotional abuse (threats, withholding love, support or guidance).”²²⁰ Njeru reports from her interviews that when she had asked the parents what their experiences of raising children in a culture different from their own had been, one of them, named Ali, had said:

It is difficult to raise children – you raise them in a different culture from the one you grew in, so you confront new things all the time and it is not easy. I think the main challenge is cultural, because here you are in a community where you are almost not supposed to tell a child what to do. I remember in Kenya when we were in school, if you were expelled from school for doing something wrong, you could go home and get expelled from home by your parents, whereas here, the teachers are even afraid to send the children home because they are afraid of parents. Here, like I know a few cases where some African parents lost their children to the state because they punished them, only for the kids to be taken away. So discipline can be a problem but I personally haven’t had a problem with it. I mean, my kids are still young and I hope it will not be a problem.²²¹

Kenyan immigrant children also become participants in this cultural paradigm shift as they begin to realize that they are protected from their parents against the disciplinary method of spanking. According to Karanja:

Immigrant children also become increasingly aware of their freedoms as they integrate into the American school system.

As they interact with other children and teachers, they learn that they are protected from their parents against what is considered child abuse. Although article 53 of the Kenyan Constitution provides for protection against child abuse, enforcement of the same is inadequate, especially in rural areas.

Cultural norms may be seen as culprits as it may be difficult for a child to report abuse cases by their parents.²²²

²²⁰ Department of Homeland Security. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa Fact Sheet,” <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnnextoid=8707936ba657d210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=8a2f6d26d17df110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD> [accessed August 22, 2012].

²²¹ Njeru, 178.

²²² Karanja.

One other cause of concern for Kenyan immigrant couples in the US frequently mentioned is the rising level of societal permissiveness regarding sexual matters. African societies have always treated sexual issues with a lot of privacy and secrecy. Kenyan immigrant families in the US have, hence, been influenced adversely by behaviors that they have otherwise always considered unacceptable prior to settling in this country.

In Kenya, for instance, certain parts of the body, including the genitals, buttocks, and the woman's breasts, are not supposed to be seen, touched or exposed. This makes cloth-fashions, dressing modes and manners, and physical postures, very important factors in African society. John Mbiti writes:

Sexual organs are the gates of life. For many African peoples, the genitals and buttocks are the parts of the body most carefully covered; their lack of covering constitutes 'nakedness' in the eyes of the African... African people are very sensitive to any departure from the accepted norm concerning all aspects of sex.²²³

Sexual decency, therefore, is a matter of central importance in African societies. Irrespective of the fact that a large cross-section of the African peoples lived primarily half-naked until very recently in African history, the matter of sexual privacy is still taken very seriously. Current generations of Africans, furthermore, do not approve but regret the naked living of their ancestors. This observation by Mbiti, hence, was timely. The morals surrounding clothing fashions, dressing manners, and physical behaviors have admittedly deteriorated in African societies. In Kenya, for instance, there is increased social sanctioning of half-nakedness in the manner in which people dress themselves and of practices such as pornography, sexy movies, and sexy dances. This has been caused primarily by the increased influence of the TV, Internet, and other media upon Kenyans.

²²³ Mbiti, *ARP*, 146.

Despite this amount of moral deterioration, certain behaviors, activities, and practices, such as homosexuality and abortion, are still considered to be social taboos. Concerning homosexuality, persons that have been attracted to members of their own sex have always existed in African society but, as Rowland 'jide Macauley, a self-confessed gay minister and activist of African descent admits: "Gay culture" virtually does not exist from an African point of view. The subject of homosexuality is a huge taboo. Many Africans are in same-sex relationships but very few will be open about their sexuality to their families."²²⁴ Homosexuality, hence, is frowned upon in African society. Kilonzo affirms: "The gays or lesbians in the villages are unknown; and there is zero tolerance for two women holding hands or two men kissing in public in the villages. It is not even an issue that politicians have to deal with in their campaigns to win an election."²²⁵ Similarly, the Kenyan constitution stipulates concerning marriage that "every adult has the right to marry a person of the opposite sex, based on the free consent of the parties"²²⁶ while, with respect to abortion, the Kenyan constitution again makes it clear:

- (1) Every person has the right to life.
- (2) The life of a person begins at conception.
- (3) A person shall not be deprived of life intentionally, except to the extent authorised by this Constitution or other written law.
- (4) Abortion is not permitted unless, in the opinion of a trained health professional, there is need for emergency treatment, or the life or health of the mother is in danger, or if permitted by any other written law.²²⁷

²²⁴ Rowland 'jide Macauley, "Africa and Homosexuality," AGW: A Globe of Witnesses, <http://www.thewitness.org/agw/macauley121604.html> [accessed August 23, 2012].

²²⁵ Kilonzo, 77.

²²⁶ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 4, part 2, sec. 26. [accessed August 23, 2012].

²²⁷The Constitution of Kenya, chap.4, part 2, sec. 45, clause 2 [accessed August 23, 2012].

Certain behaviors also, like extreme half-nakedness, kissing, or petting are all matters African peoples have traditionally confined to privacy and not expected them to be exposed to the eyes of the public. Even African couples do not practice their sexual or romantic affections in public in activities like kissing or caressing one another. Kanya observes that “public displays of affection are uncommon among African couples; instead, humor is often used to communicate such emotions.”²²⁸ As Betty Coplan notes:

The question of sex is a vexed one in most African countries because it is intensely private. I have learned to admire and respect the way in which physical contact between the sexes in public is absolutely taboo. In the West, you find young people virtually making love before your very eyes, blissfully unaware of your existence. It has always made me feel very uncomfortable, as if I’m inadvertently peeping through someone’s key hole!²²⁹

Africans do not freely discuss sexual matters in public. Sexual discussions are confined to groups of peers or age mates away from children and respected members of the community like parents, elders, and other leaders. Other cases are adult men teaching young boys and adult women the young girls concerning adulthood. Tiony observes that although in some cases the men and women may talk about sex to the young boys and girls and sex education is provided in some schools, “some parents still find it very uncomfortable to discuss the subject with their children.”²³⁰

On the other hand, in the United States, the practices of homosexuality and abortion have become increasingly more accepted by American society, including the church, wherein some denominations have ordained gay ministers. Sex education is also provided to all ages and more and more people view sexual talk as normal. As Tiony

²²⁸ Kanya, 110.

²²⁹ Betty Coplan, “Sex and Education,” *School Digest 10* (May August 2000): 36.

²³⁰ Tiony, 56-57.

further notes, “In the USA, sex education is an open subject that most parents address with no shame. The entertainment industry has taught some of these kids about sex both in a positive and negative way and it’s up to them to choose the road to follow.”²³¹

This study clearly upholds heterosexual marriage and the sanctity of life. However, the intended purpose in quoting these sources is not necessarily to dwell on the pros and cons of the subjects in question but to bring out the cultural differences between Kenya as an African country and the United States as a Western country. In cases where one spouse becomes a convert to societal permissiveness while the other does not, marital arguments erupt. Isolated from relatives and friends who, back home in Kenya, would have questioned any strange behaviors noticed, some immigrant spouses drift into cultural habits that are unacceptable in Kenya.

Tension rises, hence, where one spouse accepts and adopts the new American ways for the children whereas the other does not. Biney reports, for instance: “I observed that the women adapted more quickly to American sociocultural life than their male counterparts did and were therefore faster at effecting cultural change.”²³² Arthur also notes, “An emerging pattern among the women is a willingness to experiment with alternate lifestyles that complement African culture. In this way, the women are able to maintain their African identities and cultures and at the same time embrace new roles and lifestyles.”²³³

²³¹ Tiony, 57.

²³² Biney, 130.

²³³ Arthur, 122.

With respect to the male parents, Arthur observes: “Changes in gender roles are also affecting the lives of the immigrant children, who are becoming Americanized. In the multiple roles that they play at home and in public, these children are under extreme pressure from parents, especially from fathers, to pattern their lives after African cultural expectations and role models.”²³⁴ It is however not a general pattern that the women are culturally liberal and are the ones who make cultural adjustments faster than the men nor that the men are always slow in accepting the new culture. Without doubt in some cases it is the man who is culturally liberal and the woman the conservative one. It makes no difference which parent has abandoned African ways and adopted American ways because the impact will be the same in either case.

In such complex developments and situations affecting the couple and their children, tension and disagreements between the immigrant spouses should be expected. Some causes of strife, for example, may be differences of opinion between the spouses on how best to bring up the children in the new culture; differences caused by one parent taking sides with all or some of the children; or problems between the children and one of the spouses. In any family, let alone immigrant families who have to grapple with cross-cultural issues, where the two parents harbor conflicting aspirations for themselves and their children, disharmony in the marriage will inevitably occur. Child rearing requires unity between the two parents.

²³⁴ Arthur, 113.

**Related Theological Viewpoints:
Marriage and Divorce Evaluated from a Biblical Perspective**

Chapter Two discussed the permanence and sanctity of marriage as a divine institution as well as highlighted the harmfulness of marital breakdown. This section assembles literary witnesses to these facts by highlighting, where available, information that (1) reaffirms that the marriage union is the norm, (2) points out that marital breakdown is unfortunate, and (3) recommends marital resilience as indispensable.

Marital Union is the Norm

According to most sources, heterosexual marriage is the norm for human civilization. Basing his explanation on Jesus' words, "from the beginning it was not so," Joseph S. Exell points to the significance of marriage being as old as creation. Commenting on what he calls, "The Rule of Reformation," and citing the words that Jesus used in answer to the query from the Pharisees regarding marriage, Exell explains:

"From the beginning it was not so." Which rule, if we apply unto the scope of this text, as it stands in relation unto the context, we shall have more to say for it than for most constitutions, Divine or human. For that of marriage is almost as old as Nature. There was no sooner one man, but God divided him into two; and then no sooner were there two, but he united them into one. This is that sacred institution which was made with mankind in a state of innocence; the very ground and foundation of all, both sacred and civil, government.²³⁵

Exell's observation is crucial to understanding marriage as the norm for humanity. According to Genesis 1:26, the man and the woman were both created on the same day. The details in the second chapter of Genesis therefore do not represent a long lapse of time before Eve was created. Adam therefore never lived even a whole day without Eve. This means that from the very beginning the human race has never had any other form of

²³⁵ Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator*, "Matthew" (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 418.

existence apart from male and female. To Exell therefore, Jesus, by pointing back to the very beginning of human creation affirms that the norm for the human race is marriage. Divorce and single life are the rare exceptions. For, if man is intrinsically *male and female* by creation, it only makes sense that *male and female* should be his normal form of existence. Moreover, the very fact that marriage is as old as mankind and for that reason older than man's sin, points to marriage being the norm for humanity.

Similarly, the very fact that God divided the man into two and then pronounced the two back into oneness points us to the indissolubility of marriage. This also makes the sacred nativity of marriage, rather than the negative effects following the breakdown of any marriage, an even stronger reason for the ignobility of divorce. Marriage, hence, is the norm, and single life, for any reason, the exception. This may also be clearly seen in the fact that both divorce and genuine celibacy require special consideration by God.²³⁶

Common attitudes toward marriage appear to imply that marriage is not necessarily essential to the existence of society but just something we can do without and go about our businesses. Exell's explanation reveals that these notions are all misconceived. The truth is that human society inherently needs marriage for its eligibility and relevancy. An illustration of this point in human civilization is the condition of marriage in the United States. Despite statistics that indicate that divorce rates are rising in the country, the Barna Group announces:

Most Americans get married at some point in their life: just one out of five adults (22%) has never been married. Among those who have said their wedding vows, one out of three have been divorced at least once.

²³⁶ Matt. 5:32 and 1 Cor. 7:6.

Marriage Is the Norm

In addition to finding that four out of every five adults (78%) have been married at least once, the Barna study revealed that an even higher proportion of born again Christians (84%) tie the knot. That eclipses the proportion among people aligned with non-Christian faiths (74%) and among atheists and agnostics (65%).²³⁷

Commenting on this report, the *Concerned Women for America* website says: “A new study from The Barna Group debunks the often-stated ‘fact’ that half of all marriages end in divorce. New figures show that marriage is the norm for our society with only one out of five people never marrying and one out of three experiencing divorce.”²³⁸

On his part, Derek Prince likens marriage to a covenant in which God is one of the parties involved. Every covenant involves stakeholders. To Prince, hence, God is a stakeholder in the marriage covenant. Discussing, “Jesus’ Standard of Marriage,” in the first chapter of his book, *The Marriage Covenant*, Prince illustrates marriage using the following words from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:

9 Two *are* better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.
 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.
 But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls,
 For *he has* no one to help him up.
 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm;
 But how can one be warm *alone*?
 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.
 And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Prince then says: “But Solomon’s fourth picture – the ‘cord of three strands’ – illustrates marriage as it was conceived at creation, a binding together of three persons: a man, a woman, and God. The relationship between the man and the woman is still on the human

²³⁷ Barna Group, “New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released” (March 31, 2008), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released> [accessed August 31, 2012].

²³⁸ CWA, “Marriage is the Norm,” Beverly LaHaye Institute, Concerned Women for America <http://www.cwfa.org/articledisplay.asp?id=14976&department=BLI&categoryid=commentary&subcategoryid=blifam> [accessed August 31, 2012].

plane; but when God is added to the relationship, it introduces a new dimension. He becomes an integral part of the marriage.”²³⁹ To Prince, Jesus’ reference to God’s original purpose in instituting marriage is exemplary in understanding the marriage institution. Declaring that “one of the most revolutionary features of the teaching of Jesus was His standard of marriage,” Prince notes:

He refused to settle for anything less than the original purpose of God. For this reason, Solomon’s picture of “a cord of three strands not only illustrates the pattern of marriage established at creation, it also portrays just as accurately the pattern of marriage for believers today who are united through their faith in Christ. **The three strands are the man, the woman, and God. The principle that binds them inseparably together is covenant.** What Solomon says of a cord thus formed is still true today; it ‘is not quickly torn apart.’²⁴⁰

Later, in the fourth chapter of his book, headed, “Union with God,” Prince says that “the marriage covenant is not merely sacred in its own right. It is sacred also because it typifies other relationships of great spiritual significance. The first and the most important of these is the relationship that God desires to have with His people.”²⁴¹ Gary Thomas agrees: “In fact, both the Old and New Testaments use marriage as a central analogy – the union between God and Israel (Old Testament) and the union between Christ and his church (the New Testament). Understanding the depth of these analogies is crucial, as they will help us determine the very foundation on which a truly Christian marriage is based.”²⁴²

²³⁹ Derek Prince. *The Marriage Covenant* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1978), 24.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Prince, 71.

²⁴² Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 32.

Thomas continues to observe that even the early Church fathers, despite their ambivalent attitude toward the status of marriage, did at least recognize the symbolic significance of marriage. He explains:

Marriage can be that holy place, the site of a relationship that proclaims God’s love to this world, but Christian thinkers haven’t always elected to look at marriage this way. For all their ambivalence about whether marriage is an inferior state, the early church fathers at least recognized that the analogy of reconciliation is the highest aim of marriage, pointing as a sign to the union of Christ with his church. Paul explores this theme in his letter to the Ephesians (5:22-33).²⁴³

Further, Thomas observes another vital understanding of marriage by the church fathers with respect to the benefits of marriage. Noting that “one of these early thinkers, Augustine (A.D. 354-430), suggested that there are three benefits of marriage: offspring, faith (fidelity), and sacrament,” Thomas observes:

Of the three benefits, he clearly points to the latter (sacrament) as the greatest. This is because it is possible to be married without either offspring or faith, but it is not possible to be (still) married without indissolubility, which is what a sacrament points toward. As long as a couple is married, they continue to display - however imperfectly – the ongoing commitment between Christ and his church. Thus, simply “sticking it out” becomes vitally important.²⁴⁴

Lockyer points out that the many messes that surround marriage today, such as serial or multiple divorces and polygamy, are all regrettable and were certainly not part of God’s original creation of the first man and woman. Discussing the sub-topic, “The Marriage of One Man and One Woman Is a Divine Act,” Lockyer declares:

Without doubt, the first marriage on earth was made by heaven, but heaven has no part in the six marriages of an actor or actress with all previous wives or husbands still living. What a mockery of such a divine institution this is! Jesus said, “They are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6; Gen. 2:23-25; 4:1, 2). Both Adam and Jesus emphasize the fact that in creating man, God made one woman for one man, and

²⁴³ Thomas, 31.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

that monogamy is to be the rule of man; and any rules which covertly or openly permit to marry a plurality of wives, stand condemned by the precedent of the Garden of Eden.²⁴⁵

Marriage, finally, is both the most perfect example of oneness, patterned by the Triune God after his own image, and the most perfect example of intimacy, created to typify the intimate fellowship of the Trinity. Discussing, “The Divine Order to Marriage,” under the sub-heading, “Marriage is the full expression and design of God’s image in human beings” David Kyle Foster cites Genesis 2:18, 21, 22, and writes:

Why did God do it that way? Why create one being and then take a part of that being and create a second, differentiated yet complimentary being who is "bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh," a being who is sexually, emotionally and in other ways different, yet of his own substance? Upon seeing her, Adam could have observed, "It's me . . . but not me." Well, if you think about it, it does sound like the kind of thing you might expect a Trinity to do. The Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is a family, and thus man in God's image must be made a family as well. Therefore, a man cannot completely realize the essence of his existence until he learns to exist with someone and for someone. Both relationship and communion are crucial to this process.

And so we see from Genesis 1 and 2 that God created woman from the side of man so that the man would not be alone. From the teaching of the New Testament, saints have since discovered that He also created the Church from the side of the second Adam—Christ—for the same reason—for intimate fellowship.²⁴⁶

Marital Breakdown is Unfortunate

Many writers and Bible scholars dismiss divorce as unfortunate and regrettable. It should, however, be clarified from the start that criticism of divorce does not in any way

²⁴⁵ Herbert Lockyer, *All The Teachings of Jesus*, “Marriage and Divorce” (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 194.

²⁴⁶ David Kyle Foster, “The Divine Order to Marriage,” Marriage and Relationships, *Focus on the Family: Helping Families Thrive*, http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/gods_design_for_marriage/marriage_gods_idea/the_divine_order_to_marriage.aspx [accessed August 30, 2012].

suggest that every divorced person is living in sin. Adams clarifies that “neither is the Bible silent on the subject of divorce, nor does it always, under all circumstances, for everyone, condemn divorce” and goes on to explain:

It is altogether true that God hates divorce. But He neither hates all divorces in the same way nor hates every aspect of divorce. He hates what occasions *every* divorce – even the one that *He* gave to sinful Israel. He hates the results that often flow to children and to injured parties of a divorce (yet even that did not stop Him from willing divorce in Ezra 10:44, 11). And he hates divorces wrongly obtained on grounds that He has not sanctioned. But that leaves some things about divorce that He does not hate. He certainly does not condemn or hate divorce proceedings *per se* – i.e., as a process. Nor does He hate divorce when it is obtained according to the principles and regulations laid down in the Scriptures and which He followed in His dealings with unfaithful Israel.²⁴⁷

Attention in this section, hence, must be drawn away from condemning divorced persons or the circumstances surrounding their specific cases to highlighting, from the point of view of God’s Word, the wrongfulness of divorce as a practice. According to Herbert Lockyer, for instance, divorce is illogical and defiant of human reasoning. Saying that “Adam registered the truth that in marriage man and wife become one flesh; and, being so joined, may not be put asunder,” Lockyer argues:

While our courts rip asunder an ever-increasing number of marriages and allow those parted to remarry others almost immediately, the universal reason of man feels that the grounds of indissoluble union are valid and conclusive and that the proper view of marriage treats it as a union, binding ‘as long as both shall live.’²⁴⁸

Again, discussing “Marriage and Divorce” under the subheading, “The Marriage of One Man and One Woman Unifies Husband and Wife so That They Cease to Be Two and Become One Flesh,” Lockyer affirms that according to Jesus’ response to the

²⁴⁷ Jay E. Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 23-24.

²⁴⁸ Lockyer, 194.

Pharisees' question as to marriage and divorce, man does not have the authority to separate the two as they are "intimately joined as to be one" according to God's creation of "one woman for one man." Only God's authority can separate them. Lockyer explains: "In his reply to the cunning question of the Pharisees as to marriage and divorce, Jesus declared that since two are so intimately joined as to be one, and since in the beginning God made but one woman for one man, it follows that they cannot be separated but by the authority of God. Man may not put away his wife for every cause. What God hath joined together, *man* may not put asunder."²⁴⁹

Lockyer continues to argue that the act of dividing one flesh, as divorce does, amounts to destroying "a living organism because divorce saws "asunder" two persons who "in God's sight are organically one." He says:

To divide *one flesh*, or to unmarry two who have been united, is to destroy a living organism. The word *asunder* Jesus used is most suggestive. We read that some early Christians were "sawn asunder" (Heb. 11:37), and this is the kind of murder so prevalent today. The courts of our land, quite easily and quickly, saw asunder those who in God's sight are organically one, and they are thus murdering the home life of our land. "What God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccles. 3:14)²⁵⁰

The teaching of Jesus Christ was that the divine concession to divorce in the Old Testament was only because of the hardness of men's hearts. Divine concession in the New Testament again is only due to the corruptions of sexual immorality (Mt. 5:32) and the refusal to submit to the Gospel message (1 Cor. 7:15). According to Thomas Pierce, divorce, moreover, was permitted because sin could become "so vile" that divorce would be the better option than a sinful relationship. This may also mean that divorce, was never a God-ordained option but the lesser of two evils. Discussing in *The Expositor's Bible*

²⁴⁹ Lockyer, 195.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

Commentary Jesus' explanation to the Pharisees on the actual reason why Moses had permitted divorce, Pierce explains:

Both Matthew and Mark show that Jesus taught that Moses' concession reflected not the true creation ordinance but the hardness of men's hearts. Divorce is not part of the Creator's perfect design. If Moses permitted it, he did so because sin can be so vile that divorce is to be preferred to continued "indecency." This is not to say that the person who, according to what Moses said, divorced his spouse was actually committing sin in so doing; but that divorce could even be considered testimony that there had already been sin in the marriage. Therefore any view of divorce and remarriage (taught in either Testament) that sees the problem only in terms of what may or may not be done has already overlooked a basic fact – divorce is never to be thought of as a God-ordained, morally neutral option but as an evidence of sin, of hardness of heart. The fundamental attitude of the Pharisees to the question was wrong.²⁵¹

Joseph S. Exell, hence, affirms below that Jesus' response to the Jewish leaders as to marriage and divorce was more than just an answer to their question but a corrective measure to bring them to the rightful theological understanding of the matter based on God's original creation and law. Saying that "it was by sending back the Pharisees to the most venerable antiquity, that our Lord here asserted the law of wedlock against the old custom of their divorce," Exell says:

Whilst they had made themselves drunk with their muddy streams, He directed them to the fountain, to drink themselves into sobriety. They insisted altogether on the Mosaical dispensation; but He endeavored to reform them by the most primitive institution. They alleged a custom; but He law. They a permission, and that from Moses; but He a precept, and that from God. They did reckon from afar off; but not as He, from the beginning. (Thomas Pierce).²⁵²

Willful desertion, moreover, amounts to breaking the marriage covenant.

Although marriage is a covenant, like any other covenant it needs both parties to observe

²⁵¹ Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With The New International Version of The Holy Bible, Vol. 10 (Romans – Galatians)*, "Matthew" (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 413.

²⁵² Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator*, "Matthew" (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 418.

the terms of the covenant. Once one or both parties have failed to observe the terms of the covenant, then the covenant stands broken for that reason. Commenting on I Cor. 7:15 in

The Expositor's Bible Commentary, W. Harold Mare explains:

Dealing with the actual situation at Corinth, Paul realizes that in some instances the unbelieving marriage partner will not stay. So he teaches that in such an event (v.15) the believer must let the unbelieving partner go – “If [in fact – an actual condition] the unbeliever leaves, let him do so.” At this point, Paul adds two reasons: First, in this case the believer is not “bound,” for the unbeliever by willful desertion (the other legitimate reason for divorce besides sexual immorality [Matt 19:9]) has broken the marriage contract. The Greek perfect form of the verb is graphic – i.e., “the Christian brother or sister is not in a bound condition as a slave.” A second reason for allowing an unwilling partner to leave is that God has called his people to live in peace which would not be possible if the unbelieving partner were forced to live with the believer. Try to live with the unbelieving partner in the peace that God gives (Phil 4:6, 7), but do not attempt to force the unbeliever to stay.²⁵³

Commenting on 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 in *The Anchor Bible* and discussing what they term “the Lord’s charge against ultimate separation,” William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther explain that according to Paul in this passage divorce is flatly forbidden for Christian couples. They argue:

Paul affirms flatly that for couples who are both Christian divorce is forbidden. This is not by his word but by the word of *the Lord*, evidently the teaching of Jesus. It is not Paul’s practice to quote dominical sayings, but he evidently takes Jesus’ instruction (Matt 5:31-32 and 19:9 [without the exceptive phrases] Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18) as absolutely binding on the church. This is reinforced by the extension to the effect that separated Christians are to *remain unmarried or be reconciled*. The wording which seems to single out the wife for these charges is offset by Paul’s other statements which clearly establish a mutuality of requirements.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: with The New International Version of The Holy Bible, Vol. 10 (Romans – Galatians)* “1 Corinthians” W. Harold Mare (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 230-231.

²⁵⁴ William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther. *The Anchor Bible*, “1 Corinthians” (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 212.

The two also acknowledge Paul's concession that believers are "not bound by broken marriages with unbelievers" where an unbelieving person takes the initiative of divorcing the believer. Orr and Walther, hence, continue to say:

A different condition prevails when the unbeliever refuses to live with the believer and exercises the legal prerogative of divorce, whether because of disaffection from the Christian partner or from contempt for the Christian religion. In this case Paul counsels the believer to permit the unbeliever to *separate* without controversy or attempt to hold the marriage together. The deserted partner, then, is free to marry again, whether it be *the brother or the sister*.²⁵⁵

Marital breakdown also only violates but does not change the divine norm for mankind. When people get divorced they do not change the way God created them but only abandon the way God meant them to live. This is the reason divorced people and people who refuse to marry without having the gift of celibacy experience hardships that only marriage could address. When you resist the norm you inevitably strain yourself. Men and women are both born yearning for each other. The urge to merge is a normal human craving which marriage fulfills (1 Cor. 7:1, 8). This is why persons who carelessly choose to remain single end up having children out of wedlock. Marital breakdown, therefore, is unfortunate and regrettable. Divorce should only be the last resort after all the efforts made to stop it or reconcile the parties concerned have completely failed.

As will be discussed in the next subsection, therefore, marital resilience is recommended as the best option. However, it is recognized that God does not hate all divorces and has allowed legitimate causes for divorce. Adams says:

God hates divorce. He did not institute it: He only recognizes and regulates it under certain biblically prescribed circumstances. But- and this is the important concept to gain from reading this chapter – even though God hates

²⁵⁵ Orr and Walther, 214

divorce, because there is sin behind every divorce as its cause, not *every divorce is sinful*. Some are proper (remember Jer.3:8; Matt. 1:19). God permitted divorce within stringently defined limits. There are legitimate causes for divorce, even though (perhaps it would be better to say *because*) those causes involved sin. Even though all divorces are the result of sin, not all divorces are sinful.²⁵⁶

That man has turned such a noble institution into a relationship of agony and anguish, and has even allowed its breakdown, only serves to illustrate the depth, extent, and totality of human depravity. For no other state befits marriage than permanence and sanctity.

Marital Resilience is Indispensable

Most writers recommend marital resilience. There are no perfect human beings or perfect marriages. There are only weak partners learning and growing together. Every two married partners, therefore, especially those who recognize the teaching of God's Word concerning marriage and who desire to honor God in their marriage, need to receive and put into practice wise counsel on how to conduct their marriage. Teaching on, "God's Design for Marriage," under the sub-heading, "Find the key to making your marriage flourish — just as God designed,' Carol Heffernan observes:

It's easy to think that only "other people" get divorced. That your own marriage is somehow immune to heartache, infidelity and fights over who gets the house, the car, the dog. After all, how many of us would walk down the aisle if we believed our relationships would end up in divorce court?

Truth is, no relationship comes with a lifetime guarantee. Even men and women who grew up in stable homes, who attend church and consider themselves Christians, who promise "until death do us part," can have it all fall apart.

As Christians, we know that applying biblical principles to marriage will give us a stronger foundation than those of our unbelieving friends and neighbors. We know this, but what are we doing about it? In other words, what makes a marriage "Christian"?²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Adams, 30.

²⁵⁷ Carol Heffernan, "God's Design for Marriage," Marriage and Relationships, *Focus on the Family: Helping Families Thrive*, http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/gods_design_for_marriage/marriage_gods_idea/gods_design_for_marriage.aspx [accessed August 30, 2012].

As much as divine grace is needed for the sanctity and permanence of marriage, the breakdown of every marriage points directly to the two partners in the marriage – what they should have done as well as what they should not have done for the sake of their marriage. If marital partners will focus on each other’s interests, this will avoid making each other to feel less important. This way, the other person will also never need to look for alternative ways of survival. Gary Thomas contributes: “The essence of Christianity is found in Philippians 2. There Paul urges us to do *nothing* (it’s these absolutist words that can make Scriptures so troubling) ‘out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others’ (Philippians 2:3-4).”²⁵⁸

Thomas then goes on and touches another area in which many marriages fail. He unveils the need for the essential attitude in marriage when it comes to each other’s weaknesses and sins - that of each partner “receiving” the other’s sin. Thomas says that many men find it difficult to forgive their wives when a wife has had an affair and keep on reminding her of it especially when she points something wrong in her husband’s life. Discussing the sub-heading, “Receiving Another’s Sin,” Thomas counsels: “This manner of viewing marriage points to another important principle – not just having my sin exposed, but reflecting on how I treat my wife when her sin is exposed. Do I use this knowledge to crush her, humiliate her, or gain power over her, or do I use it to gently and lovingly lead her into imitating the character of Jesus Christ?”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Thomas, 179.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 97-98.

Then Steve Stroope introduces the vital aspect of good communication skills. To him, the “real problem” with most couples is not that there is no communication between them but rather “the wrong kind of communication.” He says: “Negative, demanding, and demeaning comments interfere with healthy, productive sharing. I’ve seen situations in which one partner turns every conversation into a win or lose argument – and the less verbal of the two usually loses. Hardly an inviting context for meaningful dialogue!”²⁶⁰ Without a doubt negative words will breed anger and strife, just in the same way that “a soft answer turns away wrath” and “a harsh word stirs up anger.”²⁶¹

According to Adams, studying Deuteronomy 24:1-4, “reveals that the process and regulation outlined there both tended to discourage divorce transacted without adequate fore thought, and divorce as a handy convenience.”²⁶² Adams, therefore, advises: “Every legitimate effort, therefore, ought to be made to help persons contemplating divorce to reconsider the alternatives, and to assist divorced persons to become reconciled to one another (whenever possible) before they remarry another and it is too late to do so.”²⁶³ Both partners must demonstrate a desire to save or sustain the marriage since it takes two to make a marriage. In a troubled marriage where one spouse does not care about the marriage, it will be difficult to save or sustain the marriage. As James Dobson says:

In any apathetic or dying marriage, there is typically one partner who is relatively unconcerned about the distance between them, while the other is anxious or even panic-stricken over it. The detached spouse, whether husband or wife, may not

²⁶⁰ Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope, *It Starts at Home: A Practical Guide to Nurturing Lifelong Faith* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 48.

²⁶¹ Prov. 15:1.

²⁶² Adams, 31.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31.

realize how much danger the marriage is in or may not care. Therefore, that person resists any effort by his mate to entice him into counseling or compromises or even meaningful conversations to address their difficulties.²⁶⁴

This is not to say there are perfect and imperfect or even bad and good spouses. Obviously, there are times when one marital partner truly earns a reputation of being a bad person. But this is something that can happen to anyone or either of the partners in a marriage. There are no intrinsically good or bad or perfect or imperfect partners in any marriage. Both partners in a marriage are sinners equally responsible for its condition and needing God's grace and deliverance. When one partner decides to not care about the marriage, there is little the other can do to help it. Yet this is unfortunately usually the case in troubled marriages. As Dobson further says: "Marital conflict always involves an interaction between two imperfect human beings who share the responsibility to one degree or another. Nevertheless, there is usually one partner who would do anything to hold the home together – and another who seems disinterested in the relationship."²⁶⁵

Dobson also urges marital partners to respect each other. Comparing mutual respect in marriage to the way employees respect their bosses, children respect their parents, and nations respect each other, Dobson observes: "And certainly, the way husbands and wives relate is a function of their mutual respect and admiration. That's why marital discord almost always emanates from seething disrespect somewhere in the relationship! That is the bottom line of romantic confrontation."²⁶⁶ Dobson concludes by saying that "if there is hope for the dying marriages we have examined, and I certainly

²⁶⁴ James Dobson, *Love Must be Tough: New Hope for Families in Crisis* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1996), 8.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

believe there is, then it is likely to be found in the reconstruction of *respect* between warring husbands and wives.²⁶⁷

Summary

Chapter Three has solicited the contributions of literary sources on the subject of African cultural ideologies that impact the marriages of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States, who hail from Africa and bring their culture to the United States. The chapter examined the African cultural aspects of (1) communal existence that sustains African marriages by providing couples in Africa with needed checks and balances, such as accountability and corporate support during times of hardship; (2) gender inequality that contributes to male immigrants' negative response to their wives' assertion of freedom from their husbands' domination and disregard for their husbands' authorities; and (3) limited parental ability (in view of unfavorable US laws and culture) to discipline their children by means of African cultural methods.

The chapter then discussed several cultural paradigm shifts that the Kenyan immigrant couples encounter on settling in the country, namely, changed gender roles (e.g. men taking on domestic roles while women take on increased financial burdens), unfavorable economic conditions that become even harder to deal with in the couples' isolation from their communal setups, and diminished parental authority over their children. Finally, the chapter briefly reviewed the literature on marriage and divorce with particular emphasis on the biblical teaching that the marital union is the norm for human civilization, marital breakdown is unfortunate, and that marital resilience is essential.

²⁶⁷ Dobson.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Much information has already been obtained through library research and the electronic media, as may be seen especially in the second and third chapters. This fourth chapter, hence, concentrates on the project's field research. The study, which seeks to establish the kinds of marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States and the factors causing those marital problems, demands a qualitative research approach and methodology. Discussing, "Examples of Qualitative Research Strategies" in the *Houston Chronicles*, Renee O'Farrell of the Demand Media explains:

Qualitative research is the type of research people use to gain insight into a problem, issue or theory. Unlike quantitative research, which is concerned with objectively measurable variables, qualitative research seeks to build a narrative about the issue; qualitative research tries to understand the reasons why something is the way it is. It is more naturalistic or anthropological, whereas quantitative research is more scientific. While this means qualitative research is more subjective, it also supplies a way to examine variables in their natural setting as opposed to the clinical conditions required in quantitative research methods.²⁶⁸

As was pointed out in the first chapter, research in this project has relied mainly on secondary research methods, e.g. library research, media reports, and Internet sources. A considerable amount of field research, however, was undertaken, involving personal interviews that were conducted in one of the communities in the United States with high

²⁶⁸Renee O'Farrell, "Examples of Qualitative Research Strategies," *The Houston Chronicle* <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-qualitative-research-strategies-10244.html> [accessed November 17, 2012].

numbers of Kenyan immigrants. Qualitative research, as described above, called for field interviews of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States by means of a questionnaire. The aim of the researcher was to make reasonable inferences and conclusions with respect to the kinds of marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. The conclusions the researcher made were based on answers provided by the Kenyan immigrant couples that responded to questions designed to expose those marital problems.

As a Kenyan immigrant spouse himself, the researcher tried as much as possible to avoid injecting his own biases into the interviews where this was unnecessary. This the researcher did by allowing the interviewees to come up with their own opinions over the various issues raised in the questionnaire without suggesting responses for them. The researcher's own personal experience and knowledge through living with his wife in the United States for the last five years albeit made him profoundly knowledgeable as far as the interviewees contributions were concerned. The researcher believes that being one of the Kenyan immigrant spouses in the United States did not adversely affect but rather enhanced the findings of the research. Discussing, "The Pro-Active Research Method," which "intentionally engages in qualitative research while pro-actively working toward transformation," William R. Myers observes:

Note that data is gathered from not only the participants and the setting, but also honors subjective material generated by the researcher. Because the researcher's generation of subjective data is also valued, the personal journal of the researcher often becomes central to the data gathering process, primarily because pro-active research places high priority on naming and monitoring such personal factors in an effort to ground and make theory more explicit.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ William R. Myers, *Research in Ministry: A Primer for the Doctor of Ministry Program* (Chicago: Exploration Press, 2000), 25, 26.

The researcher took enough care, nevertheless, to design interview questions that adequately adhered to qualitative research standards. As O'Farrell continues to explain concerning the *interviews* aspect of qualitative research:

In some cases, qualitative research may be conducted through interviews, such as listening to someone recount something that happened in the past, such as a wartime experience or other event. When qualitative research takes the form of an interview, the interviewer asks open-ended questions and simply records what the participant says. Personal bias can be an issue, but other issues arise as well. For instance, the researcher may react to the subject's responses, encouraging or discouraging the dialogue in a certain direction. Moreover, the researcher has to be careful that he does not ask leading questions.²⁷⁰

The Fieldwork Focus

Primary Objectives

As noted in Chapter One, this research seeks to provide a solution to the marital problems of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. The study hypothesis is that these marital problems are the product of cultural dissonance resulting from the couples' exposure to a United States culture that is very different from their native Kenyan culture. Moreover, the study seeks to identify the kinds of marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States and the factors causing those problems.

Although the interview questions were open-ended, the researcher was looking for responses that would prove or disprove the premise guiding this study as indicated above, that Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States experience marital problems because of the cultural dissonance arising from their exposure to a culture that is different from their own. This premise was supported by the literature review in Chapter Three, which helped the researcher to outline the factors responsible for cultural dissonance

²⁷⁰ O'Farrell, "Examples of Qualitative Research Strategies."

experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. The researcher, hence, was looking for evidence in support of these assumptions.

As noted earlier, the researcher was motivated to do the study after he and his wife witnessed and received reports of many marital problems among fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States; problems that discussions with fellow Kenyan immigrants attributed to the cultural conflicts experienced by the couples on being exposed to the different culture of the United States. Notwithstanding these observations, however, the researcher initiated the field research with the understanding that the interviews and case studies could, as often happens in research work, produce findings that conflicted with this study's premise and the literary sources consulted.

Principal Factors

The key factors that were pinpointed in the literature review as being the causes of cultural conflict among the Kenyan immigrant couples included a number of African cultural ideologies that were believed to impact the marriages and family lives of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States, namely, communal existence, gender inequality, and parental assertiveness. Once they have immigrated to the United States, hence, the Kenyan immigrant couples are believed to encounter certain cultural paradigm shifts that are directly related to their Kenyan African cultural ideologies and related conditions, especially, changed gender roles, unfavorable economic conditions, diminished parental authority, and increased societal permissiveness. These are the concepts that the researcher worked with during the field interviews and case studies.

The researcher was, for instance, seeking responses that explained ways in which the individualistic lifestyle of the United States affected Kenyan immigrant couples, who

had previously been accustomed to communal living wherein members of the community helped each other in shouldering economic burdens and censuring each other's social behaviors. The researcher also sought for the effects of changed gender roles and rights on the marriages of Kenyan immigrants, who had been raised in a society that thrived on gender inequality, embraced male chauvinism, and tolerated female oppression.

And finally, the researcher sought to identify the kinds of reactions Kenyan immigrant parents had manifested in the wake of their diminished parental assertiveness especially in view of their children's new freedoms and protections and exposure to an increasingly permissive society. In each of the cases mentioned above, the researcher's primary objective was to identify factors that had adversely affected the Kenyan immigrant couples' marriages and the ways in which those factors could be addressed.

Existing work on this subject, as secondary research revealed, is limited; the need, hence, for field research to complement any existing secondary data, also enhanced by the author's personal knowledge and experience as being, with his wife, a Kenyan immigrant couple in the United States, as mentioned above. Myers concurs with this idea when he notes that "while some research methodologies deny the importance of data generated by the researcher's own internal (and highly subjective) dialogue, the Doctor of Ministry process accents such data as necessary and important information. Data generated by the subjective valuing process of the researcher is therefore considered to be of great value in building a case study."²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Myers, 63.

Three field case studies and interviews of a total of twenty married Kenyan immigrant individuals comprising ten couples, both analyzed in detail below, were conducted and reported. First to be described will be the field case studies.

The Field Case Studies

Review and Emphasis of Research Context

This is just a brief recap as most of the background information relating to the marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States has already been provided in the earlier chapters. Some of the Kenyan immigrant couples' marriages have ended up in divorce but a majority of the marriages have remained intact despite experiencing problems. As already discussed in the earlier chapters, Africans are not prone to abandoning or breaking their marriages. African cultural marital tenets have conditioned Kenyans and other Africans to persistent endurance of marital conflicts and hardships, which has enabled many African couples to ultimately stay in their marriages for life despite these adverse conditions. As Femi Awodele explains:

On the traditional wedding day, both families are introduced. When [a] problem occurs in such marriage, elders from both families get involved and one feel[s] obligated to stay in such relationship. An African woman said to me about 3 years ago, "when you have your mother-in-law kneeling for you, apologizing for [her] son's adultery - what are you supposed to do" When an older person kneels for you in the Yoruba culture, refusing such person's demand is considered an insult. Needless to say this woman's marriage ended in divorce when they moved to America, because he still committed adultery and there was no family around to beg her this time. Western women do not feel obligated to anyone but themselves, and in most cases would have divorced before they even tell any family member.²⁷²

²⁷² Femi Awodele, "Divorce Rates – Africa vs Western Countries," Nigeriaworld (Feature Article), <http://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2005/may/021.html> [accessed November 19, 2012].

The African cultural tenet of communal lifestyle embraces corporate accountability among the society's members, which involves communal marriage ceremonies, extended family relationships, and corporate censorship of individual behavior and actions, among other things. African family and community members stand with each other during difficult times, offer counsel to each other, rebuke each other for perceived misdemeanors, and warn each other of any suspicious behaviors. Within this context, divorce, which is generally frowned upon in African society, becomes a hard undertaking for African couples. It is only after Kenyan immigrant spouses in the United States have lived together away from their African cultural environment and in a culture that permits easy divorce that, once they encounter difficulties in their marriage, they find it convenient to divorce each other. In addition, there would be no reason for some of the marital problems faced by the Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States to occur if the couple lived in their Kenyan cultural environment.

Consequently, a very common feature in African society has been that of spouses living together, merely surviving but not enjoying their marriages. The researcher has witnessed certain cases where spouses, having nothing to enjoy in their scandalous marriages, have concentrated on raising children whom they have hoped would take care of them during their old age. Other spouses have simply resolved to support themselves financially in dysfunctional marital relationships where they nominally have lived together though practically separated.

As Awodele further observes: "It is common place in Nigeria (from my visits) to see couples married for 30, 40 years having separate rooms and not having sex for many years, yet they would not even think of divorce. Westerners don't have that level of

tolerance or is it faith? To stay in a marriage that seems to have no future.”²⁷³ Awodele’s observation is in line with cases that the author personally knows of in Kenya where spouses though still married, have for many years not shared their marriage bed. Awodele also points out that many African couples choose to sustain their troubled marriages for faith-related reasons. As he observes: “Africans would rather endure than go against what the Bible says, many marriages in Africa [are] being ‘endured’ rather than being ‘enjoyed.’”²⁷⁴ The researcher chose to examine three case studies of representative Kenyan immigrant marriages in the United States that adequately represent and address the premises of this study.

Two of the case studies involved two different couples whose marriages had encountered difficulties, in both cases owing to issues related to the couples’ exposure to the culture of the United States. The researcher built up the case studies by personally collecting and evaluating information from these couples. The third field case study involved two former spouses that had already been divorced. The researcher, hence, separately collected and examined the individual views of each of the two former spouses regarding the kinds of marital problems that had led to their divorce and the factors that had caused the marital problems. It should be noted that in view of the levels of marital resiliency in African societies described above, the fact that the Kenyan immigrant couples in the first two case studies had not divorced did not in any way indicate that the two couples had experienced lesser degrees of marital problems compared to couples who might have been divorced.

²⁷³ Awodele, “Divorce Rates – Africa vs Western Countries.”

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

Descriptions and Objectives of Case Studies

The field case studies, therefore, were selectively chosen for use in testing specific assumptions with respect to the kinds of marital problems Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States are experiencing as well as the factors that cause them. One common domestic problem among Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States has been children reporting their parents to the authorities for their alleged abuse. This study assumes that this kind of a marital problem is caused by the conflicting cultural influences of the Kenyan culture over the immigrant parents and the United States culture over their children. Children in the United States can report their parents to the authorities for disciplining them harshly. As already pointed out in the first and second chapters, children in Kenya do not normally report their parents to the authorities for spanking them. The children of Kenyan immigrants in the United States, hence, learn and utilize laws of their host country contrary to the cultural orientations of their immigrant parents.

The first field case study that was examined, hence, involved a Kenyan immigrant couple in the United States who had experienced a strained marital relationship after their children had reported them to the authorities for spanking them. The case study narrates in detail the consequences the parents suffered after the children had made the report and how the entire episode affected them and their relationship as a couple. Through this field case study, the researcher sought to establish the following:

- 1) Whether these Kenyan immigrant parents, who as children were disciplined by their own parents through spanking; who, while they lived in Kenya, disciplined these same children through spanking; and to whom parental assertiveness was a given and a necessary ingredient of their duty of instilling

discipline in their children, were prone to still discipline their children through spanking while living with them in the United States.

- 2) Whether these Kenyan immigrant children, who would not have reported their parents to the authorities for spanking them if they lived with them in Kenya, had found it convenient, due to the legal rights and protections accorded to children by the laws of the United States, to settle scores with their parents for spanking them and for whatever else the parents might have done to the children against their wishes.
- 3) How these Kenyan immigrant parents, who might not have expected their children to take such drastic measures against them, had reacted to their children's action.
- 4) How the differences between the immigrant parents and their children had strained the marriage of the Kenyan immigrant couple.

Another reportedly common kind of a marital problem among Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States has been conflict between husbands and wives over the management of their finances. Otiso notes that “unlike in Kenya, Kenyan immigrant wives in the United States have more financial freedom given the latter country's more vibrant work environment, culture, and legal protections for wives. This exposes Kenyan immigrant couples to new challenges since traditional Kenyan African culture seldom allows wives to operate independently from their husbands.²⁷⁵ Once a Kenyan couple has settled in the United States, hence, the wife becomes financially independent from her husband. The second field case study that was examined, therefore, was the case of a

²⁷⁵ Otiso, editorial note to author, January 01, 2013.

couple that had been experiencing difficulties in its marriage due to disagreement between the spouses over the management of their finances because the husband had no control over his wife's income. Through this field case study, the researcher sought to establish the following:

- 1) Whether this Kenyan immigrant husband, who had always supported his wife financially or controlled all the couple's finances while the couple lived in Kenya, either because the wife was not earning her own income or the husband did not let her have control over her finances, had been experiencing some disorientation after his wife had become independent and gained control over her own income.
- 2) Similarly, whether this Kenyan immigrant wife, who thanks to living in the United States had now become financially independent and able for the first time in her life, had indeed resolved to break links with the Kenyan traditional cultural practice and refused to submit to her husband's domination and control over her finances.
- 3) How this Kenyan immigrant husband had, due to his Kenyan cultural roots, reacted to his wife's behavior in her newly acquired independence in the United States and, similarly, how his Kenyan immigrant wife had, due to how she had embraced her newly found freedom and protection from male domination, consequently resisted her husband's attempts to dominate her.
- 4) How changed gender roles had caused relational tensions between these two Kenyan immigrant spouses in the United States as the husband had grappled with the reality of his wife's newly found independence and the wife, as she

had enjoyed her newly found freedom and protection, had dismissed and resisted any pressure upon her to submit to her husband's control.

Lastly, despite the high levels of marital resiliency expected of African couples, as has been discussed, many Kenyan immigrant marriages in the United States have, nevertheless, reportedly ended up in divorce. The third field case study that was examined, hence, involved two former Kenyan immigrant spouses in the United States whose marriage had ended in divorce. By incorporating information from both former spouses regarding the kinds of marital problems that had led to the couple's divorce and the factors that had caused them, the researcher sought to establish the following:

- 1) Whether the kinds of marital problems this Kenyan immigrant couple had experienced in the United States would have occurred in their marriage, in the same way and to the same extent, had the couple been living in Kenya at the time. If not, why?
- 2) Whether this Kenyan immigrant couple would have handled their marital difficulties in the same way had they been living in their Kenyan cultural environment and within reach of their parents, immediate and extended family members, and the community.
- 3) Given the high cost of divorce in Kenya in terms of time and finances, would this Kenyan immigrant couple have gone through with the divorce in Kenya?
- 4) In the light of available information from this case study, what would each of these two spouses have done differently to stop the breakdown of their marriage in the United States?

The Field Interviews

Interview Demographics

The researcher interviewed a total of ten Kenyan immigrant couples living in the South Bend/Mishawaka/Elkhart metropolis in Indiana. This metropolis is one of many regions in the US that host thousands of Kenyan immigrants who live and work in the country. The Kenyan immigrants are so numerous in this metropolis that they have established several church congregations that are attended primarily by Kenyans. The interviews incorporated two categories of Kenyan immigrant couples that had been married for various durations of time ranging from less than five to more than twenty years. In one group were couples who had lived in the US for less than seven years and in the other couples that had lived in the country for more than seven years. The researcher was of the view that the effects of cultural dissonance would have had heavier impact on couples that had been married for a lesser number of years and also that the longer that a couple had lived in the US the better their understanding would be of the real factors causing marital problems among the Kenyan immigrant couples.

A comparison of the views provided by interviewees from these two categories of couples, hence, helped the researcher to establish more authoritatively the answers to the research questions. The two categories, therefore, served as controls to each other. The questions utilized by the questionnaire were designed to solicit responses from individual spouses, which would have made it possible to interview spouses separately. The couples, nevertheless, worked together and individual spouses compared their responses. Again, the interview incorporated both couples that had strong marriages and those that were experiencing marital problems. This was done to ensure that the views of

the individuals who were interviewed represented the views of Kenyan immigrant couples across the United States. Any notable differences in their cultural experiences should mostly be in intensity rather than essence.

Field Interviews Demographic Table

Field Interviews Demographic Table			
Number of years couple had been married	Number of couples who had lived in the United States less than 7 years	Number of couples who had lived in the United States more than 7 years	Total Number of couples interviewed
Under 5 years	1	1	2
6 - 10 years	1	1	2
11 - 15 years	1	1	2
15 -20 years	1	1	2
Over 20 years	1	1	2
Total	5	5	10

Figure 1. Demographic Table of Field Interviews Contacted in January 2013

The interviews table (Figure 1), as reproduced from Chapter One, represents the two categories of couples that were interviewed. The table represents face-to-face interviews that were conducted with Kenyan immigrant couples who had been married for various durations below or over twenty years, one group that had lived in the United States for less than seven years and another who had lived in the country for over seven years. There were no deviations from the questionnaire's twelve questions in any of the interviews. This was done to ensure that differing responses would only be due to interviewees holding differing opinions rather responding to differing questions.

Interview Questionnaire

Questions in the questionnaire were designed to be open-ended in conformity with the norm for qualitative research. Hence, despite the fact that the objectives of the interviews were to solicit informative responses that would help the researcher to test study hypotheses, attempts to suggest or imply responses to questions were avoided. The questionnaire consisted of two parts (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) consisting of twelve interview questions that each Kenyan immigrant couple or spouse was expected to answer.

These interview questions were purposefully designed to solicit responses that exposed the Kenyan immigrant couples' cultural experiences in Kenya and the United States. Those experiences included: changed gender roles, individualistic living, diminished parental assertiveness, and societal permissiveness. As the eleventh question in the questionnaire indicated, hence, the terminologies best describing the individual – confident, assertive, excited, co-operative, head, optimistic, peaceful, conservative, happy, positive, encouraged, and responsible, or their opposites – were very revealing regarding the individual's cultural experience during his or her life in the United States.

This said, however, it must be stated that this study does not hold the view that all individual syndromes or marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States could only have been caused by the couples' cultural experiences in the country. Certain marital problems could be related to the individual personalities of the spouses and others could have been in the couple's marriage while they were still living in Kenya. The researcher was careful, hence, in evaluating the evidence from both the field case studies and responses from the interview questions to avoid stereotyping any of the cases he examined.

Interview Settings

The interviews were conducted at the convenience and location determined by the interviewees. All efforts were made to ensure the interviewee was in a relaxed and unstilted atmosphere. The researcher also avoided as much as possible incorporating into the interview any previous acquaintance or knowledge he had of any of the interviewees. The intent was to conduct each interview in a mode of informal conversation, not to resemble interrogational questioning but at the same time still make the interview exercise as formal as possible. The researcher took much care and ensured the same questionnaires were utilized in each interview and no one individual or group of interviewees were better exposed to some areas or questions where the other interviewees were denied equal opportunity.

Couples were interviewed together and the researcher allowed a casual mood of conversation where dialogue took place between the spouses themselves and between them and the researcher. The aim was to maximize the acquisition and amount of information that was availed by the interviewees. The researcher made such arrangements for corporate interviews, however, only after thorough consultation and agreement with the couples whereby he ensured they were comfortable being interviewed together and was willing to allow for separate interviews of husbands and wives. The researcher, hence, provided one questionnaire for each interviewee even when interviewing couples.

Field Interviews Questionnaire: Part One

Bishop Justus Musyoka's Field Research for the Doctor of Ministry

Interview Questionnaire: Part One

Interviewee Husband Wife **Age Bracket** Under 25 25-35 35-45 45-55 Over 55
Date of Marriage _____ **Number of Children:** Born in Kenya Under 15 Over 15 Born in USA Under 15 Over 15
Date of Entry into the USA _____ **Current Educational Level** High School or below College University or beyond
Annual Income Bracket Under \$20,000 20,000-40,000 40,000-60,000 60,000-80,000 Over 80,000

Dear interviewee: Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am very grateful for you taking the time to help in this research. Please be frank and natural in your responses. Bishop Justus Musyoka

1. With respect to your marriage and family, what did you like the most about the culture in the United States and why?
2. Similarly, what aspects of the culture in the United States did you dislike or like the least and why was this so?
3. Did your Kenyan African marital cultural values or some of them conflict with those of the United States? If yes, in what ways?
4. Where you did not experience any conflicts between your Kenyan cultural marital values and those of the United States, what were the reasons?
5. How did your spouse personally respond to the culture in the United States and how did that affect your marital relationship?
6. How did your children, if you have any, respond to the culture in the United States and how did that affect your marital relationship?
7. In what cultural or social aspects did the two of you differ or disagree in your relationship as a couple and for what reasons?
8. Where cultural or social aspects did cause differences/disagreements between the two of you how did you resolve the conflicts?
9. In what ways have you responded to cultural ways in the United States that have conflicted with your Kenyan African cultural ways?
10. As you look back into the past and evaluate your married life in the United States, what do you wish you did differently?

Figure 2.1. Part One of the questionnaire used in the field interviews contacted in January 2013.

Field Interview Questionnaire: Part Two

Bishop Justus Musyoka's Field Research for the Doctor of Ministry

Interview Questionnaire: Part Two

1. Descriptive terminologies - pick one in each of the following pairs of words that best describes you as a marital partner:-

Confident - Skeptical

Assertive - Reserved

Excited - Indifferent

Cooperative - Difficult

Head - Headed

Optimistic - Pessimistic

Peaceful - Confrontational

Conservative - Moderate

Happy - Unhappy

Positive - Negative

Encouraged - Discouraged

Responsible - Irresponsible

2. Given the opportunity what recommendations would you offer to fellow immigrant husbands/wives in the United States to strengthen their marriages?

Figure 2.2. Part Two of the questionnaire used in the field interviews conducted in January 2013.

Summary

This study's purpose, to establish the kinds of marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States and the factors causing them so as to make recommendations to the couples to maintain stronger marriages, called for field research, particularly case studies and interviews. As Nancy Vyhmeister observes, "interviews permit a deeper and fuller understanding of the attitudes of a respondent. Whereas the survey may have room only for 'agree' and 'disagree' answers, an interview can tell the researcher why the person disagrees or agrees. Interviewing takes time but provides information not available through survey."²⁷⁶ Vyhmeister further observes that "the case-study method normally starts from a case and proceeds, via critical analysis of the data, to a constructive interpretation of the pastoral-theological issues implied in the case. It culminates in guidelines for action."²⁷⁷

Through the field work undertaken in this research, hence, the researcher intended to gather findings that accurately represented the culturally related marital experiences of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. This was necessitated by not only the researcher's obligation to uphold the virtues of accountability and excellence in scholarly research but also the research project's purpose to make pragmatic recommendations that would help the Kenyan immigrant couples to maintain stronger marriages. The detailed report of these fieldwork findings, edited and organized, constitutes Chapter Five of this research project.

²⁷⁶ Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 161.

²⁷⁷ Vyhmeister, 173.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze, report, and evaluate the data collected from the case studies and field interviews. As shown in Chapter Four, the data for this study consist of three field case studies²⁷⁸ and field interviews of ten Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. The couples have been married and lived in the USA for various durations and are from the South Bend/Mishawaka/Elkhart metropolis of Indiana. The chapter's other objective is to evaluate the research findings in light of the initial assumptions, questions, and purpose of the research project. A number of facts and observations, though, need to be noted at the outset.

First, the researcher obtained the study data from Kenyan immigrant couples on issues such as their marital conflicts due to cultural differences between the United States and Kenya. While the couples were kind enough to participate in the interviews, the quality of the data is proportional to the couples' willingness to share such sensitive information. Fortunately, however, the researcher was seeking information that would help him establish the reality of cultural dissonance in Kenyan immigrant marriages in the United States rather than sensitive details of individual couples or spouses.

²⁷⁸ One of the case studies is a news item from the media that the researcher found to be profoundly relevant and informative to this study.

Second, although the researcher went into the field research with certain assumptions and presuppositions as outlined in the earlier chapters, he was willing to receive, record, and accept all information from the immigrant couples without bias. This openness enabled the researcher to have a learning experience through compiling the case studies and conducting the interviews. The researcher, hence, was further enlightened on the subject of his research by two categories of findings: (1) findings that, on the one hand, disclosed attitudes among the Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States that challenged some of the researcher's initial presuppositions and (2) findings that, on the other hand, confirmed the initial assumptions of this research project.

Third, all the research findings, whether supportive or contrary to the study's initial assumptions, have enriched this study in a number of ways. Overall, they have placed the researcher in a good position to make well-informed recommendations that can strengthen Kenyan immigrant marriages in the United States.

The Case Studies

Kilonzo and Mueni: ²⁷⁹ An Encounter with US Children-Protection Law

Kilonzo and Mueni, who had immigrated to the United States together with their children, had a very unpleasant experience with the children in the US. After the couple had settled and began working in the country, their children joined American schools, grew up, and became teenagers. Kilonzo and Mueni loved their children deeply and desired for them to become good and reliable people. They also valued their African cultural heritage and desired to see their children embrace African cultural values, which the couple was working hard to instill in them.

²⁷⁹ Case study names have been changed to protect the identities of the individuals concerned.

One day, however, Kilonzo had a domestic disagreement with his teenage children, during which, according to the children, he inflicted pain and scars on them. The children apparently did not like Kilonzo's African-oriented assertiveness as a parent and consequently exposed the incident to their school teachers who in turn informed the relevant authorities. Subsequently, the authorities took away the children from the couple and made sure Kilonzo was interrogated and arrested.

Kilonzo was taken to court and charged with domestic violence. Kilonzo denied having inflicted pain upon the children, nor was there visible evidence of injury or beating on the children's bodies. The medical experts who worked on the case, however, were of the view that there was a strong probability that the children had been subjected to some kind of violence. Kilonzo's testimony was therefore rejected. He was declared guilty, sentenced, and jailed, and the children placed under the care of foster parents.

According to Kilonzo and Mueni, these events destabilized the couple's marriage profoundly. The court process was very taxing to the couple in terms of time, energy, and finances. As a result of the charges against Kilonzo and his imprisonment, Kilonzo and his wife were separated from each other temporarily and from their children for lengthy periods. Only Mueni was allowed to see the children from time to time; therefore, the family was virtually on the verge of a breakup.

After completing his imprisonment, Kilonzo was barred from either working or securing most jobs. This meant that he was not in a position to support his family as he was supposed to, which had a serious effect upon him and Mueni. The emotional and psychological burden was very heavy on the couple. Kilonzo and Mueni affirmed that their sex life and other aspects of their marriage were tremendously affected, with their

marriage narrowly surviving a breakup. The two were convinced that if God had not intervened in their marriage, it would have fallen apart.

Kibet and Judy: An Encounter with US Women-Protection Law

As earlier explained, information in two case studies was generated from field research as the researcher personally talked to the couples concerned. The story of Kibet and Judy, however, is the unique case study already referred to above, which is a news item that appeared in Kenya's leading newspaper, the *Daily Nation*, on Friday, February 10, 2012, and one that has become very famous and widely circulated in the Kenyan Diaspora. The news item, reported by Antony Karanja in Dallas, USA, was entitled, "Rude shock for Kenyan men facing strong US family law." Following is the story, obtained online from the newspaper's digital version:²⁸⁰

By ANTONY KARANJA in DALLAS, USA

This is the story of Kibet, a Kenyan living in Massachusetts in the United States, but also the story of many a male compatriot.

Married for 11 years, he accuses wife, Judy, of throwing him out of their matrimonial home after she started dating someone else.

Kibet says it all began as a row over the remittance of money to his family back home, which his wife was opposed to.

She accused him of being more supportive of his family back home than his wife and their two children, an accusation which Kibet denies.

One day during an argument, she hit him and Kibet grabbed her hands to protect himself. His wife started screaming and when he released her, she called the police. When the police arrived at their home, his wife insisted that she feared for her life as he had tried to kill her, though Kibet maintained he was merely trying to protect himself.

The police advised Kibet to move from the home for a while until they sorted themselves out. He then moved in with his brother.

²⁸⁰ Anthony Karanja, "Rude Shock for Kenyan Men Facing Strong US Family Law," *Daily Nation*, February 10, 2012. <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Betrayed-in-America/-/1056/1324434/-/drjbxh/-/index.html> [accessed January 08, 2014].

Judy then filed for divorce in April last year, claiming that she could not continue living in an “abusive marriage.” Kibet denied the abuse accusation and maintained that at no time had he assaulted her and that the incident in question was a case of self-defence.

Kibet was then slapped with child support for his two children as well as alimony, which is supposed to restore his former wife to the financial position she enjoyed during their marriage.

That was not all: His wife was also awarded their matrimonial home.

Kenyan families that immigrate to the United States are usually quickly confronted with the task of reconciling their Kenyan traditions and the US culture.

Kenyan women quickly discover that the US takes violation of women’s rights very seriously, a situation that they quickly embrace. The woman also realises that she has an upper hand in matters involving custody of children after divorce, and rarely is a child taken away from its mother.

According to lawfirms.com, 70 per cent of custody cases in US are awarded to women, 10 per cent are awarded to men and 20 per cent are shared custodies.

Immigrant children also become increasingly aware of their freedoms as they integrate into the American school system.

As they interact with other children and teachers, they learn that they are protected from their parents against what is considered child abuse.

Although article 53 of the Kenyan Constitution provides for protection against child abuse, enforcement of the same is inadequate, especially in rural areas.

Cultural norms may be seen as culprits as it may be difficult for a child to report abuse cases by their parents.

Immigrant parents in the US find out that they can no longer punish their children by slapping or even whipping as they used to do in Kenya.

These forms of punishment can easily be lumped into a form of child abuse. Children are known to report the cases to their school teachers as well as to the local police.

School teachers are trained to look out for signs of child abuse and once a case is detected, they are required to report to school authorities, who may in turn contact the local authorities.

This could lead to serving jail time as well as losing custody of your children to the state authorities.

Out of the 24 Kenyan women interviewed for this story, 21 of them felt that there was some bias in the American law towards women, but that it is necessary to protect them from men, while four felt that there was unnecessary bias.

All 26 Kenyan men across the US interviewed felt that the law is biased towards women and that men often get a raw deal.

Most men pointed to state laws that require a man to continue paying child support for a child even if he discovers later that he is not the biological father.

According to a 2006 study published by *Current Anthropology*, two per cent of married men who had every confidence that the child they were bringing up was theirs ended up not being biological parents after paternity tests were conducted.

Statistics published in 2007 by Rense.com showed that 1.6 million men pay child support for children that are not theirs.

In many states, courts have ruled that no matter what the DNA results show, the man cannot abandon the child unless he can prove that he was tricked into the role by proving fraud and that he must have stopped acting as the child's father as soon as he learnt the truth.

Kenyan men, however, feel that some women often misuse the protections offered to them by these laws. Some feel that women use these laws to harass them as well as settle old or new scores.

Back to Kibet. At the time of their divorce, alimony had no expiry date in the state of Massachusetts and Kibet would have to continue paying even if Judy moved in with her new partner.

However, he may soon have some relief.

A Bill signed into law in September last year by Governor Deval Patrick set new limits on alimony, curbing Massachusetts' lifetime alimony payments. This allows those making alimony payments to stop once they retire or once a former spouse moves in with a new partner.

Since the court deemed Kibet and Judy to have a "toxic" relationship, Kibet can only see his children under supervised visitation where Judy's brother watches close by.

Supervised visitation ensures that the physical and emotional well being of children is guaranteed when the parents are in bitter divorces.

Kibet is seriously considering moving back to Kenya, severing the alimony payments that his former wife enjoys. He, however, worries about permanent separation from his 10-year-old twins.

According to Judy, however, their marriage started getting abusive in 2005. She says she suffered emotionally as Kibet often disregarded her in matters concerning family finances. "He wanted everything his way," Judy says. "It was either his way or the highway."

Judy insisted that she did not have a problem with him sending money back home, but she resented the fact that she would always have to beg for certain basic needs to be met at home.

Send money home

"I have never seen a man slash his wife's grocery list, marking some items as unnecessary while he affords to send money home," she lamented. "I just felt neglected and not important enough."

Judy, however, stands by her claim that Kibet abused her and used words that intimidated her.

“Trust me when I tell you he humiliated me in front of the children as if I was a nanny,” she continued. “I had been in that marriage for 10 years too long.”

Wanjala and Akinyi: An Encounter with US-Kenya Cultural Differences

Wanjala and Akinyi got married in their home country of Kenya and lived as husband and wife for a number of years before moving to the United States together with their children. After living in the United States for a number of years, the couple experienced problems in their marriage and got divorced. Wanjala accused his former wife of a number of things that he said she had done prior to the couple’s divorce. He accused her of having become sexually immoral once the couple had settled in the United States, being continually involved in adulterous affairs with various men, particularly one man with whom she had continued in an affair for a long time. According to Wanjala, Akinyi’s adulterous behavior had reached a climax when at one time he had caught her in the act with one of the men in the couple’s house. Wanjala stated, however, that he believed that this kind of behavior would still have caused the divorce even if it had occurred while the couple was still living in Kenya.

Wanjala further explained that Akinyi had verbally stated in conversations with other persons that she had been like a slave for many years and that she was not prepared to let this state of events continue any further. According to Wanjala, Akinyi, who because of the cultural values of the United States had found new freedom and independence as a woman, had used her new status to free herself from her husband’s authority, especially in financial matters. Wanjala mentioned that Akinyi was now working, had her own money, was in college, and did whatever and went wherever she

wanted. Wanjala observed that Akinyi had also become arrogant, frequently talking to him rudely and hurling insults at him during the time when the couple still lived together in the same house. According to Wanjala, Akinyi had even begun seeking an opportunity to get him in trouble with the law by trying to provoke him to do something for which he would be arrested. Blaming his former wife's conduct on the freedom accorded to women in the United States, Wanjala said it was because of such behavior that he had finally found it very difficult to bear with Akinyi and had decided to divorce her.

On her part, Akinyi asserted, however, that her former husband began to be sexually unfaithful to her soon after they got married. She said that Wanjala had engaged in this behavior while the couple still lived in Kenya and continued with it after they settled in the United States. Akinyi explained that Wanjala had been having adulterous affairs with various women. Asked by the researcher about the possibility that she had sexually neglected her former husband, Akinyi responded that Wanjala had had no reason or excuse to have had affairs with other women as she had continually satisfied him sexually, adding that this behavior had been Wanjala's own problem. She even admitted that by having failed to expose Wanjala's infidelity for such a long time, for fear of his possible reaction, she had manifested personal weakness.

Akinyi, in addition, explained that she had never accepted the male oppression of women that was common in Africa. She said that she had resisted this cultural trend even while the couple still lived in Kenya. Akinyi said, for instance, that the couple had never held joint bank accounts or managed their finances jointly since the beginning of their marriage. She explained that this was because she had never accepted the manner in which men in Kenya oppressed their wives by making sole decisions on their families'

financial matters even to the point of investing family money on projects that their wives knew nothing about.

Akinyi explained that she had finally been unable to continue tolerating her former husband's adulterous behaviors, which had become worse with time. She said that the situation had deteriorated to the point that she had once tried to confront a woman with whom her husband was having an affair. This woman, however, had told her off, saying that the affair was none of Akinyi's business. Akinyi went on to say that, consequently, after making numerous vain attempts to find help for her husband, she had moved out of the couple's house. She explained that Wanjala had eventually divorced her despite her refusal to be party to the divorce and mentioned that she and Wanjala had joint custody of their children.

The Interviews

The Settings

The interviews were conducted in the South Bend/Mishawaka/Elkhart metropolis in Indiana with ten Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States who have been married and lived in the country for various durations (Table 1). The interview questions were set to solicit for information on the cultural experiences of Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. The responses to the interview questions, hence, provided data that were organized into eight areas that the researcher deemed holistically representative of the Kenyan immigrant couples' experiences in the US.

<i>Details of the Numbers and Categories of the Interviewed Couples</i>			
<i>Number of years couple has been married</i>	<i>Number of couples who have lived in the United States less than 7 years</i>	<i>Number of couples who have lived in the United States more than 7 years</i>	<i>Total number of couples interviewed</i>
<i>Under 5 Years</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>5 - 10 Years</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>11 - 15 Years</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>16 -20 Years</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Over 20 Years</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>

Table 1

The interview questions covered the following ten cultural aspects:

1. Cultural aspects of the United States that the Kenyan immigrant couples appreciated.
2. Cultural aspects of the United States that the immigrant couples did not appreciate.
3. Conflicts in marital cultural values between the United States and Kenya observed by the immigrant couples.
4. The couples' experiences of cultural dissonance in the United States.
5. How the individual spouses had responded to the culture of the United States and how that had affected the couples' marital relationships.
6. How the immigrant couples' children had responded to the culture in the United States and how this had affected the couples' marriages.
7. Aspects of the culture of the United States over which the spouses had differed.

8. How the immigrant couples were coping with the culture in the United States.
9. What the couples had learned through interacting with the US culture.
10. Recommendations that the interviewed couples gave to their fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States.

Data on the issues listed above were obtained directly from the responses given by the couples interviewed. Various settings were used for the interviews as were dictated by the circumstances. The researcher interviewed each of the first five couples as well as the tenth couple separately from the rest of the couples. Except in the case of the fifth couple, where the spouses themselves wrote down their responses to the questions, the researcher took notes as the spouses gave him responses to the questions provided in the questionnaires. These six interviews were conducted with one individual couple at a time, with only the interviewer and the husband and wife in the interview room.

With respect to the remaining four couples, however, the researcher met with them all together in a common room and did not conduct verbal interviews but, instead, let them write down their own responses on the questionnaires. Each spouse, nevertheless, was handed his or her own questionnaire, thereby minimizing the chance of them influencing each other.

My use of different protocols in conducting the interviews, therefore, was necessitated by the need to work with the schedules and availability of the couples, all of whom were also workers having various work schedules.

The Languages

Both the researcher and interviewees in this research project are Kenyan immigrant spouses who have similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They, like most

Kenyans, speak a minimum of three languages: a mother-tongue (that is the first language of most Kenyans and one that varies by tribe or ethnic group), Kiswahili, and English. Kenya's forty plus local ethnic groups, hence, speak different languages, most of which are entirely different from each other. The second language utilized by the greater majority of Kenyans is Kiswahili. The third language, which increasingly large numbers of educated Kenyans speak, more so in urban areas, is English. Kiswahili is Kenya's national language, whereas English is its official language.

These three linguistic levels - mother-tongue, Kiswahili, and English - dominate Kenyan society, with members of the same ethnic group generally conversing with each other in their native language while addressing non-coethnics or persons from other ethnic groups in Kiswahili and English. Kenyans have also produced a fourth language locally known as Sheng, a slang dialect based on local languages, Kiswahili, and English, and spoken primarily by urban youth, though also understood and often used by many adults. This is the linguistic environment that influenced communication during the interviews, given that the researcher and most of the interviewees all spoke or understood at least one ethnic language in addition to Kiswahili, English, and Sheng. As commonly happens in communication among Kenyans, all these languages were interchangeably utilized during the interviews. However, since the vast majority of Kenyans in the US speak English, they understood the study questions even though their responses may have been in any of the other languages. There was, hence, no need for translation.

The Questionnaire

The interview questionnaire, which consisted of two parts, is reproduced below in Table 2 and Table 3.

Bishop Justus Musyoka's Field Research for the Doctor of Ministry									
Interview Questionnaire: Part One									
Interviewee	<input type="checkbox"/> Husband	<input type="checkbox"/> Wife	Age Bracket	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 35-45	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-55	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 55	
Date of Marriage	<input type="text"/>		Number of Children:	Born in Kenya	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 15	Born in USA	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 15
Date of Entry into the USA	<input type="text"/>		Current Educational Level	<input type="checkbox"/> High School or below	<input type="checkbox"/> College	<input type="checkbox"/> University or beyond			
Annual Income Bracket	<input type="checkbox"/> Under \$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 20,000-40,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 40,000-60,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 60,000-80,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 80,000				
<p><i>Dear interviewee: Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am very grateful for you taking the time to help in this research. Please be frank and natural in your responses. Bishop Justus Musyoka</i></p>									
<p>11. With respect to your marriage and family, what did you like the most about the culture in the United States and why?</p>									
<p>12. Similarly, what aspects of the culture in the United States did you dislike or like the least and why was this so?</p>									
<p>13. Did your Kenyan African marital cultural values or some of them conflict with those of the United States? If yes, in what ways?</p>									
<p>14. Where you did not experience any conflicts between your Kenyan cultural marital values and those of the United States, what were the reasons?</p>									
<p>15. How did your spouse personally respond to the culture in the United States and how did that affect your marital relationship?</p>									
<p>16. How did your children, if you have any, respond to the culture in the United States and how did that affect your marital relationship?</p>									
<p>17. In what cultural or social aspects did the two of you differ or disagree in your relationship as a couple and for what reasons?</p>									
<p>18. Where cultural or social aspects did cause differences/disagreements between the two of you how did you resolve the conflicts?</p>									
<p>19. In what ways have you responded to cultural ways in the United States that have conflicted with your Kenyan African cultural ways?</p>									
<p>20. As you look back into the past and evaluate your married life in the United States, what do you wish you did differently?</p>									

Table 2

Bishop Justus Musyoka's Field Research for the Doctor of Ministry Interview Questionnaire: Part Two	
3.	Descriptive terminologies - pick one in each of the following pairs of words that best describes you as a marital partner:-
	Confident - Skeptical
	Assertive - Reserved
	Excited - Indifferent
	Cooperative - Difficult
	Head - Headed
	Optimistic - Pessimistic
	Peaceful - Confrontational
	Conservative - Moderate
	Happy - Regretting
	Positive - Negative
	Encouraged - Discouraged
	Responsible - Irresponsible
4.	Given the opportunity what recommendations would you offer to fellow immigrant husbands/wives in the United States to help their marriages?

Table 3

The first part contained ten questions that sought to unveil Kenyan immigrant couples' experiences in the US with respect to the vast cultural and value differences between the US and their country of origin - Kenya. The second part contained two questions. The first asked the couples to rate themselves by selecting one word from each of twelve pairs of adjectives depicting opposite personality, emotional, and behavioral traits in a person's life. The second question asked them to make recommendations that would help their fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to strengthen their marriages. The questions sought to reveal the types of problems that Kenyan immigrant couples in the US were experiencing, identify the factors that were causing them, and solicit recommendations that could help the couples to maintain stronger marriages.

The Questions

This subsection discusses the interview questions one by one, unveiling the role of each question in the interview as well as its significance to the research process. This will show how the immigrant couples' responses to the interview questions will inform this study on the marital problems that the couples are facing, the factors causing them, and the recommendations that could help them to strengthen their marriages.

Part One

1. *With respect to your marriage and family, what do you like the most about the culture of the United States and why?*

Couples were expected to state, giving reasons, what they appreciated the most about the culture of the United States as far as their marriages and families were concerned. It was the researcher's thesis that the immigrant couples were experiencing minimal cultural dissonance in connection with US cultural aspects that they appreciated.

2. *Similarly, what aspects of the culture of the United States do you dislike or like the least and why?*

On the other hand, couples were expected to state and explain aspects of the culture of the United States that they did not appreciate and give their reasons. The couples would have experienced cultural conflicts, most likely, in the areas of the US culture that they did not appreciate.

3. *Do any of your Kenyan African marital cultural values conflict with those of the United States? If yes, in what ways?*

Couples were expected to identify, describe, and explain the cultural values of the US that they deemed to conflict with their Kenyan cultural values. Such conflicting

marital cultural values were most likely to create cultural dissonance and marital problems to the Kenyan immigrant couples.

4. *In what areas do you experience conflicts between your Kenyan cultural marital values and those of the United States and why?*

The couples were expected to personalize the cultural conflicts between the two countries and reveal areas where they had strongly felt the pressure of these conflicts. In the same way as in 3 above, the cultural conflicts between the two countries that impacted the couples the most would be the most likely to affect their marriages.

5. *How has your spouse responded to the culture of the United States and how has that affected your marital relationship?*

Spouses were asked to explain ways in which their partners had responded to the culture in the United States, whether by adopting the culture or resisting it and retaining theirs. Spouses could respond to the US culture in differing ways and to varying degrees, hence impacting their mutual and marital relationships.

6. *How have your children responded to the culture in the United States and how has that affected your marital relationship?*

The couples were asked to explain ways in which their children had interacted with the culture of the United States and how it had affected the couples' marriages. The manner in which the immigrant couples' children responded to the US culture was thought to be very vital to the couples' marital relationships.

7. *In what cultural or social aspects, if any, have the two of you differed or disagreed in your relationship as a couple and why?*

The spouses were asked to state specific aspects of the culture of the United States over which they had differed as marital partners. Couples' differing perspectives over cultural issues would be likely to create tension that could consequently lead to marital problems.

8. *Where cultural or social aspects have caused differences between the two of you, how have you resolved your conflicts?*

The spouses were expected to explain ways in which they had dealt with such differences between them, if they had had any. Kenyan immigrant couples with effective conflict resolution strategies that have helped to sustain their marriages in the US could contribute greatly to this study by sharing those strategies.

9. *In what ways have you responded to US cultural ways that have conflicted with your Kenyan African cultural norms?*

Couples were expected to explain how they had coped with US cultural values that differed from their African ones. Similar to question 8 above, this study could benefit from knowing how the immigrant couples had adjusted to US cultural values that had conflicted with their Kenyan cultural norms.

10. *As you look back and evaluate your married life in the United States, what do you wish you had done differently?*

Couples were expected to outline lessons they had learned during their lives in the US, whether by having adopted or rejected the country's cultural values. In this way, the couples were expected to encourage their fellow immigrant couples to avoid making similar mistakes and to adopt the lessons their counterparts had learned.

Part Two

1. *Descriptive terminologies - pick one in each of the following pairs of words that best describes you as a marital partner:-*

Confident – Skeptical

Assertive - Reserved

Excited - Indifferent

Cooperative - Difficult

Head - Headed

Optimistic - Pessimistic

Peaceful – Confrontational

Conservative - Moderate

Happy – Unhappy

Positive – Negative

Encouraged - Discouraged

Responsible – Irresponsible

This part was for rating individual spouses' personality, emotional, and behavioral traits. The researcher believed that individual spouses' attitudes influenced the Kenyan immigrants' cultural experiences, which in turn affected their married lives in the US.

2. *Given the opportunity, what recommendations would you offer to fellow Kenyan immigrant husbands/wives in the United States to strengthen their marriages?*

This last question sought to solicit the couples' recommendations or lessons that could be used to strengthen fellow Kenyan immigrant marriages in the US. The recommendations, therefore, could profoundly contribute to the overriding purpose of this study.

Data Presentation

1) Data from the Case Studies

Tables 4 – 9 below present data on various cross-cutting aspects of the three case studies presented earlier (pages 3-10). While the researcher had no way of confirming the information in the case studies, he, nevertheless, had reason to accept the validity of the information provided based on its conformity with the literature reviewed in Chapter Three, the field interview responses, and the researcher's own knowledge of the subject as a Kenyan immigrant spouse.

Table 4 contains data regarding occurrences in the case studies of Kenyan immigrant women enjoying their protection by US laws and authorities. The women, in addition, were accused by men in the case studies of abusing their rights and harassing their husbands.

Kenyan Immigrant Women's Use and Misuse of the Empowerment Given to Them by US Laws and Authorities

<i>The Immigrant Couples' Cultural Experiences</i>	<i>Case Study 1</i>	<i>Case Study 2</i>	<i>Case Study 3</i>	<i>Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>Non-Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>
<i>Kenyan immigrant women enjoying protection, freedom, power, and independence, including making and controlling their own finances</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Kenyan immigrant women accused of abusing their privileges and harassing their husbands</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Kenyan women aggressively and firmly defending their rights</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Totals for three case studies</i>	0	3	3	6	3	9
<i>Percentage contribution from the Case Studies</i>				67%	33%	100%

Table 4

Table 5 contains data regarding occurrences in the case studies of claims that Kenyan immigrant men were disfavored by US laws and authorities. It was also claimed that immigrant men were disrespected by their wives, who were protected by US laws.

*Kenyan Immigrant Men's Claims/Feelings of Disfavor
by US Law and Disrespect by Their Wives*

<i>The Immigrant Couples' Cultural Experiences</i>	<i>Case Study 1</i>	<i>Case Study 2</i>	<i>Case Study 3</i>	<i>Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>Non-Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>
<i>Kenyan immigrant men: US laws/authorities are biased in support of women</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Kenyan immigrant men: Men in US are disrespected by their wives</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Kenyan immigrant men: Kenyan immigrant women abuse their privileges of protection by the law against the men</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Totals for three case studies</i>	0	3	3	6	3	9
<i>Percentage contribution from the case studies</i>				67%	33%	100%

Table 5

Table 6 shows data regarding occurrences in the case studies of Kenyan immigrant children being protected by US law and authorities. There were also claims that the children were overprotected, rebellious, and resistant to parental authority.

*Kenyan Immigrant Children Protected by US Law
and Claims of Their Overprotection and Rebellion*

<i>The Immigrant Couples' Cultural Experiences</i>	<i>Case Study 1</i>	<i>Case Study 2</i>	<i>Case Study 3</i>	<i>Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>Non-Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>
<i>Reports/claims: Children and their rights protected by US law and authorities; abused children and children suspected of being or claiming to be abused seized by authorities; slapping/whipping of children not allowed; and parents punished for abusing or being accused of abusing children</i>	√	√	0	2	1	3
<i>Reports/claims: Kenyan immigrant children are aware of their freedoms and protections, resist parental authority, report parents to teachers/ police</i>	√	√	0	2	1	3
<i>Reports/claims: American teachers search and report signs of child abuse</i>	√	√	0	2	1	3
<i>Total for three case studies</i>	3	3	0	6	3	9
<i>Percentage Contributions from the case studies</i>				67%	33%	100%

Table 6

Table 7 contains data regarding claims and/or reports in the case studies of differences between Kenyan and US cultural values. It also highlights the consequences the Kenyan immigrants face for failing to adapt their cultural traditions to US culture.

Kenyan/African Cultural Values Versus US Cultural Values in the Case Studies

<i>Cultural Conflicts Between Kenya and the United States</i>	<i>Case Study 1</i>	<i>Case Study 2</i>	<i>Case Study 3</i>	<i>Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>Non-Contributing Case Studies</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>
<i>Reports/Claims: Kenyan immigrants must reconcile their cultural traditions to the culture and laws of the US and/or they face painful consequences for not doing so</i>	√	√	√	3	0	3
<i>Reports/claims: protection of children by the authorities is inadequate in Kenya; children in Kenya are not able to report their parents to the authorities; US authorities take tough measures towards the protection of children</i>	√	√	0	2	1	3
<i>Reports/Claims: Kenyan men are dictatorial and oppressive to their wives; women in Kenya do not enjoy personal or financial freedom; Kenyan immigrant women in US enjoy their independence and need protection from their husbands.</i>	0	√	√	2	1	3
<i>Totals for three case studies</i>	2	3	2	7	2	9
<i>Percentage contributions for cultural differences</i>				78%	22%	100%

Table 7

Table 8 shows summary percentages of contributions from the case studies regarding Kenyan immigrant couples' experiences of cultural conflicts in the US. The table also summarizes the reported cultural conflicts between the two countries.

Summary Contributions for the Cultural Conflicts from the Case Studies

<i>Summary of Contributions Regarding Experiences of the US Culture Gathered From All Three Case Studies</i>	<i>Available Data</i>	<i>Unavailable</i>	<i>TOTALS</i>
<i>Reports/Claims of Women's Freedom, Empowerment and Financial Independence</i>	67%	33%	100%
<i>Reports/Claims of Men's Disfavor and Harassment by the law and Disrespect by their Wives</i>	67%	33%	100%
<i>Reports/Claims of Children's Protection, Freedom, and Resistance to Parental Authority</i>	67%	33%	100%
<i>Reports/Claims of Kenyan/African Cultural Values Conflicting with US Cultural Values</i>	78%	22%	100%

Table 8

2) Demographic Data from the Field Interviews

Tables 9-16 below show the distribution of the individual spouses' demographic data: age groups, duration of marriage, length of stay in the US, educational and income levels, and the birthplaces and ages of their children. The 10 couples fell under two age groups of 6 older and 4 younger couples.

Table 9 shows the couples' age distribution. The 6 older couples were *Couples 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10* were older and aged over 35 years. The 4 younger couples were *Couples 4, 7, and 8, and Husband 9* and were aged under 35. *Wife 9*, though aged over 35 years, was part of a younger couple.

Distribution of Individual Spouses' Age Groups

INDIVIDUAL SPOUSE'S AGE GROUP	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTAL IN EACH AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGES
25-35							√	√					√	√	√	√					7	35%
36-45		√			√	√												√	√	√	4	20%
46-55	√							√	√	√	√										7	35%
Over 55			√	√																	2	10%
TOTAL NUMBER OF SPOUSES																					20	100%

Table 9

Table 10 contains the distribution of the couples' 29 children's countries of birth. Eighteen of the children were born in Kenya, 15 of them to the older couples, while 11 of them were born in the US, 8 of them to the younger couples.

Distribution of the Couples' Children's Birth Countries

CHILD'S COUNTRY OF BIRTH	<i>Couple 1</i>	<i>Couple 2</i>	<i>Couple 3</i>	<i>Couple 4</i>	<i>Couple 5</i>	<i>Couple 6</i>	<i>Couple 7</i>	<i>Couple 8</i>	<i>Couple 9</i>	<i>Couple 10</i>	TOTAL IN EACH BIRTH COUNTRY	PERCENTAGES
<i>Kenya</i>	2	4	1	1	4	4	1	1	0	0	18	62%
<i>United States</i>	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	2	3	11	38%
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN	3	4	3	1	4	6	2	1	2	3	29	100%

Table 10

Table 11 shows the distribution of the couples' children's age groups. Twelve of the couples' children were 15 years of age and over and 17 were aged under 15 years. All but 1 of the older children were born to the older couples, while all but 1 of the younger couples' children were under 15 years of age.

Distribution of the Couples' Children's Age Groups

CHILD'S AGE GROUP	<i>Couple 1</i>	<i>Couple 2</i>	<i>Couple 3</i>	<i>Couple 4</i>	<i>Couple 5</i>	<i>Couple 6</i>	<i>Couple 7</i>	<i>Couple 8</i>	<i>Couple 9</i>	<i>Couple 10</i>	TOTAL IN EACH AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGES
<i>Under 15</i>	1	0	3	1	3	2	1	1	2	3	17	59%
<i>15 And Over</i>	2	4	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	12	41%
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN	3	4	3	1	4	6	2	1	2	3	29	100%

Table 11

Table 12 shows the distribution of the couples' durations of marriage. One of the 4 younger couples had been married for 5 years and the other 3 for 6 years. The 6 older couples had been married for 9, 13, 19, 20, 30, and 31 years.

Distribution of the Couples' Durations of Marriage

DURATION THE COUPLE HAS BEEN MARRIED	Couple 1	Couple 2	Couple 3	Couple 4	Couple 5	Couple 6	Couple 7	Couple 8	Couple 9	Couple 10	TOTAL IN EACH CATEGORY	PERCENTAGES
0 – 5 Years									√		1	10%
6 – 10 Years				√			√	√		√	4	40%
11 – 15 Years			√								1	10%
16 – 20 Years	√										1	10%
20 Years And Over		√			√	√					3	30%
TOTAL NUMBER OF COUPLES											10	100%

Table 12

Table 13 contains the distribution of the couples' durations of stay in the US. The 4 younger couples had stayed in the US for under 7 years, two of them for 1 year each and the other two for 3 and 4 years. The 6 older couples had stayed in the country for over 7 years; three of them for 8 years each and the other three for 9, 12, and 14 years.

Distribution of the Couples' Durations of Stay in the United States

DURATION THE COUPLE HAD LIVED IN THE UNITED STATES	Couple 1	Couple 2	Couple 3	Couple 4	Couple 5	Couple 6	Couple 7	Couple 8	Couple 9	Couple 10	TOTAL IN EACH CATEGORY	PERCENTAGES
Under 7 Years				√			√	√	√		4	40%
Over 7 Years	√	√	√		√	√				√	6	60%
TOTAL NUMBER OF COUPLES											10	100%

Table 13

Table 14 shows the distribution of the individual educational levels of the spouses. Three spouses had high school or below, eleven spouses had college, and six spouses had university or higher educational levels.

Distribution of Individual Spouses' Educational Levels

INDIVIDUAL SPOUSES' ACADEMIC LEVELS	Individual Spouses										TOTAL IN EACH LEVEL	PERCENTAGES										
	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5			Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10
High School or Below															✓	✓			✓		3	15%
College		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	11	55%
University or Beyond	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓										6	30%
TOTAL NUMBER OF SPOUSES																					20	100%

Table 14

Table 15 contains data on the couples' annual income levels. Only 4 spouses earned below \$20,000 annually. Twelve spouses earned \$20,000-\$40,000; 3 spouses \$40,000-\$60,000; and 1 spouse above \$80,000 annually. Most of the spouses, therefore, most likely earned above the US minimum wage for the state of Indiana for 2012.²⁸¹

Distribution of Individual Spouses' Annual Incomes

INDIVIDUAL SPOUSES' ANNUAL INCOME	Individual Spouses										TOTAL	PERCENTAGES										
	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5			Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10
Below \$20,000				✓											✓	✓	✓	✓			4	20%
\$20,000 - \$40,000	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	12	60%
\$40,000 - \$60,000							✓				✓				✓						3	15%
Above \$60,000					✓																1	5%
TOTALS																					20	100%

Table 15

²⁸¹ US Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, "Changes in Basic Minimum Wages in Non-Farm Employment under State Law: Selected Years 1968 To 2013," http://www.dol.gov/whd/state/state_MinWageHis.htm [accessed April 3, 2014].

Table 16 summarizes Tables 1-16. All 10 couples entered the US married; two had no children and 3 had all their children at the time of entry. Seventeen of the children were under 15 years of age. The 4 younger couples had been married for 5-6 years and stayed in the US for 1-4 years while the 6 older couples had been married for 9-31 years and stayed in the US for 8-14 years. Most spouses had college education and income above \$20,000 annually. Most of the older couples had been married and stayed in the US for longer and had higher educational and income levels than the younger couples.

Summary of the Distributions of Information on the Couples and Their Children

DISTRIBUTION ITEMS	Couple 1	Couple 2	Couple 3	Couple 4	Couple 5	Couple 6	Couple 7	Couple 8	Couple 9	Couple 10
<i>The spouses' age groups</i>	H: 45-55 W: 35-45	H: Over 55 W: Over 55	H: 35-45 W: 35-45	H: 25-35 W: 25-35	H: 45-55 W: 45-55	H: 45-55 W: 45-55	H: 25-35 W: 25-35	H: 25-35 W: 25-35	H: 25-35 W: 35-45	H: 35-45 W: 35-45
<i>The children's countries of birth</i>	2 Kenya 1 US	4 Kenya 0 US	1 Kenya 2 US	1 Kenya 0 US	4 Kenya 0 US	4 Kenya 2 US	1 Kenya 1 US	1 Kenya 1 US	0 Kenya 2 US	0 Kenya 3 US
<i>The children's age groups</i>	2 Over 15 1 Under 15	4 Over 15 0 Under 15	0 Over 15 3 Under 15	0 Over 15 1 Under 15	1 Over 15 3 Under 15	4 Over 15 2 Under 15	1 Over 15 1 Under 15	0 Over 15 1 Under 15	0 Over 15 2 Under 15	0 Over 15 3 Under 15
<i>The couples' durations of marriage</i>	15-20	Over 20	10-15	6-10	Over 20	Over 20	6-10	6-10	0-5	6-10
<i>The couples' durations of stay in the US</i>	Above 7	Above 7	Above 7	Below 7	Above 7	Above 7	Below 7	Below 7	Below 7	Above 7
<i>The spouses' educational levels</i>	H: University/Beyond W: College	H: College W: College	H: University/Beyond W: University/Beyond	H: College W: College	H: University/Beyond W: University/Beyond	H: University/Beyond W: College	H: College W: College	H: High School W: High School	H: College W: College	H: High School W: College
<i>Individual spouses' annual income levels In US Dollars</i>	H: 20,000 – 40,000 W: 20,000 – 40,000	H: 20,000 – 40,000 W: Below 20,000	H: Above 80,000 W: 40,000 – 60,000	H: 20,000 – 40,000 W: 20,000 – 40,000	H: 20,000 – 40,000 W: 20,000 – 40,000	H: 40,000 – 60,000 W: 20,000 – 40,000	H: 20,000 – 40,000 W: 20,000 – 40,000	H: 40,000 – 60,000 W: Below 20,000	H: Below 20,000 W: Below 20,000	H: 20,000 – 40,000 W: 20,000 – 40,000

Table 16

3) Narrative Data from the Field Interviews

Table 17 shows data on the couples' appreciation of certain aspects of the culture of the US. The couples primarily appreciated 1) the protection, freedom, power, and independence of women, 2) availability of jobs, schooling, and educational funding for families, 3) children being more valued, free, and protected, 4) marital love and dignity and more expression of love between spouses and from parents to children, and 5) husbands helping with domestic work.

The Couples' Appreciations of Certain Aspects of the US Culture

ASPECTS OF THE US CULTURE THAT THE COUPLES APPRECIATED	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
	<i>Women more protected, free, powerful, and independent</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Availability of jobs, schooling, and educational funding for family</i>			✓	✓			✓											✓	✓	✓	3 (15%) 3 (15%)
<i>Children more valued, free, protected, and bold</i>	✓	✓																	✓	✓	2 (10%) 2 (10%)
<i>Marital love and dignity between spouses, more expression of love between spouses and from parents to children</i>													✓	✓	✓						2 (10%) 2 (10%)
<i>Husbands helping in domestic work</i>		✓					✓														1 (5%) 1 (5%)
<i>Polygamy is illegal and disallowed</i>				✓																	1 (5%)
<i>Absence of housemaids compels fathers to have time for children</i>					✓																1 (5%)
<i>Individualism and absence of communal living leaves room for family privacy and spouses' personal freedom</i>					✓																1 (5%)
<i>Good infrastructure making it easy for people to go about their businesses</i>							✓														1 (5%)
<i>Equality and independence between marital partners</i>									✓												1 (5%)

Table 17

Table 18 shows data on the couples' encounters with socially/morally-related cultural conflicts. The couples disapproved of gay marriages, loose sexual morals, the absence of communal life, and extreme individualism and personal freedoms.

The Couples' Encounters with Socially and Morally-Related Cultural Conflicts

SOCIALLY AND MORALLY-RELATED US CULTURAL TRAITS THE COUPLES DISAPPROVED AND STRUGGLED WITH	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
	Gay marriages and loose sexual and social morals	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Absence of communal living and excessive individualism and personal freedom of expression and behavior	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		5 (25%) 4 (20%)

Table 18

Table 19 shows data on the couples' views on divorce in the United States. The couples disapproved of the country's easy divorces and high divorce rates and blamed Kenyan immigrant divorces on a number of aspects of US culture.

The Couples' Views on Divorce and Easy Divorces in the United States

VIEWS ON DIVORCE AND US DIVORCE RATES THE COUPLES EXPRESSED	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES	
	Divorce too easy, causing high divorce rates	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Kenyan immigrant divorces caused by men being powerless, women and children being too powerful and disrespectful to the men, and US culture accepting divorce	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		2 (10%) 2 (10%)	
TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS																					9 (45%)	
TOTAL NON-CONTRIBUTORS																						13 (55%)

Table 19

Table 20 shows data on the couples' encounters with marriage-related cultural conflicts. The couples complained about merged gender roles, light esteem for marriage, the powerlessness and disfavor of men in society and disrespect by their wives, and the overprotection, power, and abuse of privileges by women in the US.

The Couples' Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts

MARRIAGE-RELATED US CULTURAL TRAITS THE COUPLES AND STRUGGLED WITH																					TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	
<i>Merged gender roles, mutual disrespect, and competition over family headship</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		8 (40%)
		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	6 (30%)
<i>Marriage too lightly esteemed and marriages nominal, individualistic and temporary</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		6 (30%)
		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	7 (35%)
<i>Men powerless, harassed, degraded, disfavored in society, and disrespected by their wives</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		6 (30%)
		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	6 (30%)
<i>Women too protected, powerful, independent, free, and abusing their privilege to harass the men</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		4 (20%)
		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	5 (25%)

Table 20

Table 21 shows data on the couples' encounters with economically-related cultural conflicts. They primarily disapproved of the culture of overworking, the absence of housemaids, and the determination of a man's respect by his financial status in the US.

The Couples' Encounters with Economically-Related Cultural Conflicts

ECONOMICALLY-RELATED US CULTURAL TRAITS THE COUPLES STRUGGLED WITH	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES	
	Culture of overworking and denying families time for each other	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Absence of housemaids making it hard for husbands and parents	✓		✓			✓		✓														2 (10%) 2 (10%)
Men's financial statuses determining his respect															✓				✓	✓		2 (10%) 1 (5%)
Financial exposure and control of families by state									✓													1 (5%)

Table 21

Table 22 shows data on the couples' encounters with children-related cultural conflicts. Various couples indicated that children were overprotected, parental authority diminished, parents tied down with children, and that the children were Americanized.

The Couples' Encounters with Children-Related Cultural Conflicts

US CULTURAL VALUES AFFECTING THE COUPLES' CHILDREN	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES	
	Children too protected, powerful, and free and parental authority diminished	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
Parents having to be with their little children all the time and involvement in day cares tying down the parents						✓		✓	✓	✓												3 (15%) 1 (5%)
Immigrant children Americanized and ignorant about Kenyan/African ways	✓														✓	✓						2 (10%) 1 (5%)

Table 22

Table 23 shows data on the couples' coping with children-related cultural conflicts. Various couples indicated that they had coped by 1) concertedly parenting and guiding their children, 2) teaching their children Kenyan ways, 3) holding meetings and spending time with their children, 4) praying for their children, and 5) making sure that their homes had Kenyan outlooks and enforcing it.

The Couples' Coping with Children-Related Cultural Conflicts

WAYS THE COUPLES DEALT WITH THEIR AMERICAN ORIENTED CHILDREN																					TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	
Teaching, parenting and providing direction to their children, e.g., making good choices for them			√				√		√		√									√	5 (25%)
				√				√		√		√									√
Teaching their children the Kenyan/African ways of life	√						√		√				√							√	5 (25%)
								√		√										√	3 (15%)
Holding family meetings and spending time with their children									√				√								2 (10%)
										√				√							2 (10%)
Praying for their children			√										√								2 (10%)
				√										√							2 (10%)
Making their homes entirely Kenyan and letting their children know it	√																				1 (5%)
		√																			1 (5%)

Table 23

Table 24 shows data on the couples' coping with social, moral, economic, and marital cultural conflicts. The couples indicated that they had coped mainly by 1) sticking to their Kenyan culture, 2) maintaining unity on cultural issues, 3) accommodating themselves in the US culture, 4) exercising their faith in God, 5) mutually discussing issues and resolving their conflicts, 6) working around busy schedules and making time for family, and 7) remaining faithful to their initial mutual agreements.

The Couples' Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts

SKILLS OF COPING WITH CULTURAL DISONNANCE THAT THE COUPLES UTILIZED																					TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	
Sticking to their Kenyan culture	√		√		√		√		√		√		√				√		√		9 (45%)
Having united views, compromising with each other's interests, avoiding differing over cultural issues	√	√					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	9 (45%)
Accommodating themselves in US culture, accepting some aspects and rejecting others					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7 (35%)
Exercising their faiths and praying to God			√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√							5 (25%)
Spouses having mutual discussion of issues and resolving their conflicts						√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					3 (15%)
Working around busy schedules to make and spend time together and hold family meetings	√	√	√	√					√	√				√							3 (15%)
Faithfulness to initial mutual agreements.			√	√	√																2 (10%)
Working hard to support their families													√	√							1 (5%)
Leading contented lives													√	√							1 (5%)

Table 24

Table 25 shows data on the immigrant couples' gains from their interactions with the US culture. The main gains made by various couples were that the couples had gained increased unity in their mutual relationships and become stronger in their marriages. Some of the husbands had also been culturally transformed and were appreciating their wives more and helping them with domestic work.

The Couples' Gains from Their Interactions with the US Culture

CULTURAL GAINS THE COUPLES HAD MADE	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
<i>Increased mutual unity and closeness, operating together, and stronger marriages</i>							√	√			√		√	√		√	√	√			4 (20%) 4 (20%)
<i>Husbands appreciating wife better and helping in the house</i>	√		√			√												√	√		3 (15%) 2 (10%)
<i>Discovered the mistake of investing more back home than in the US for the benefits of their immediate families</i>									√	√											1 (5%) 1 (5%)
<i>Growth in their Christian lives</i>							√	√													1 (5%) 1 (5%)
<i>Spending time with their children</i>																	√				1 (5%)

Table 25

Table 26 shows data on the couples' recommendations to their fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. The couples mainly recommended to their fellow immigrant couples to 1) maintain their Kenyan cultural roots, 2) fear and trust God and be prayerful, 3) maintain humility and mutuality in their relationships, 4) spend time with each other and their children, 5) hold mutual discussions and maintain united views on issues, and 5) to receive counsel from professionals.

The Couples' Recommendations to Fellow Kenyan Immigrant Couples

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FELLOW KENYAN IMMIGRANT COUPLES THAT THE COUPLES MADE	Husband 1	Wife 1	Husband 2	Wife 2	Husband 3	Wife 3	Husband 4	Wife 4	Husband 5	Wife 5	Husband 6	Wife 6	Husband 7	Wife 7	Husband 8	Wife 8	Husband 9	Wife 9	Husband 10	Wife 10	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
	<i>Remember their roots, be themselves, and maintain the Kenyan cultural ways, e.g. listening to the elders</i>	√		√		√		√				√				√				√	
<i>Fear/trust God and His word, be prayerful, pray as a family, have prayer partners</i>	√		√						√		√					√			√		4 (20%) 3 (15%)
<i>Humility, mutual understanding, communication and openness, Sacrifices and compromises and love in good and bad times</i>					√		√		√				√		√				√		5 (25%) 2 (10%)
<i>Spend time together as family and with children and talk to your children</i>																√			√		2 (10%) 1 (5%)
<i>Mutual discussions of and united approach to issues</i>							√		√		√										2 (10%) 1 (5%)
<i>Counsel from pastors, successful people, and professionals</i>									√		√										1 (5%) 1 (5%)
<i>Avoid involving outsiders</i>										√											1 (5%)
<i>Live within their means</i>													√								1 (5%) 1 (5%)
<i>Remain in their marriages</i>							√														1 (5%)

Table 26

Table 27 shows data on the couples' self-evaluation using adjectives depicting opposite personality, emotional, and behavioral traits. All 20 spouses indicated that they were *confident, cooperative, optimistic, peaceful, happy, positive, encouraged, and responsible*. Two wives said that they were *assertive* and 2 other wives said that they were *excited*. Seven husbands and 3 wives said that they were *heads*. Four husbands and 2 wives said they were *conservative*. Three spouses did not provide responses concerning being *optimistic* or *pessimistic, conservative* or *moderate, and positive* or *negative*.

The Couples' Personality, Emotional, and Behavioral Traits

OPPOSITE PERSONALITY, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL ADJECTIVES	Husband One	Wife One	Husband Two	Wife Two	Husband Three	Wife Three	Husband Four	Wife Four	Husband Five	Wife Five	Husband Six	Wife Six	Husband Seven	Wife Seven	Husband Eight	Wife Eight	Husband Nine	Wife Nine	Husband Ten	Wife Ten	NO RESPONSE	TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES
1. Confident Skeptical	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	20 (100%)
																						0
2. Assertive Reserved	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	0	18 (90%)
		√																√				2
3. Excited Indifferent	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	18 (90%)
									√		√											2
4. Cooperative Difficult	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	20 (100%)
																						0
5. Head Headed	√		√		√	√	√		√		√		√		√			√	√		0	10 (50%)
		√		√				√	√		√	√		√	√	√	√			√		10
6. Optimistic Pessimistic	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	1	19 (95%)
																						0
7. Peaceful Confrontational	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	20 (100%)
																						0
8. Conservative Moderate	√		√	√	√				√				√	√	√	√	√	√		√	1	6 (30%)
						√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		13
9. Happy Regretting	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	20 (100%)
																						0
10. Positive Negative	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	1	19 (95%)
																						0
11. Encouraged Discouraged	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	20 (100%)
																						0
12. Responsible Irresponsible	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	20 (100%)
																						0

Table 27

Table 28 shows the interviewed couples' patterns of acculturation, which followed the couples' two age groups of four younger and six older couples (Table 10). As shown earlier, all the younger couples' children were either born in or raised in the US, while most of the older couples' children were born in Kenya (Table 11). Of the 12 children that were over 15 years of age, 5 were born to the older couples (Table 12). All 6 older couples had been married for 9 or more years and lived in the US for 8 or more years, while the 4 younger couples had been married for 6 or less years and lived in the US for 4 or less years (Tables 13, 14). All spouses having university education or beyond and most of the high income earners were among the older couples (Tables 15 and 16). The older spouses appeared to be more conservative and the younger spouses more liberal, culturally.

Older Versus Younger Couples' Interview Responses

	<i>Older Couples</i>		<i>Younger Couples</i>	
<i>75% and Over</i>	<i>Husband as "head" (6)</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>Indication of being "moderate" (8)</i>	<i>100%</i>
	<i>Men powerless, disfavored, harassed (11)</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>Increased mutual unity (7)</i>	<i>88%</i>
	<i>Marriage lightly esteemed in US (10)</i>	<i>83%</i>		
	<i>Merged gender roles in US frustrating (9)</i>	<i>75%</i>		
	<i>Women too protected, free, powerful (9)</i>	<i>75%</i>		
	<i>Culture of overworking frustrating (9)</i>	<i>75%</i>		
<i>50% and Over</i>	<i>Children too powerful, parents too weak (7)</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>Merged gender roles in US frustrating (5)</i>	<i>63%</i>
	<i>Divorce too easy, divorce rates too high (7)</i>	<i>58%</i>		
	<i>Absence of communal living frustrating (6)</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>Culture of overworking in US frustrating (4)</i>	<i>50%</i>
	<i>Indication of being "conservative" (6)</i>	<i>50%</i>		
<i>25% and Over</i>	<i>Indication of being "moderate" (5)</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>Marriage lightly esteemed in US (3)</i>	<i>38%</i>
			<i>Children too powerful, parents too weak (3)</i>	<i>38%</i>
			<i>Absence of communal living frustrating (2)</i>	<i>25%</i>
			<i>Divorce too easy, divorce rates too high (2)</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Under 25%</i>			<i>Men powerless, disfavored, harassed (1)</i>	<i>14%</i>
	<i>Increased mutual unity (1)</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>Husband as "head" (1)</i>	<i>14%</i>
<i>0%</i>			<i>Women too protected, free, powerful (0)</i>	<i>0%</i>
			<i>Indication of being "conservative" (0)</i>	<i>0%</i>

Table 28

Data Analysis

This section analyses and discusses the data gathered from the three Case Studies and interviews with the ten couples as displayed in Tables 4 to 28 above.

The Couples' Appreciations of Certain Aspects of the US Culture

The US cultural aspects that the Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States appreciated the most were that (1) women in the US were more protected, free, powerful, and independent; (2) there was easy availability of jobs, schooling, and educational funding for family; (3) children were more valued, free, protected, and bold; and (4) that there existed marital love and dignity between spouses and more expression of love between husbands, wives, and their children.

Protection, Freedom, Power, and Independence of Women

As data from most of the case studies show (*Table 4*), women in the US (1) enjoy the protection of the law and authorities and are free, powerful, and independent, (2) make and control their own finances and (3) are more aggressive and firm in defending their rights. In the second case study, the lady in the union had boldly stood up against her husband's mistreatment, eventually called the police on him, and later divorced him. In the third case study, the husband claims that once the couple had settled in the US and his wife had realized that she was protected by US law and authorities, and after she had obtained a job and begun making and managing her own money, she had begun rebelling against him, saying that she had lived long enough as a slave.

Similarly, 50% of the interviewed couples (*Table 17*) appreciated the protection, empowerment, and freedom of women in the US. They mentioned (1) gender equality,

justice, and non-discrimination (*Wife 4, Couple 8*), (2) better treatment, compared to women in Kenya (*Wives 4, 8, 9*), (3) respect (*Couple 10*) and help with household chores (*Wife 1, Couple 4*) by their husbands, (4) protection against violence from their husbands (*Wife 1*), some of whom come to the US as dictators (*Wife 1*), (5) enjoyment of financial freedom (*Husband 3*), (6) promotion of both spouses financially, academically, and professionally, with neither limiting the other's dreams (*Husband 5, Wife 9*), and (7) having a voice (*Couple 4, Wife 8*). Some women, however, abuse these rights (*Couple 2*).

Women have, admittedly, been abused and denied their human rights in Kenya and the rest of Africa. Kenya's patriarchal system²⁸² and the values that promote it,²⁸³ are to blame for the fate of women in Kenya. Women have consequently developed low self-esteem²⁸⁴ as society confines them to domestic spheres.²⁸⁵ Kenyan immigrant women, hence, are grateful for their status in the US, given the many things a woman in Kenya cannot do without obtaining her husband's permission.²⁸⁶ This has been the reason why, when some African immigrant men have continued their chauvinism in the US²⁸⁷ and sought to subject their wives to these same conditions, most of the immigrant women have resisted such attempts. However, things are getting better for women in Kenya as the country's new constitution, guarantees both men and women equal access to their

²⁸² Mary Nyangweso Wangila, *Female Circumcision: The Interplay of Religion, Culture, and Gender in Kenya* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 23.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Laura C. Rudolph, "Kenyan Americans," Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America, Encyclopedia.com, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3405800097.html> [accessed March 23, 2014].

²⁸⁷ John A. Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 113.

human rights²⁸⁸ and gender equality in representation,²⁸⁹ among other provisions. Kenya has made significant efforts towards improving the status of women²⁹⁰ and Kenyan women have aggressively participated in politics and fought for their rights.

Availability of Job and Schooling Opportunities

The interviewed couples also appreciated the availability of jobs, schooling, and educational funding in the US for families. Thirty percent of the spouses (*Table 17*) appreciated (1) the abundance of jobs and schooling availability for the whole family, enabling each person to take care of his or her own needs (*Couple 2*), especially for women, who did not have similar educational opportunities in Kenya (*Wife 9*), (2) the help offered by the government to individuals for education (*Couple 10*), and (3) the man being able to conveniently both work and lead his family and families (all ages) being able to both work and go to school at the same time because of good roads, uncongested traffic, varying work schedules, and affordable schools (*Husband 4*).

In contrast, despite some notable advances, Kenya is still economically unstable, many Kenyans live in poverty,²⁹¹ and good education is unaffordable. Many Kenyan immigrants, hence, move to the United States in search of better economic and

²⁸⁸ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 4, part 2, sec. 27, (National Council for Law Reporting, 2010), 24, <http://kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/The%20Constitution%20of%20Kenya.pdf> [accessed March 27, 2014].

²⁸⁹ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 7, part 1, sec. 81, (National Council for Law Reporting, 2010), 51, <http://kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/The%20Constitution%20of%20Kenya.pdf> [accessed March 27, 2014].

²⁹⁰ Wangila, 29.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

educational opportunities, as Kanya,²⁹² Wangila,²⁹³ Arthur,²⁹⁴ and Kioko²⁹⁵ have shown. Kenyan immigrant couples in the US, hence, appreciate the educational and work opportunities in the US.

Protection, Freedom, and Boldness of Children

The third US cultural aspect the interviewed couples appreciated was the protection of children by the authorities. Data from two of the case studies (*Table 6*) show that (1) children and their rights are protected by the law, (2) Kenyan immigrant children themselves are aware of their freedoms and report abusive parents to the teachers or local police (*Table 6*), and (3) American teachers look out for and report any signs of children abuse by their parents. In the first case study, after the teachers had suspected the children of having been abused, they reported the matter to the authorities and Kilonzo was arrested and charged. In contrast, according to data in *Table 7*, the protection of children by the authorities is inadequate in Kenya.

Similarly, 20% of the interviewed couples liked the way children in the US were more free, protected, and bold (*Table 17*). They observed that in the US, (1) unlike what the case was in Kenya, whenever one neglected his or her children, the government took them away from him or her (*Husband 1*), (2) even cashiers at the stores usually asked the children why they were not in school (*Wife 1*), (3) there was a requirement of child

²⁹² Hugo Kanya, "African Immigrant Families," in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, ed. Monica McGoldrick, Joseph Giordano, and Nydia Garcia-Preto (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 103, http://books.google.com/books?id=6A11kB_6GyMC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed March 27, 2014].

²⁹³ Wangila, 12.

²⁹⁴ Arthur, 22-23.

²⁹⁵ Maria Mwikali Kioko, "Transnational Connections of First Generation Immigrants from Kenya in the United States." (PhD diss., Graduate School-New Brunswick Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2010), 93-94.

support which kept men on their toes who carelessly produced children and failed to take care of them, a practice that started happening in Kenya only recently (*Husband 1*), and (4) the children, hence, were safer (*Couple 10*).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that children in Kenya and Africa are loved and valued as the “seal of marriage” and heirs to succeeding generations.²⁹⁶ But some of the disciplinary methods used by parents and teachers are violent and harmful to the children. Kenyans have also taken a long time to make and implement laws that could protect the children from such abuse. There has, consequently, been much public outcry against cases of child abuse. Kenya’s new constitution, however, guarantees the identity, education, care, protection and freedom of “every child.”²⁹⁷ Ongoing cultural and political changes, therefore, are expected to improve the protection of children in Kenya.

Love and Dignity between Spouses and Expression of Love in the Family

The interviewed couples also appreciated how in the US love was demonstrated between spouses and parents and children (*Table 17*). They observed that in the US (1) spouses respected one another and exchanged love and dignity (*Wife 7, Couple 8*), (2) spouses were more genuine in their love and demonstrated openly if they did or did not love each other, (*Wife 7*), and (3) people expressed love to their families (*Husbands 7, 8*). In contrast, in African society, love between spouses, children and parents, and other relatives, is mostly understood, and expressed more through good deeds than verbal statements. Verbal expressions of love are limited to strictly private matters like sex and

²⁹⁶ Mbiti, IAR, 112-115.

²⁹⁷ The Constitution of Kenya, chap. 4, part 3, sec. 53, (National Council For Law Reporting, 2010), 24, 25. <http://kenyaembassy.com/pdfs/The%20Constitution%20of%20Kenya.pdf> [accessed March 27, 2014].

romance. In Africa, open physical contact²⁹⁸ and exposure are considered as taboos.²⁹⁹ Thus, as Kenyan scholar and professor at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, Kefa Otiso, observes, “while Kenyan immigrant couples in the US appreciate the expression of love here, this may partly stem from their appreciation of the US way of doing things rather than the absence of spousal love in Kenya.”³⁰⁰

Other US Cultural Traits the Interviewed Couples Appreciated

The interviewed couples also appreciated (1) the absence of housemaids, which compelled the parents, more so fathers, to have more time for their children, (2) the absence of communal living, which left room for family privacy and greater freedom between spouses, (3) husbands helping their wives with domestic work, (4) polygamy being illegal, (5) good infrastructure, making it easy for people to go about their businesses, and (6) equality and independence among marital partners.

While fathers do not need to be forced by circumstances to spend time with their own children, nor husbands to help their own wives in the house, American individualism has made this possible. Moreover, equality and independence between spouses, though good, must not be misused to nullify the man’s role of leading the home. These concepts should be understood only in the context of the teaching of Scripture. God’s Word says: “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.”³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Betty Coplan, “Sex and Education,” *School Digest 10* (May August 2000): 36.

²⁹⁹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1974), 146.

³⁰⁰ Kefa Otiso, Notes to author, Bowling Green, OH, May, 2014.

³⁰¹ 1 Cor. 11:2.

Mbiti explains that in Africa polygamy (strictly polygyny) - one man marrying more than one wife - was meant for reproducing many children to preserve life (which is immortality) glory, and society; increasing wealth, preventing/reducing “unfaithfulness and prostitution;” and increasing manpower.³⁰² Wangila observes that in most traditional African communities, “the number of wives and children a man has demonstrates his status and success.”³⁰³ Similarly, Otiso explains:

Polygamy has many roles. It is a 1) means of getting more hands to help with farm work; 2) method of family planning; 3) traditional solution to the natural excess of female in society. Moreover, it is a solution to infertility and a method of dealing with disability in the children or one of the spouses. It also persists due to wife inheritance customs and the prestige of large families.³⁰⁴

Observing that “in a society where women need males to access resources, polygamy does actually care about women as well as serving their needs,” Otiso further explains that “some of these women become co-wives willingly and some are even obtained by other women” and that “some men become polygamous because custom calls on them to inherit widows.”³⁰⁵

No argument could justify polygamy. One, none of the needs mentioned above is centered on the spouses’ personal love, happiness, and peace or solely cares about the woman. In most cases, African polygamy serves men’s and society’s needs and has an element of selfishness on the part of men. A key reason for polygamy missing in both Mbiti’s and Otiso’s explanations is that many African men marry multiple wives because

³⁰² Mbiti, *ARP*, 142-143.

³⁰³ Wangila, 21.

³⁰⁴ Otiso.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

of the men's insatiable sex drives. Two, polygamy both denies the woman her right of being the only wife of her husband's and reduces her to merely one of his assets. No man can love more than one wife with the same amount of affection and level of commitment as he could love only one wife. Three, Mbiti admits, after all, that polygamy breeds problems like quarrels, fights, husband favoring some wives and neglecting others, economic/financial burdens, and discipline.³⁰⁶ Admittedly, such conditions do also occur in monogamous unions but not as profoundly as in polygamous situations.

While God permitted polygamy in the Old Testament, he had, in the beginning, created only one woman, Eve, and not many women, for Adam,³⁰⁷ demonstrating that his ideal was monogamy. Jesus told the Pharisees that Moses had permitted divorce because the people's hearts were hard, but that from the beginning it was not so.³⁰⁸ It is reasonable, hence, to believe that God, similarly, permitted polygamy and levirate marriage³⁰⁹ because of the hardness of man's heart. Polygamy, therefore, was not God's but man's idea and it is, for this reason, unacceptable in the Christian context.

The Couples' Encounters with Socially and Morally-Related Cultural Conflicts

The interviewed couples disapproved a number of US cultural traits that, in their view, represented sharp departures from the Kenyan culture. As data in Table 18 show, the couples disapproved (1) the practice of gay marriages (45% of interviewees), (2) the prevalence of loose sexual and social morals (45%), and (3) individualism, absence of

³⁰⁶ Mbiti, *ARP*, 143-144.

³⁰⁷ Gen. 2:18.

³⁰⁸ Matt. 19:8.

³⁰⁹ The Old Testament institution whereby a man had to marry the widow of his childless brother in order to maintain the brother's line.

communal living, and excessive personal freedoms of expression and behavior (45%).

Gay Marriages and Loose Sexual and Social Morals

To the Kenyan immigrant couples, gay marriages, which were unacceptable (*Couple 2, Husband 7*), were probably due to gay male and female bonds caused by marital problems arising from men feeling threatened by the societal system (*Husband 1*). The couples said that the practice of gay marriage was far more prevalent in the US than in Kenya (*Wife 4*) and an example of conflict between the cultural values of the two countries (*Couple 9*). Moreover, the reason why divorce was easier in the US than in Kenya was that it was easy for husbands in the US to have sex outside their marriages, since this was culturally acceptable, unlike in Kenya, where it was totally unacceptable for a married man to freely go about having sex with other women (*Husband 1*). Because sex was so much more available outside of marriage, young people increasingly saw no need for marriage (*Husband 1*). There also seemed to be a culture of doing whatever one wanted, as long as it did not break the country's laws (*Husband 1*). The immigrants also frowned upon indecent dressing by women (*Wives 8, 5*), common use of cursing and/or inappropriate language (*Wife 8, Husband 7*), and women smoking (*Wife 8*).

In Kenya, heterosexual unions are the norm; any other forms “threaten the social order” and immoral behavior is discouraged.³¹⁰ “Fornication, incest, rape, seduction, homosexual relations, sleeping with a forbidden ‘relative’ or domestic animals, intimacy between relatives, children watching the genitals of their parents (in the wide usage of the term), all constitute sexual offences in a given community.”³¹¹ Any persons engaging in

³¹⁰ Wangila, 79.

³¹¹ Mbiti, *ARP*, 147-148.

these behaviors, do so at their own risk, lose social respect, and attract criticism. Indecent exposure, especially of the sexual organs, whether by a man or woman, is unacceptable in African society.³¹² The practice of women smoking, though frowned upon in many Kenyan communities, may, nevertheless, be acceptable in certain communities.

Absence of Communal Living

In all three case studies, there is conspicuous absence of any aspect of intervention by family or community members in the marriages and family lives of *Kilonzo* and *Mueni*, *Kibet* and *Judy*, or *Wanjala* and *Akinyi*. Unlike the situation in Kenya, the concerned couples had to experience their crises without communal assistance. The interviewees similarly lamented that although in Kenya marriages were permanent and communal, in the US they were temporary and egocentric (*Husband 1*) and parental and family involvement in marriages was diminishing and becoming ineffective (*Couple 2*). Unlike in Africa, where there was an abundance of immediate and extended family members, friends, and neighbors, the absence of communal living in the US resulted in increased stress due to the lack of people to lean on (*Couple 3*), with everyone having to solve his or her own problems (*Husband 9*). This lack of community was one reason why Kenyan immigrants in the US tended to gravitate and live near each other or in adjacent cities (*Couple 3*). The immigrants also noted that unlike in Kenya, there was in the US excessive freedom of expression and behavior for the individual, including children (*Couple 2*, *Husband 8*), such that once a child was over 18 years of age, he or she was free from the authority of the parents (*Couple 2*). This, according to them, led to disrespect for men and fathers, leading to dysfunctional families and giving

³¹² Ibid., 146.

men a hard time in their attempts to lead their families.

Kenyan immigrant couples find individualism and absence of communal living to be uncomfortable. US values are individualistic, as opposed to the Kenyan communal values.³¹³ Kenyans' value the family, while in the US, emphasis is on the individual.³¹⁴ The African individual is because the community is.³¹⁵ In Africa one must be concerned about his neighbor.³¹⁶ "Familial ties may be the most salient aspect of transnationalism among Kenyan immigrants because of their Afrocentric roots and communal worldview that is characterized by maintenance of networks of family and friends."³¹⁷ The ties maintained by Kenyan immigrants indicate "the strong longing" that the immigrants have "for their home country and the people they left behind" and are "imbued with a sense of belonging."³¹⁸ Some individualism does exist in Kenyan urban areas due to "increased exposure to western cultures through media and technology"³¹⁹ and "modernization, Christianity, and Westernization."³²⁰ But Kenyan/African individualism is still less, compared to the situation in the US, since "in most areas, rural communities continue to adhere to traditional systems."³²¹

³¹³ Lilian Odera, *Kenyan Immigrants in the United States: Acculturation, Coping Strategies, and Mental Health*, (El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2010), 85-86.

³¹⁴ Rudolf.

³¹⁵ Mbiti, *ARP*, 108.

³¹⁶ Eucabeth Kilonzo, *From Africa to America: An Immigrant's Story* (Charleston, SC: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2009), 87.

³¹⁷ Odera, 47.

³¹⁸ Kioko, 146-147.

³¹⁹ Odera, 51.

³²⁰ Wangila, 21.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

The Couples' Views on Divorce in the United States

As shown in *Table 19*, 45% of the interviewed couples said that divorce was too easy in the US, which was the cause of high divorce rates in the country and 25% said that the US culture was responsible for Kenyan immigrant divorces.

Easy Divorces and High Divorce Rates

According to the interviewed couples, easy divorces in the US were caused by many factors. First was lack of serious commitment to marriage (*Couple 2*), with many married couples even staying together but living as if they were not married to each other (*Wife 4*). Second was the fact that the virtues that sustained marriages in Africa, including parental authority, the involvement of parents in their children's married lives, and respect of husbands by their wives, were dying out (*Couple 2*). Third, marital partners, instead of tolerating one another, were looking for perfection which was not possible because it was "not easy to find a perfect person"³²² (*Wife 7*). Finally, couples were resorting to confrontations instead of solving their problems or conflicts amicably (*Husband 6*). The couples further observed that easy divorces had made it difficult for spouses to be sure that their marriages would last (*Wife 1*) and caused high divorce rates (*Couples 2, 4*) that removed father figures from the families and left the boys imitating their mothers' feminine characteristics, for instance, the braiding of their hair (*Couple 2*). This affected the children's entire lives (*Couple 2*).

The wife in *Couple 1* explained, for instance, that divorce had been so enshrined in America that spouses talked of "my wife so and so" and "my husband so and so"

³²² *Wife 7*, "The Couples' Views on Divorce and Easy Divorces in the US."

instead of just “my wife” or “my husband,”³²³ because they would never be sure that the present spouse would be the same one tomorrow. [It is also true that Americans like to be specific, which may be their reason for commonly saying, “My wife/husband so and so”]. Conversely, divorces are rarer in Kenya than in the US because, as Mbiti explains, an African marriage is not expected to break down.³²⁴

Although today’s Kenyan society has been permeated by Western culture, divorce is still uncommon. Majorities of Kenyans still embrace their traditional culture and, as Odera notes, “profess Christianity as their religion”³²⁵ more than the Americans do. They, therefore, strongly uphold the Scripture: “For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.”³²⁶ Kenyan immigrant couples in the US, hence, view easy divorce and high divorce rates from the biblical and Kenyan cultural perspectives and consider them unacceptable. In so doing, they agree with Jay E. Adams who notes that God hates divorce, did not institute it, and only allows it under certain biblically prescribed circumstances.³²⁷

Growing Kenyan Immigrant Divorces Due to the US Culture

Some spouses indicated that divorces among Kenyan immigrant couples were mostly caused by the US Culture because it had rendered men powerless and given

³²³ *Wife 1*, “The Couples’ Views on Divorce and Easy Divorces in the US.”

³²⁴ Mbiti, *ARP*, 141.

³²⁵ Odera, 98.

³²⁶ Mal. 2:16.

³²⁷ Jay E. Adams, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 30.

women and children unnecessary powers (*Husband 1*), accepted divorce (*Husband 1*), and changed gender roles, leading to competition over family headship (*Husband 1*) and mutual disrespect (*Wives 3, 4*). Moreover, they argued that due to the woman's extra freedom, the man felt threatened in his leadership territory (*Husband 1*) and, because he could not fight the system, turned to fighting his wife, whom he viewed as the system's representative (*Husband 1*). Although many of these immigrant couples had some marital problems in Kenya, they were held together by their African culture until they came to the US, where the culture supported their separation (*Couple 2*).

Some Kenyan immigrant couples experience problems and lose their marriages when they begin competing over leadership. Others get into trouble once the wife begins to earn some income and begins to disrespect her husband.³²⁸ These problems, however, may not necessarily be culturally-related. Disrespect, harassment, and unwillingness to make compromises could be the spouses' personal choices. Such behaviors, moreover, are neither beneficial nor biblical, as wives are commanded to submit to/respect their own husbands and husbands to love their own wives (Eph. 5:22-31).³²⁹ The wife must submit to her husband whether or not he works or she generates her own income and the husband must love his wife and respect her freedom whether or not she is legally protected. Believers are "the light of the world"³³⁰ and "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who

³²⁸ Moses O. Biney, *From Africa to America: Religion and Adaptation among Ghanaian Immigrants in New York* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011), 128.

³²⁹ Emerson Eggerichs, *Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 17-19.

³³⁰ Matt. 5:16.

called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”³³¹ They should, therefore, remain in their marriages irrespective of what society permits.

The Couples’ Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts

Key marriage-related US cultural traits that the interviewed couples disapproved of and confessed struggling with (see Tables 4, 5, and 20), were merged gender roles (70% of the interviewees), mistreatment of men (data from two case studies and 60% of interviewees), the overprotection of women (data from two case studies and 45% of interviewees), and the low esteem of marriage in society (65% of interviewees).

Merged Gender Roles

The interviewed couples observed that, while in Kenya domestic chores were the women’s responsibilities and outside chores were men’s duties, in the US:

- There was no defined leader in the house since both spouses had equal say and power (*Wife 7, Couple 8, Husband 9*).
- There was disrespect and competition over family headship (*Couple 3*), unlike in Africa where the wife respected the husband (*Couple 2*).
- There was competition over control of money since the women made more money in the US than they did while living in Kenya (*Couple 1*).
- There was frustration among the men because their leadership roles were dead, leading to marriages being discouraged (*Husband 5*).
- House duties had to be shared, due to lack of housemaids (*Wife 3, Husband 2*), societal expectations (*Husband 4*), and busy work schedules (*Husband 5*).

³³¹ 1 Pet. 2:9.

- The US system was unfair since the man was overloaded by doing domestic chores on top of being the family's bread winner (*Couples 2, 3*).
- There were conflicts between Kenyan immigrant spouses, since some husbands were not used to doing domestic chores (*Couple 4, Husbands 5, 9*).

Husband 9, nevertheless, emphasized that the man was still the head of the family and had “the choice of making the final decisions.”³³² *Husband 6* pointed out that, unlike in Kenya, where certain things had “to be done by men,” in the US “there were no boundaries as to who can do what.”³³³ The wife added that in Kenya married persons had to “toe the line”³³⁴ [of cultural expectations], which led to respect and commitment.

Kenyan immigrant spouses in the US, however, transformed their “gendered domestic roles” and modified “their traditional roles”³³⁵ to adjust to US society. These changes “create certain ambiguity and fluidity” among their immigrant families, which were “previously hierarchical and structured,”³³⁶ but any “attempts to retain premigration ideas of gender roles and family functioning” cause them family problems.³³⁷

³³² *Husband 9*, “The Couples’ Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³³³ *Husband 6*, “The Couples’ Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³³⁴ *Wife 6*, “The Couples’ Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³³⁵ Yoku Shaw-Taylor and Steven A. Tuch, eds., *The Other African Americans: Contemporary and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States*, (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 110. In Google Books, http://books.google.com/books?id=gVY7Y1b0iXyC&pg=PA110&lpg=PA110&dq=Changed+gender+roles+among+african++immigrants&source=bl&ots=1woDTTfpl_&sig=iWL7wLjTzCqaSsXcKXcDPxaUe3E&hl=en&sa=X&ei=sRA9UNrXLMONygG6-4DIAQ&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=Changed%20gender%20roles%20among%20african%20%20immigrants&f=false [accessed March 31, 2014].

³³⁶ Paul Okeyo Orieny. “African Immigrants Stressful Marital and Family Experiences.” PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2008, 70. In Google Books, http://books.google.com/books/about/African_Immigrants_Stressful_Marital_and.html?id=W4_CdMwm-tsC [accessed March 31, 2014].

³³⁷ Yoku Shaw-Taylor and Steven A. Tuch.

From a Christian perspective, however, every loving husband, even where gender roles have not been merged, needs to offer his wife whatever help she happens to need. In the same manner, every caring wife needs to help her husband wherever he happens to need help. Prevailing societal practice notwithstanding, it is not fair for one spouse to undertake heavy loads of work without help from the other. Spouses should mutually agree and share their domestic chores. Kenyan immigrant wives in the US celebrate merged gender roles because in Kenya most men do not participate in house chores, yet women participate in many activities outside the home. The Scripture says: “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”³³⁸ The very first neighbor in every married person’s life is one’s spouse. As Otiso observes, “Since love prefers the other, spouses should endeavor to help each other out based on their circumstances.”³³⁹

On the other hand, however, every couple should use discretion in sharing their workload, depending on their circumstances. Even in the US, if the husband has external duties equal to the woman’s house duties, the two might have a fair compromise sticking to those roles. But if each spouse has a job outside the house, it is needful for them to share the domestic workload. Again, each spouse needs to respect the other’s preferences in this matter. Some women, for instance, do not like men working in the kitchen, while others, like the researcher’s wife, enjoy mowing the lawn. In addition, some external

³³⁸ Matt. 22:37-40.

³³⁹ Otiso.

duties performed by men are too taxing for most women to want to perform them.

Indicating that sharing domestic work becomes necessary only in the US “where both spouses work outside the home,” Otiso remarks: “In rural settings, many women gladly prefer their domestic roles to the hard work that men do outside the home.”³⁴⁰

Men Mistreated/Women Overprotected

Data from two of the case studies (*Table 5*) and responses from the interviewed couples (*Table 21*) indicate that many Kenyan immigrant men and women feel that in the US men are disfavored by the law and authorities and are powerless, harassed, degraded, and disrespected by their wives (60% of interviewees). Many also felt that women are overprotected, too powerful, independent, and free, and that they abuse these privileges to harass the men and settle old or new scores (45%). In the second case study, after their divorce, Kibet was ordered to pay child support and alimony, and Judy was awarded their matrimonial home and the custody of the children, with Kibet only seeing the children under close supervision by Judy’s brother. Some Kenyan immigrant men and women who had been interviewed, all said that there was bias in US law in support of women.

In the third case study, *Wanjala* accused his wife of having been deliberately provoking him to anger in order to cause him to lose his temper and do something for which he could be arrested. *Wanjala* obviously believed that if *Akinyi* had called the police, the police would have taken her word against his. In the second case study, *Kibet* explained that when *Judy* had hit him and he had grabbed her hands in self-defense, she had started screaming and called the police, clearly abusing the US legal protection of women. According to data from the second case study: “Kenyan women quickly discover

³⁴⁰ Otiso.

that the US takes violation of women's rights very seriously, a situation that they quickly embrace. The woman also realizes that she has an upper hand in matters involving custody of children after divorce, and rarely is a child taken away from its mother."³⁴¹

The interviewed couples expressed similar views. They felt that in the US:

- The protection of women had a good motive, but some Kenyan immigrant wives, like many US women, had abused these provisions for selfish motives and to despise and victimize their husbands (*Wife 1, Couples 2, 3, 6, Wife 10*).
- Because the culture had accorded to women excessive and unnecessary freedom, independence, and power (*Couple 3, Husband 10*), the men were harassed and threatened and felt that they needed to defend themselves (*Husband 1*), and had difficulties leading their homes (*Wife 6*).
- Women openly disrespected and addressed their husbands like children, demanded equality with them, did not give them the same services wives in Kenya gave to their husbands (*Couples 3, 5, 6*), and demanded that they help them in domestic chores (*Husbands 2, 10*).
- Men were disfavored by the law and authorities in domestic disagreements (*Couple 3, Wife 5*) and the Kenyan immigrant women had also become economically more independent and powerful in the US since they made more money than they did while they were living in Kenya (*Husband 1*).

Couple 1 stated that in the US a woman could tell both her husband and children together: "Clean up your mess."³⁴² The couple also noted that women in the US talked or

³⁴¹ Second case study, *Kibet and Judy*.

³⁴² *Couple 1*, "The Couples' Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts."

yelled at their husbands close enough to their faces for spit from their mouths to sprinkle on their husbands' faces. *Husband 2* observed that while the absence of housemaids in the US called for men to help in the house, the wife should not, for this reason, demand it; if she politely asked her husband to help her, he would have no problem doing so. *Wife 2* stated: "I don't like how men are disfavored, especially in domestic disagreements. The men are punished more and they have to pay child support."³⁴³ *Couple 3* gave the example of a man who was once ejected from the house by his wife for yelling at their son. The wife objected to the yelling and called the police, who when they arrived took her word against the husband's.³⁴⁴ The couple warned that when Kenyan immigrant couples adopted these cultural values in the US, their marriages were affected negatively.

Not all Kenyan immigrant women, however, sympathized with the men. In the second case study, some of the interviewed women "felt that there was some bias in the American law towards women, but that it [was] necessary to protect them from men."³⁴⁵ In the third case study, *Wanjala* claims that *Akinyi* had become arrogant in the way she talked to him once the couple had settled in the US, since she had a job and her own money by then and was attending college. *Akinyi* explains, however, that even while the couple was still living in Kenya, she had never accepted the Kenyan cultural trait of men controlling most of the family's money and investing it in projects of their own choice without involving their wives. She said that men in Kenya were dictatorial and oppressive to their wives, and that women in Kenya did not enjoy personal or financial freedom.

³⁴³ *Wife 2*, "The Couples' Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts."

³⁴⁴ *Couple 3*, "The Couples' Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts."

³⁴⁵ Second case study.

In contrast, as Biney observes, African immigrant wives in the US make their own money and demand greater participation in decision making.³⁴⁶ Having been denied their rights in their own African culture, the immigrant women “no longer agree to be subservient to their husbands”³⁴⁷ in the US. Nevertheless, some African immigrant men in the US try to retain “the rights of dominance that the patriarchal system confers on males in Africa” by subjecting their wives to “physical and psychological abuse”³⁴⁸ and by harassing and threatening them with divorce,³⁴⁹ once the wives increase their education and/or begin earning their own money.³⁵⁰ Neither of these situations is ideal as Kenyan women do not need to immigrate to the US to be valued and treated as important stakeholders in the affairs of the home by their husbands. Nor should they become disrespectful to their husbands because of their new statuses. Moreover, it is unlikely that Kenyan immigrant men would feel threatened by their wives’ increased learning and financial freedom if they valued and honored them before immigrating to the US.

The researcher was unable to verify claims that US laws and authorities favored women against men. According to “**Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa Fact Sheet,**” provided by the Department of Homeland Security on its USCIS website, “all people in the United States (regardless of

³⁴⁶ Biney, 128.

³⁴⁷ Goyan, Pamela, and Kathryn P. Sucher, *Food and Culture*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008), 210.

³⁴⁸ Arthur, 112.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

race, color, religion, sex, age, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status) are guaranteed protection from abuse under the law.... The police may arrest your fiancé(e), spouse, partner, or another person if they believe that person has committed a crime. You should tell the police about any abuse that has happened, even in the past, and show any injuries.”³⁵¹ Nevertheless, there’s word of mouth evidence, from both immigrants and citizens, that US police and courts normally take the woman’s word against the man’s. Otiso notes that “in many cases ... men fail to protect their own legal rights.”³⁵²

The Bible teaches: “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.”³⁵³ The man, as the head of the home should love, value, and honor his wife as his God-given helper. The wife, likewise, must respect and obey her own husband. The husband’s position as head of the wife is not a rank but a divine assignment, not superiority but responsibility, and not for lordship but leadership. Similarly, the wife’s submission to her husband is not demotion but commission, not inferiority but humility, and not for vulnerability but accountability. Both husband and wife are answerable to God and each shall give an account before him for their marriage. The husband must honor his wife and allow her to excel and prosper, even when she becomes highly learned and wealthy, and the wife must respect and

³⁵¹ Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Information on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa Fact Sheet,” <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5af9bb95919f35e66f614176543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=8707936ba657d210VgnVCM100000082ca60aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=8a2f6d26d17df110VgnVCM1000004718190aRCRD> [accessed March 27, 2014].

³⁵² Otiso.

³⁵³ 1 Cor. 11:3.

submit to her husband.³⁵⁴ Christian marriage is not regulated by legal statutes nor does it depend on them to survive or thrive.

Marriage Lightly Esteemed

The interviewed couples also observed that marriage was too lightly esteemed in the US. Specifically, they lamented that marriages were temporary and egocentric (*Husband 1*) and there was no serious commitment to it (*Couple 2*); “you come and go as you want”³⁵⁵ (*Husband 4*). Some couples even lived and stayed together as husbands and wives but led individualist lives as if they were not married to each other (*Wife 4*), including having separate bank accounts and possessions or wealth (*Couple 10*). The couples noted, moreover, that there was no respect for vows, prayers, and other biblical marriage practices and marriage had been reduced to a purely legal and secular institution in which faith, the Church, and God did not matter, and one that a judge easily dissolved (*Husband 5, Wife 7*). Similarly, every domestic disagreement was settled legally through lawyers and courts instead of elders and family members (*Husband 5*). The couples also pointed out that in the US there was no dowry payment by the husband (*Wife 7*).

Marriage in African society is a sacred relationship that involves families and the community³⁵⁶ and one that is prepared through a long process of rites and rituals.³⁵⁷ It is also sealed with the exchange of “visits and gifts among the members of the two families and their relatives” which “bind the man and the wife together in the sight of their

³⁵⁴ I Pet. 3:1-7.

³⁵⁵ *Husband 4*, “The Couples’ Encounters with Marriage-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁵⁶ Mbiti, *ARP*, 136.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

families"³⁵⁸ and create a contract that is “extremely hard to dissolve.”³⁵⁹ Along with family and communal involvement, these exchanged gifts, called dowry, brideprice or bridewealth, legally seal the marriage which is not expected to easily break, “because divorce often calls for return of the dowry,”³⁶⁰ irrespective of how long the couple has been married. As the Theological Advisory Group observes: “Furthermore, dowry cements the agreement and prevents an easy divorce of the marriage. Thus dowry helped to stabilize marriages and protected the wife from unreasonable oppression or rejection by the husband. The dowry was a kind of “seal,” showing that the marriage had been legally and properly contracted.”³⁶¹ Laurenti Magesa notes that “a marital arrangement without bridewealth is highly irregular and offensive”³⁶² to Kenyan African culture. Kenyan immigrant couples, hence, are dismayed that the American society esteems marriage so lightly.

The Couples’ Encounters with Economically-Related Cultural Conflicts

Most of the interviewed spouses disapproved and expressed their frustration with the culture of overworking. Sixty-five percent of them felt that US work schedules were too tight and inconvenient for families (*Table 21*).

³⁵⁸ John S. Mbiti, *IAR*, 107.

³⁵⁹ Mbiti, *ARP*, 145.

³⁶⁰ Otiso.

³⁶¹ Theological Advisory Group, *A Biblical Approach to Marriage and Family in Africa* (Machakos: Scott Theological College, 1994), 20.

³⁶² Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 125.

The Culture of Overworking

The interviewed couples said that tight work schedules (1) made life hard for the Kenyan immigrant couples, who had been accustomed to working 8-5 shifts in Kenya, compared to the US 24/7 shifts (*Husband 1*), (2) denied couples time with one another and their children (*Husband 1, Couples 2, 3, 7, 8, Husband 9*) and for intimacy and prayer (*Husband 5*), such that couples even communicated through written notes (*Couple 10*), and (3) made spouses to connect more with their co-workers than with each other, which often led to illicit relationships (*Couple 1*). Some couples admitted that overworking had affected their marriages. *Husband 1* affirmed that he and his wife had argued over what shifts each would work in order to allow time for taking care of their children. *Couple 2* noted that in some cases, spouses were almost completely separated from one another by their jobs because, “out of sight, out of mind.”³⁶³ *Wife 7* pointed out that her being a mother, wife, and student affected the couple’s mutual time and relationship, while *Wife 8* lamented that US culture had affected the couples’ “social life because, while in their culture, a husband, wife, and kids were always together,” in the US people were “always working because of the [high] living standards.”³⁶⁴

“Large numbers of Americans work nonstandard schedules,” with “one-fifth of all employed Americans” working “mostly in the evening, at night, or on a rotating shift,”³⁶⁵ in work schedules that are “often determined by the demands of the industry,

³⁶³ *Couple 2*, “The Couples’ Encounters with Economically-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁶⁴ *Wife 8*, “The Couples’ Encounters with Economically-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁶⁵ Harriet B. Presser and Brian W. Ward, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review Online, “Nonstandard Work Schedules Over the Life Course: A First Look,” <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2011/07/mlr201107.pdf> [accessed April 04, 2014].

rather than by workers' preferences.³⁶⁶ On the contrary, Kenya mainly follows 8-5 weekday and 5 hours on Saturdays work shifts.³⁶⁷ The majority of the Kenyan immigrant couples, therefore, had not been used to 24/7 schedules prior to settling in the US. Such tight schedules deny couples time for each other and their children, make "family members strangers to each other," and lead "to major strains."³⁶⁸ Long working hours are also not conducive to intensive prayer times, especially night vigils.³⁶⁹ Such schedules have interfered with "even regular church attendance" and "led to idolatry"³⁷⁰ because anything for which we sacrifice our marriages and families is not of God.³⁷¹ Since US working schedules are unlikely to change, at least in the near future, Kenyan immigrant couples continue to strain to work and have time with each other and their children.

Other Economically-Related Cultural Conflicts the Couples Faced

Other economically-related cultural conflicts that the couples experienced in the US were the absence of housemaids and practice of day cares (20% of interviewees) and the attitude of society towards a person's financial status (15% of interviewees). Various couples pointed out that: (1) the absence of housemaids was overbearing especially because there were no relatives and friends to help with domestic work (*Husband 1*) and

³⁶⁶ Terence M. McMenamin, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "A Time to Work: Recent Trends in Shift Work and Flexible Schedules," <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2007/12/art1full.pdf> [accessed March 30, 2014].

³⁶⁷ People's Parliament/Bunge la Mwananchi, National Labour Law Profile in Kenya, "Working Time and Rest Time," <http://www.peoples-parliament.org/spip.php?article32> [accessed March 30, 2014].

³⁶⁸ Kanya, 103.

³⁶⁹ Odera, 113.

³⁷⁰ Otiso.

³⁷¹ Voddie Baucham Jr., *Family Driven Faith: Doing What it Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 162.

[the high cost of and occupation of parents by] day cares made the need for help even greater (*Wife 4*) and required men to help with house work (*Couple 2, Wife 3*); (2) parents had to be with their children all the time, which tied down the parents, especially the wives (*Wife 5*), unless the couple could afford day care (*Husband 5*); (3) a husband's or wife's respect was based on one's financial status (*Husband 7, Couple 8*), and (4) [even private financial matters of] families were too exposed to the public (*Husband 5*).

Wife 7 said, not in disapproval but appreciation, however, that her husband had earned respect from her and the children because he always tried his best in his work as head of the family and provided for the family. *Husband 5* disapproved of the way in the US many family aspects like income, jobs, number of children, and ages, were exposed because it made the family public property. Consequently, he said, the family had little say concerning their finances and major policy decisions; the establishment had too much control over the family. This, in his words, slowed down progress, investment, and the number of children a couple wished to have, and killed spouses' marital morale. To him, these policies made families to pay for their own existence and undermined marriage.

In contrast, Scripture takes marriage and parenting very seriously and charges parents to diligently rear their children. The Scripture says: "You shall teach them [God's laws] to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up"³⁷² and "you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."³⁷³ Tight work schedules leave parents so "little time or energy to pass on [to their children]

³⁷²Deut. 11:19.

³⁷³Eph. 6:4.

the cultural traditions, values, and rituals that traditionally have sustained African families in their homelands”³⁷⁴ that responsible parents are forced to sacrifice some jobs and income in order that they may be able to take care of their children. Absence of housemaids and the requirement that parents always stay with their children, therefore, might be a blessing in disguise.

The Couples’ Encounters with Children-Related Cultural Conflicts

The major children-related cultural conflict reported by Kenyan immigrant couples was that children in the US were overprotected and too free and powerful. Data from two of the *case studies (Table 6)* show that children in the US resist and rebel against parental authority because they are aware of their freedom and protection by the law. This undermines parental authority and assertiveness because US laws, in various states, do not allow spanking of children. Parents that spank their children are often accused of child abuse by their children and jailed even as the children are seized and committed to foster parents. In the first case study, where Kilonzo was accused by his children of having abused them, the children were seized and committed to foster parents and Kilonzo was arraigned in court and convicted of domestic violence.

Similarly, 50% of the interviewed spouses complained that children in the US were too protected, powerful, and free, and parental authority had diminished (*Table 22*). The couples lamented that in the US the culture had given children unnecessary powers (*Husband 1*) and the children almost controlled their parents (*Couple 10*). Thus, the couples could not, as parents, discipline their children through spanking, which made the children a reckless generation (*Husband 1*). The culture also taught the children to be

³⁷⁴ Kanya, 103.

bold and to speak up when they were mad at their parents (*Wife 1*). While this could be a good thing, the children's boldness affected their parents' marriages, for instance, when the parents took opposite positions on issues or suspected one another of feeding their children with what to say (*Couple 1*). The couples said that the children were also disrespectful to their parents (*Wife 6*), self-centered, and demanding (*Wife 7*) because they had realized that they had power and tried at times to be in control by doing what they thought was good rather than what they were told (*Husband 9, Couple 10*).

This is in contrast to the situation in Kenya where children are taught obedience, respect, and work³⁷⁵ as they are prepared for adulthood.³⁷⁶ Lazy and uncooperative children are disciplined by being made to work harder or by being denied food temporarily (similar to the US culture's "time out" for children). They are disciplined also through spanking, which is different from child abuse. As Scripture says: "Do not withhold correction from a child, For *if* you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell."³⁷⁷

Assured Angel³⁷⁸ and Kilonzo³⁷⁹ help differentiate between child abuse and spanking. Child abuse, which involves excessive anger, violence, disrespectful manhandling, and inappropriate utterances to the child, etc., on the part of the one

³⁷⁵ Mbiti, *IAR*, 114.

³⁷⁶ Mbiti, *ARP*, 135.

³⁷⁷ Prov. 23:13-14.

³⁷⁸ Assured Angel, "Discipline vs Abuse - an African Child's Perspective," Wikinut, <http://family.wikinut.com/Discipline-vs-Abuse-an-African-child-s-perspective/dalg-ly4/> [accessed March 27, 2014].

³⁷⁹ Kilonzo, 57.

administering the discipline, is unacceptable in both Kenya³⁸⁰ and the US.”³⁸¹ Kenyans and other Africans who abuse children, therefore, are a disgrace to the African community. Violence against the child, nevertheless, is only one of two extremes. The other is freeing the child to make its own choices and even control its parents thereby ultimately damaging to the child. The balanced approach is parents disciplining their children responsibly, including spanking them when necessary.

The Couples’ Coping with Children-Related Cultural Conflicts

As data in *Table 23* show, the interviewed couples, in order to cope with children-related cultural conflicts, dealt with their children by (1) guiding and teaching them God’s word and good behavior (50% of the spouses), (2) instilling Kenyan cultural values in them (35%), (3) spending time with them (20%), and (4) praying for them (20%). Three couples taught God’s Word and the gospel to their children, led them to Christ, and brought them up by teaching them what was right (*Couple 1, Couple 5, Couple 6*). One couple taught their children to be united, love one another and their parents, and appreciate and feel at home in their parents’ house (*Couple 1*).

Another couple made good choices for their children and showed them the right way with respect to school-related matters and respectfulness (*Wife 4*). Two couples prayed for their children regularly, and when the children went wrong (*Couple 1, Couple*

³⁸⁰ African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), “Capacity Building Programme for Key Stakeholders towards the Elimination of Corporal Punishment and Adoption of Positive Discipline Methods,” <http://www.anppcankenya.co.ke/index.php?option=comcontent&task=view&id=65&Itemid=65> [accessed March 27, 2014].

³⁸¹ Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

7). One couple entrusted its children with the Lord for it was he who built a house.³⁸² (*Wife 6*) while five others brought up their children according to their family principles as Kenyan Christians and taught and urged them to stick to Kenyan cultural ways and languages, especially while they are young, (*Couples 1, 3, 4, 5, 7*). One couple also coped by spending time and holding regular family meetings with their children (*Couple 5*).

As *Husband 1* commented: “Our children, even those born in Kenya, are Americans who know little about Kenya, but we have brought up our children by emphasizing that our home was Kenyan and, once one entered our gates, he or she was now in Kenya. We even speak our mother tongue in our house.”³⁸³ The immigrant parents “walk a tight rope” by encouraging their children to learn both American and African ways.³⁸⁴ To Arthur, the immigrant parents believe that their African heritage is essential for their children’s survival,³⁸⁵ but they also become “overprotective”³⁸⁶ and risk “limiting the world view of their children and alienating them.”³⁸⁷ Kenyan immigrant couples must concertedly and conservatively parent their children, in accordance with the biblical instruction to parents. They should teach them God’s Word, godly living, and Kenyan ways like decency, communal living, and marital resiliency. The couples must also adjust their parenting to US culture to avoid confusing or provoking their children.

³⁸² Ps. 127:1.

³⁸³ *Husband 1*, “The Couples’ Coping with Children-Related Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁸⁴ Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration: The Developing Child Series*, (President and Fellows of Harvard University, 2001), 89. In Google Books, http://books.google.com/books?id=PmypbDvvyA8C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&ad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed April 4, 2014].

³⁸⁵ Arthur, 113-114.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

The Couples' Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts

The interviewed couples had developed some strategies for coping with cultural conflicts (*Table 24*). These included (1) sticking to their Kenyan culture (90% of the spouses), (2) maintaining mutual unity (70%), (3) accommodating themselves in the US culture (65%), (4) praying and trusting God (40%), (5) holding discussions and resolving their conflicts (35%), and (6) creating time for one another, family, and church (35%).

Sticking to the Kenyan Culture

The couples said that they had remained authentically Kenyan (*Table 24*): (1) one couple maintained its house as a Kenyan home and the family spoke their mother tongue in the house (*Couple 1*), (2) one wife and one couple maintained their Kenyan upbringing and lifestyles (*Wife 1, Couple 9*), (4) one couple upheld their Kenyan Christian culture (*Couple 2*), (5) three couples adjusted themselves to the US culture only where necessary, accepting only what was good, and refusing to allow it to change or affect their Kenyan lifestyles (*Couple 4, Couple 5, Husband 7*), and (6) two couples ignored aspects of the US culture that conflicted with their African culture, (*Husband 7, Couple 10*).

Husband 1 said that he and his wife had responded to the US culture “by being ourselves. I don’t want to be an American. I cannot change the fact that I was not born in America. I am a Kenyan by birth. My wife has also remained authentic [in her African identity].”³⁸⁸ The wife affirmed that she had also responded to the culture in the US “by being myself and taking care of my family; living the way your mother brought you

³⁸⁸ *Husband 1*, “The Couples’ Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts.”

up.”³⁸⁹ The two spouses both affirmed, though, that they had adjusted to the US culture where necessary. The husband took care of the couple’s children and participated in the house chores and his wife normally took time out alone, called the “me time.”³⁹⁰ Her husband supported this and said: “I have no problem because I trust her, and I know she can’t do anything bad while she is gone.”³⁹¹ The wife agreed and explained that she needed the “me time” to do her own personal good things for which she would find no other time. *Husband 9* admitted that his wife had tried to “keep it as it was in Africa though there were few challenges”³⁹² while *Husband 10* affirmed that sticking to their Kenyan culture was why he and his wife were still together; otherwise they would have had suffered a break up.

Although *Husband 1* and his wife had, through these practices, departed from normal practices of couples in Kenya, the two still felt that they were authentic Kenyans. Odera examines Kenyan immigrants’ acculturation “on a bi-dimensional level – i.e., simultaneous adaptations of American cultural values and retention of Kenyan values and an adaptation that involves the choice of both”³⁹³ and argues that their transnational contacts and activities foster “a bicultural style of acculturation” and enable them “to maintain competence in both Kenyan and American cultures.”³⁹⁴

³⁸⁹ *Wife 1*, “The Couples’ Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Husband 1*, “The Couples’ Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁹² *Husband 9*, “The Couples’ Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts.”

³⁹³ Odera, 54.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

Holding United Views and Avoiding Differing on Cultural Issues

The couples had also coped by living in unity (*Table 24*). Thus, one husband responded to the US culture in a manner that did not affect the couple's marriage/relationship (*Wife 4*); four couples held united views and avoided differing over cultural issues (*Husband 5, Couples 6, 7, 10*); one couple stuck to their Kenyan culture where the US culture threatened to divide them (*Husband 9*); while another couple looked for common grounds and respected each other's boundaries (*Husband 4*).

Wife 4 observed that a couple might disagree, for instance, in the area of the US culture wherein little children asked their parents if they could go to their friends' homes to "sleep over,"³⁹⁵ if one parent did not like the idea. If one spouse insists on having his or her way, the marriage begins to experience problems. As the Bible says, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"³⁹⁶ Kim Smucker adds that high divorce rates worldwide result from selfishness, unwillingness to make individual sacrifices for the sake of the marriage, and a genuine lack in communication skills.³⁹⁷ Gary R. Collins advises that married couples learn "the importance of listening, self-disclosure, mutual acceptance, and understanding," as well as "empathy, warmth, and genuineness."³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ *Wife 4*, "The Couples' Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts."

³⁹⁶ Amos 3:3.

³⁹⁷ Kimberly Smucker, Written Article sent by E-mail to Author, Toledo, December, 2012.

³⁹⁸ Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 565.

Accommodating Themselves in the US Culture

Despite strongly affirming that they had stuck to their Kenyan culture, the interviewed spouses also indicated that they had made intentional efforts to adjust themselves to the US culture (*Table 24*). They had accommodated themselves in the US culture: (1) only where possible, necessary, or acceptable by, for instance, the husband participating in house chores (*Husband 3*) or spouses consulting more, mutually (*Husband 4*); (2) in ways that would not affect their relationships (*Wife 4*); (3) by taking time before responding to the US culture (*Couple 8*); and (4) by rejecting US cultural ways that conflicted with their Kenyan ways (*Couples 3, 4, 5, 7, Wife 9*).

Husband 7 said that his wife had ignored the bad cultural aspects of the country and that their marriage was strong, while *Wife 9* affirmed that her husband had accepted the [good aspects of the] US culture, which she said had strengthened their marriage. To Moses O. Biney, the big question for African immigrants is how they may successfully interact with their new culture so as to attain their goals without losing their cultural identity.³⁹⁹ Arthur says they are “acculturated but not assimilated.”⁴⁰⁰ R.K. Harrison warns that cultural changes could harm morals,⁴⁰¹ while Kamya notes that “immigrants experience a deep sense of loss of their culture.”⁴⁰² Kenyan immigrant couples, hence, need to exercise caution as they accommodate themselves in the US culture.

³⁹⁹ Biney, 2.

⁴⁰⁰ Arthur, 3.

⁴⁰¹ R. K. Harrison, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 99.

⁴⁰² Kamya, 104.

Help from God

A number of the interviewed spouses, who were all Christians, affirmed that God had helped them to overcome their experiences of cultural dissonance and maintain strong marriages (*Table 24*). They had coped by (1) being committed to the church (*Couple 2*), (2) living like saved Kenyans (*Couple 2*), (3) their faith contributing to their marital stability (*Couple 3*), (4) remaining prayerful, (*Couple 5, Wife 7*), and (5) looking up to God for their marital success (*Wife 6*).

Wife 6, for instance, said she thanked God because she and her husband had not differed in any way as a result of their exposure to the US culture. She said that she was right in loving and respecting her husband because that was “the will of God” and added that she and her husband normally sat down and laid every matter on the table, and God gave them “light and the way to go.”⁴⁰³ Odera notes that “akin to social support, religiosity has been a salient strategy for coping with adversity among Kenyans,” which “may be attributed to the fact that the vast majority of Kenyans profess Christianity as their religion.”⁴⁰⁴ This agrees with Scripture that the Lord will direct to success those who trust him and avoid leaning on their own wisdom or understanding.⁴⁰⁵

Mutual Discussions and Conflict Resolutions

Several interviewed spouses also pointed out that they had coped with the US culture by having mutual discussions of issues and resolving their conflicts (*Table 24*). Thus, one couple mutually consulted and helped each other (*Husband 4*); four couples

⁴⁰³ *Wife 6*, “The Couples’ Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts.”

⁴⁰⁴ Odera, 98-99.

⁴⁰⁵ Prov. 3:5-7.

mutually discussed everything openly (*Husband 4, Couple 5, Wife 6, Couple 7*); one couple remained committed to mutual agreements they had made prior to marriage to agree before doing anything (*Husband 5*); and one couple resolved the culturally-related conflicts that had risen in their relationship (*Couple 8*).

The Bible instructs believers: “Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.”⁴⁰⁶ Dobson says that in an apathetic or dying marriage there is typically one uncaring partner “who resists any effort” by the other to seek counseling, compromises, or even meaningful conversations to address their difficulties.⁴⁰⁷ As Ronald W. Richardson notes, “the basic pattern in marital conflict occurs when neither partner is able to give in to the other and adapt to the wishes of the other in a way that is comfortable and that requires no loss of self” and that “healthier couples” will eventually “find ways to reconnect, arrive at some mutual decision about how to proceed, and get on with their lives,” even when in conflicts that “involve some periods of emotional distance.”⁴⁰⁸ The ability to hold mutual discussions, therefore, is a healthy sign for a couple. As Otiso notes, “It is not lack of conflicts that matters but rather the ability to deal with them.”⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ Col. 3:12-13.

⁴⁰⁷ James Dobson, *Love Must be Tough: New Hope for Families in Crisis* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1996), 8.

⁴⁰⁸ Ronald W. Richardson, *Couples in Conflict: A Family Systems Approach to Marriage Counseling* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 72.

⁴⁰⁹ Otiso.

Working around Busy Schedules to Create Time for Family and Church

Other coping skills mentioned by the couples (*Table 24*) included “working around the schedule”⁴¹⁰ by selecting convenient working times that left them time for their children (*Couple 1*), one another (*Couple 7*), and the family (*Couple 5*); calling each other over the phone while each was at work (*Couple 2*); and avoiding working on Sunday mornings because of their commitment to the Church (*Couple 2*). Spending time with each other and their children is essential to marital bonding and successful parenting, while church attendance and other aspects of Christian fellowship are fundamental functions of the Christian family. Odera notes, for instance, that “the daily, often fast-paced immigrant lifestyles characterized by long working hours, and low wages, are not conducive” for the Kenyan overnight prayer meetings called *keshas*, and notes that “religious coping styles ... may not be favorable to Kenyan immigrant lifestyles in a new society.”⁴¹¹ This should motivate Kenyan immigrants to strive even harder to make time for one another and their children and for Christian gatherings.

The Couples’ Gains from their Interactions with the US Culture

Data in *Table 25* shows that, in spite of their experiences of cultural dissonance, the couples had also gained profoundly through their interactions with the US culture. Thirty-five percent of the interviewed spouses indicated that they had become closer to their marital partners, while 25% said that some of the husbands had effectively been Americanized and began leading lifestyles that did not reflect their Kenyan culture.

⁴¹⁰ *Couple 1*, “The Couples’ Coping with Social, Moral, Economic, and Marital Cultural Conflicts.”

⁴¹¹ Odera, 113.

Increased Mutual Unity

The couples indicated they had gained more unity in their marriages. *Husband 4* believed that he and his wife were “closer now” than they were when they “were getting started”⁴¹² while *Couple 6* had become more united in doing things together. *Husband 7* saw the need for him and his wife to have more mutual time while his wife said that the couple had learned to plan things together, save, and pay bills, which bonded her more to her husband and enabled her to maintain her vows in a world where that seemed impossible. *Wife 8* now participated in paying bills after realizing they both needed to help each other, unlike back home, where the husbands took such responsibilities while *Husband 9* had realized that he and his wife should have been spending more time together, and with their children.

The immigrant couples find that in the US both spouses have an active role in most family’s affairs, unlike in Kenya where the country’s patriarchal society prevents women from equal participation with men in family affairs.⁴¹³ In Kenyan communities, the woman’s role is that of nurturer and caregiver⁴¹⁴ while the man takes control of everything. This is contrary to Scripture, which teaches that the woman was created to be man’s “helper”⁴¹⁵. It therefore follows that she should work together with the man in everything, including in leadership and decision making.

⁴¹² *Husband 4*, “The Couples’ Gains from their Interactions with the US Culture.”

⁴¹³ Wangila, 25.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴¹⁵ Gen. 2:18.

Culturally Reformed Husbands

Some of the interviewed spouses appreciated the way their husbands had abandoned some of their unacceptable African ways and adopted good American cultural aspects. *Husband 1* had accepted his wife's purely American cultural trait of the "me time," while his wife had appreciated the practice as something she needed. *Husband 3* appreciated how the absence of house maids in the US, where there were no extended family members to help with domestic chores, compelled fathers to spend more time with their children. *Wife 9* testified that her husband had accepted the American culture, which she said had strengthened the couple's marriage. Similarly, *Husband 10* affirmed that, after living in the US for some time, he had now learned to appreciate his wife better and wished he had appreciated her from the very beginning the way he now appreciated her. He believed they would then have had more love between them.

Men in most Kenyan communities do not (1) allow their wives unqualified free time, (2) participate in domestic chores, or (3) appreciate their wives as equals. Wangila notes that in some communities, the woman and the children are both the man's properties⁴¹⁶ and part of his wealth. Kenyan immigrant men in the US, by beginning to appreciate and serve their wives better, are both adopting some good US cultural traits and conforming to God's will concerning wives, that "husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies," for "he who loves his wife loves himself," and "no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."⁴¹⁷ The US Western culture, hence, sets a good example in husbands honoring their wives.

⁴¹⁶ Wangila, 23.

⁴¹⁷ Eph. 5:28-29.

Other Gains

There were other positive gains that the couples had made. *Wife 4* said that she and her husband had grown more in their Christian lives while *Couple 5* admitted that they had made the mistake of draining their finances investing too heavily in their relatives and friends back home in Kenya while failing to do things they could have done to better themselves and their children in the US. Given the chance, they would do things differently. *Husband 9* said that the couple had now realized that they should have been spending more time with their children. As Leigh Swigart notes that many of the extended family members that African immigrants leave back home need their financial remittances.⁴¹⁸ Many Kenyan immigrants succumb to this pressure and concentrate on helping their relatives back home at the expense of ignoring their immediate families. While the immigrants must remember their relatives back in Kenya, they must not, for this reason, jeopardize their marriages and the welfare of their own families in the US.

The Couples' Recommendations to Fellow Kenyan Immigrant Couples

According to Table 26, the leading recommendation was for Kenyan immigrant couples to remember their roots, be themselves, and maintain their Kenyan cultural ways, e.g. listening to the elders (65% of interviewees). Other key recommendations were for their fellow immigrant couples to fear and trust God and His word, be prayerful, pray as families, and have prayer partners (35%) and, as marital partners, to exercise humility, mutual understanding, communication and openness, make sacrifices and compromises, and love each other in good and bad times (35%). Other recommendations were for them

⁴¹⁸ Leigh Swigart, *Extended Lives: The African Immigrant Experience in Philadelphia* (The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 2001), 6.

to spend time together and with their children and talk to their children (15%), and to hold mutual discussions and maintain united approaches to issues (15%).

Remember Their Roots

The couples urged their fellow immigrant couples in the US to remember their roots and live as Kenyans. They advised them to (1) remain authentic in their Kenyan African culture by being themselves (*Couples 1,10, Husbands 6,9, Wife 7*); (2) adjust where necessary but to “not conform to the culture of the United States”⁴¹⁹ (*Couple 3*); (3) maintain the marriage lifestyles that they learned back in Kenya (*Husband 2*); (4) continue embracing the Kenyan culture of accepting elders’ advice where needed (*Wife 2*); and (5) remain in their marriages and reject the US culture [of easy divorces] (*Wife 4*).

Wife 3 recommended: “Although we are in America, let’s assimilate to the culture, but may the culture not change who we are.”⁴²⁰ *Husband 6* recommended:

I feel strongly that Kenyan immigrant couples should not be influenced by the American culture. This is because the American culture leads couples or married life to conflict. Instead of couples solving their problems or conflicts amicably, they resort to confrontations which in turn cause marital break ups that eventually lead to divorce, which is painful. The Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States should uphold their Kenyan culture in which marriage is a respected institution rather than something that one wants to merely try. That is why in Kenya we have fewer divorces [unlike in the United States].⁴²¹

Wife 10 told her fellow immigrant couples that maintaining their Kenyan culture was beneficial for a couple’s oneness and to their children. The African culture requires couples to be accountable to their families and community, the man to lead the home, and the wife to respect her husband.

⁴¹⁹ *Husband 3*, “The Couples’ Recommendations to Fellow Kenyan Immigrant Couples.”

⁴²⁰ *Wife 3*, “The Couples’ Recommendations to Fellow Kenyan Immigrant Couples.”

⁴²¹ *Husband 6*, “The Couples’ Recommendations to Fellow Kenyan Immigrant Couples.”

African culture also upholds strict discipline of children whereby children are not allowed to disrespect or disobey their parents. The point the couples are making, hence, is that sticking to these African cultural tenets will help the couples maintain strong marriages and successfully raise their children. This, however, though still possible, can prove to be an uphill task, as Lilian Odera observes:

The cultural adjustment process is determined by how individuals manage to maintain or alternatively let go of their national culture in light of conflicting cultural values. Typically, individuals who are faced with cultural adjustment are those from the non-dominant cultural group (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Immigration into Western societies often results in a process where there is an encounter of two groups that are not equally powerful. On the contrary, the mainstream population in the country of settlement is, by definition, more dominant than the migrating groups (LaFramboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993).⁴²²

It follows from this argument that Kenyan immigrant couples in the US need to adjust to the US culture. Otiso also observes that “immigrant success in the new country therefore requires immigrants to adopt or acculturate into the host country.”⁴²³ The researcher’s view, however, is that Kenyan immigrant couples should retain the useful tenets of their African culture, adopt useful aspects of the US culture, and reject any cultural tenets that adversely affect their lives, marriages, and children.

Have Faith in God and Be Prayerful

Some of the couples also recommended stronger faith in God and prayerfulness to their fellow immigrant couples. They advised them to (1) fear God and keep his ways (*Husband 2*), (2) take the word of God as a manual for living, if one really wanted to go to heaven (*Wife 2*), (3) be very prayerful (*Couple 5*), and have prayer partners (*Wife 5*),

⁴²² Odera, 33-34.

⁴²³ Otiso.

(4) always trust God in their marriages so that they would be strong (*Wife 8*), (5) hold firmly to the faith as they continued to live in the US (*Husband 9*), and (6) put God first by praying together as a family (*Husband 10*).

As earlier noted, couples must put their trust in the Lord, for “Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it” and “Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”⁴²⁴ Again, the Bible commands believers to be “anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,” to let their “requests be made known to God.”⁴²⁵ Gary Thomas advises: “If you want to grow toward God, you must build a stronger prayer life. If you’re married, to attain a stronger prayer life you must learn to respect your spouse and be considerate.”⁴²⁶

Maintain Character and Communication

Some of the interviewees recommended character, mutuality, and communication to their fellow Kenyan immigrant spouses. They advised them to (1) maintain mutual communication (*Husbands 3, 4, 5*) and hold discussions of issues (*Husbands 4, 5*), (2) make sacrifices and compromises in whatever issues they might happen to differ on (*Husband 4*), (3) love one another during both good and bad times (*Couple 7, Husband 8*), (4) be humble before each other (*Husband 8*), and (5) be understanding with each other, for there was no need to blame each other for not doing things well that they had not been used to doing while they lived back in Kenya.

⁴²⁴ Ps. 127:1.

⁴²⁵ Phil. 4:6.

⁴²⁶ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage: What if God Designed Marriage to Make us Holy More Than to Make us Happy?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 79.

As God's Word says: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."⁴²⁷ As Thomas notes, "Giving respect to others brings light and life into our lives" and "an essential discipline" for which marriage provides daily opportunities for us to grow in this area."⁴²⁸

The Couples' Observed Patterns of Cultural Adaptation

As Table 28 shows, the interviewed couples, through their responses, categorized themselves into two age groups of six older and four younger couples, which led the researcher to believe that the interviewees' age brackets might have influenced their views on the various cultural issues. Each age group took more interest in certain cultural issues while taking minimal or no interest in certain others. The responses, moreover, gave clear indications of each age group's cultural inclinations.

The older couples apparently took more interest in the cultural discussion, provided most of the responses, and, in most cases, had higher numbers of responses than their younger counterparts. The two age groups' perspectives on the US culture differed mainly on (1) the status of men, (2) the status of marriage in society, (3) merged gender roles, (4) the status of women, (5) the culture of overworking, (6) the status of children and parental authority, (7) the absence of communal living, (8) divorce and divorce rates, (9) gay marriages and loose sexual morals, and (10) the causes of immigrant divorces. Their perspectives also differed on the husband/wife being "head" or "headed" (leader or led) and the individual being "moderate," "conservative," or "indifferent" (*Table 27*).

⁴²⁷ Phil. 2:3.

⁴²⁸ Thomas, 64.

The Older Couples' Versus the Younger Couples' Divergent Views

Examples of major perspectival differences between the two age groups in these primary issues (*Table 28*) were that (1) 92% of the six older couples said that men in the US were powerless, disfavored, and harassed, while only 14% of the younger spouses said so; (2) 75% of the older couples said that in the US women were too protected, free, and powerful, but none of the younger couples said so; (3) only 1 older husband said he and his wife had gained increased mutual unity through interacting with the US culture, while all but 1 of the 4 younger husbands said they had gained increased mutual unity in their marriages; and (4) 83% of the older couples said marriage was lightly esteemed in the US while only 38% of the younger couples said so. Similarly, (1) all 6 older husbands said they were “head” while all but 1 younger husband said they were “headed,” (2) only 41% of the older spouses said they were “moderate” but all the younger spouses said they were, and (3) while 50% of the older spouses said they were “conservative,” none of their younger counterparts said so.

The Older Couples' Conservatism Versus the Younger Couples' Flexibility

According to these data (*Table 28*), the older couples' responses point to general unwillingness and refusal to conform to US culture. Their responses also show that they were more dissatisfied with the US culture and more inclined toward maintaining their Kenyan cultural roots. The younger couples, on the other hand, were more flexible and open to cultural change. They also appreciated US culture more and showed little or no interest in criticizing most of its traits. These findings point to cultural conservation on the part of older generations of Kenyan immigrant couples in the US and cultural

flexibility on the part of the younger generations. Discussing “Demographics and Acculturation,” Odera confirms these two patterns of acculturation:

Arguably, older first generation immigrants may be less likely to adopt new cultural values while younger immigrants may be more culturally flexible and easily adapt the culture of the host country. In Kenyan culture it is the responsibility and assigned role of the older generation to teach cultural values to the younger generation. For this reason, even upon migration, older Kenyan immigrants may be less likely to adopt American cultural values, and may instead retain Kenyan cultural values.⁴²⁹

The younger couples, moreover, had stayed in the US for periods ranging from 1 to 4 years, compared to the older couples who had stayed in the US for periods ranging from 8 to 14 years. As Odera observes, “Length of stay emerges as a significant correlate of Kenyan acculturation such that Kenyan immigrants who have lived in the United States for a longer period of time report lower levels of Kenyan acculturation.”⁴³⁰ The older couples, hence, should have reported lower levels but, instead, reported higher levels of Kenyan acculturation than the younger couples, which confirms the flexibility of younger and conservatism of older generations of Kenyan immigrants in the US.

Hypotheses Testing

Study findings supported and challenged this study’s hypotheses that 1) Kenyan immigrant couples in the US experience cultural dissonance due to cultural differences between Kenya and the US; and that 2) marital problems among the couples result from their experiences of cultural dissonance. This next sub-section reports findings that were in support of the study hypotheses.

⁴²⁹ Odera, 50.

⁴³⁰ Odera, 75.

Findings that Supported the Study Hypotheses

This study has established that many of the couples have been experiencing cultural conflicts and consequently been frustrated in their marriages. Research findings agreed with the original hypothesis that Kenyan immigrant couples in the US have been experiencing marital problems due to cultural dissonance caused by the cultural differences between Kenya and the US. *Table 2* below shows data representing the major cultural conflicts encountered by Kenyan immigrant couples in the US.

Major Instances of Cultural Conflicts among Kenyan Immigrant Couples in the USA

	<i>Cultural Issues</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
1	Merged gender roles denying men leadership roles	70% (Interviewees)
2	Marriage lightly esteemed, marriages temporary	65% (Interviewees)
3	Culture of overworking denying families mutual time	65% (Interviewees)
4	Men powerless, disfavored, harassed by their wives	60% (Interviewees)
5	Children too powerful, parental authority diminished	50% (Interviewees)
6	Women too protected, free, independent, powerful	45% (Interviewees)
7	Easy divorces and high divorce rates	45% (Interviewees)
8	Individualism and the absence of communal living	45% (Interviewees)
9	Gay marriages and other loose sexual morals	45% (Interviewees)

Table 29

Merged Gender Roles

According to the interviewed couples, merged gender roles have resulted in mutual husband-wife disrespect and competition over family headship. As shown in the literature review in Chapter Three, family headship by men was one of the key tenets of Kenyan African society, and Kenyan immigrant husbands in the US are disorientated because they are no longer the heads of their houses but their wives' equals. The men are

also overworked, having to attend to their jobs and fulfill their manly chores in the home as well as help their wives with house chores that had been the responsibilities of the women while the couples lived in Kenya. According to the men, moreover, women in the US do not participate in the manly chores, despite gender roles having been merged. A number of the immigrant couples, subsequently, have lost their marriages.

Light Esteem of Marriage, Easy Divorces, and High Divorce Rates

A number of the interviewed spouses said marriage was lightly esteemed in the US, and divorce was too easy, which caused high divorce rates, with too many divorced mothers playing father roles. The couples felt that divorces in the United States were caused by the lack of serious commitment to marriage and made easy by the society's acceptance of divorce. As discussed in the first three chapters of this study, the joining together of two persons in marriage is a serious matter in the African community that calls for communal and parental involvement and solemn ceremonies. Marriage vows also are more detailed and, in most cases, the minister reads each vow separately and, in each case, solicits the prospective spouse's response, while in the US many vows may be combined together and receive a single response. Similarly, marriage is highly esteemed, with divorce not expected or considered an option in most domestic disagreements. Many Kenyan immigrant marriages have, hence, been weakened by the US culture of light esteem of marriage, individualistic and temporary marriages, and easy divorce.

The Culture of Overworking

Kenyan immigrant couples have also been strained by the US culture of overworking. As discussed in Chapter One, Kenyans generally work during daytime

hours. The majority of study couples, therefore, were not used to 24/7 working schedules. They reported that immigrant spouses have lacked time for one another and their children due to busy work schedules. After long periods without spending time with one another, the spouses begin to lose affections for one another as well as begin to develop affections for persons in their work environments and neighborhoods with whom they have spent more time. The children also finally succumb to continued lack of parenting and become wayward, even as the parents trade accusations over which of them has reneged on his or her responsibility of guiding the children.

Men's Powerlessness and Women's Powerfulness

According to some of the study couples, the US society had rendered men powerless while the women were too protected, independent, powerful, and disrespectful to their husbands. Consequently, the Kenyan immigrant husbands have been frustrated because they had not been used to their wives being independent or disrespecting them while the couples lived in Kenya. The couples, besides, complained that the authorities in the US were biased toward protecting women. According to them, in domestic disputes, for instance, the authorities normally took the woman's word against the man's. All a woman needed to do to drive her husband out of the couple's house, for instance, was provoke him to anger, start a fight with him, and call the police and lie against him.

Not that the Kenyan immigrant couples were opposed to the protection of women's rights or women's independence. As already stated above, many of the interviewed spouses appreciated the protection of women in the US, and Kenyan immigrant women in the US happily enjoyed rights that they did not enjoy while the couples lived in Kenya. The problems occurred when some women misused their

protection to disrespect or exercise control over their husbands. According to the study couples, many immigrant divorces had been caused by women being too powerful.

Children's Overprotection and Diminished Parental Authority

The study couples said that they were frustrated by their inability to spank their children, due to what they termed as the overprotection of children in the US. According to the literature review in Chapter Three and data from the second case study, spanking was a common method of disciplining children in Kenya, and protection of children was inadequate in the country. Kenyan immigrant couples, hence, were frustrated that they could not discipline their own children through spanking, because this was illegal in the US. [The researcher made inquiries and established that, mostly, spanking a child without inflicting injury or leaving a mark on the child, might not be illegal in the US]. Unlike in Kenya, moreover, children in the US freely disrespected and defied their parents, since they understood that the parents were not permitted to spank them. Such conditions have precipitated disagreements and tensions between Kenyan immigrant spouses.

Individualism and Absence of Communal Living

While in Kenya a couple's parents, families, extended families, and communities often intervene and save marriages, immigrant spouses find that such intervention is often absent in the US, due to individualism and lack of communal living. The literature review in Chapter Three revealed that the Kenyan immigrant couples, hailing from a communal society where marriage was a property of the community, experienced profound cultural conflicts in their marriages while living in the American individualistic society, where people believed and did what they wanted and often broke their marriages at will.

Gay Marriages and Other Loose Sexual Morals

Lastly, loose US sexual morals and raunchy dress and language have affected Kenyan immigrant marriages. Communal disapproval of extramarital sex, homosexuality, and raunchy dress and language in Kenya had restrained the spouses from falling into infidelity and sexual perversions. Our study couples, hence, expressed frustration with the easy availability of sex outside of marriage in the US. Extramarital sex exists in Kenya but is frowned upon by society, to the extent that in some incidences of infidelity, offended and angry spouses have attacked and seriously injured or even killed their own marital partners or the intruders. Loose manners of dressing, including short dresses and skirts or pants that are so brief that they nearly expose the private areas of the body, which are normal in the US, are also unacceptable in African society. Persons who use obscene language in public, again, are considered to be base fellows in African society. Some of the couples felt that loose sexual morals and acceptance [tolerance] of extramarital sex in the US were encouraging husbands to quit their marriages.

Findings that Deviated from the Study Hypotheses

Certain findings, however, appeared to indicate that not all marital problems among the couples were caused by their cultural experiences in the US. Also, not all the couples experienced much cultural dissonance. Some Kenyan immigrant couples had, indeed, accepted and accommodated themselves into the US culture.

Problems Dating Back to Immigrant Couple's Life in Kenya

The researcher had assumed that all marital problems among the Kenyan immigrant couples were related to the couples' cultural experiences in the US. In the

third case study, however, Akinyi says that Wanjala's problem of being a womanizer, which had culminated in her deserting him, had not been caused by the couple's immigration to the US but had been there since the beginning of the couple's marriage. Akinyi, again, explained that even while the couple still lived in Kenya, she had not submitted herself to the Kenyan/African cultural tradition of gender inequality and of men dominating women. She affirmed that she had stood her ground and refused to run her finances jointly with her husband for fear that he would behave like other Kenyan men and exclude her from financial decisions. Akinyi's claims conform to *Couple Two's* observation that many Kenyan immigrant couples who divorced in the US did indeed have some problems even before they left Kenya but were held together by their African culture until they came to the US, where the culture supported their separation.

The Couples' Appreciation of US Culture

The researcher had not expected Kenyan immigrant husbands to appreciate the protection, freedom, and power accorded to women in the US because, according to the reviewed literature and the researcher's knowledge, Kenyan men were not used to their wives enjoying those rights. On the contrary, however, many of the men interviewed (30%) appreciated the empowerment of women in the US. Similarly, the researcher had not expected the Kenyan immigrant couples to appreciate the protection and boldness of children in the US because, again, according to the reviewed literature and reports gathered by the researcher, children in the US were overprotected and rebellious toward their parents. On the contrary, though, 20% of the interviewed couples appreciated the protection and boldness of children in the US.

The husband in *Couple Three*, again, contrary to the researcher's expectations, appreciated American individualism and the absence of communal living as good cultural traits that created environments of privacy for couples. According to this man, although Western individualism had its own disadvantages, it was advantageous in this respect. Also, despite 65% of the interviewees criticizing the culture of overworking in the US, 30% of them appreciated the availability of jobs. The Kenyan immigrant couples, hence, did not negatively view every aspect of the US culture.

Limited Experiences of Cultural Dissonance

As noted, many of the interviewees' responses revealed limited experiences of cultural dissonance. Despite the two countries' cultural differences, these Kenyan immigrant couples had accommodated themselves within US culture and managed to maintain strong marriages. Some interviewed spouses, also, did not indicate having experienced certain cultural conflicts about which their counterparts complained. Some spouses even appreciated cultural traits that were disapproved by their counterparts. The data in *Table 1*, for instance, indicate that the younger couples were more liberal and positive toward the US culture than their older counterparts. While the younger generation of Kenyan immigrant couples many not necessarily be willing to abandon their culture and adopt the US culture, they certainly have been more accepting of their host country's culture, have experienced less cultural dissonance, and are less probable to experience culturally-based marital problems. Despite many Kenyan immigrant couples in the US having experienced cultural conflicts and related marital problems, therefore, there has been some success in cultural adaptation among some of the couples. Marital problems among such couples, hence, could be unrelated to cultural conflicts.

Sharp Departures from Kenyan Cultural Tenets

Some of the immigrant spouses' views and activities, moreover, represented sharp departures from traditional Kenyan/African cultural tenets. It is not usual in Kenya for a man, for instance, to take care of the babies or house chores like the husband in *Couple Three* said he had been doing. It is also unusual in Kenya for a husband to allow his wife to take time out all by herself and take care of her own business, as the husband in *Couple One* confessed he had been doing. Wives in Kenya, moreover, do not normally take such time out. These Kenyan immigrant couples had, contrary to the researcher's expectations, almost fully accepted and accommodated themselves to the US culture.

Some Immigrant Women's Criticism of Women's Protection in the US

The researcher had expected that all Kenyan immigrant wives would be excited about the protections and freedoms accorded women in the US since the wives had not enjoyed these rights prior to immigrating to the US, nor had their husbands been restrained, as they were in the US. Some 30% of the women interviewees, on the contrary, disapproved the levels to which, according to them, women had been overprotected, too empowered, and consequently disrespectful to their husbands. The views held by these women demonstrated, contrary to the researcher's expectations, that some Kenyan immigrant women in the US had not accepted or been influenced by the protection of women in the country. Such women would be less likely to experience cultural conflicts in their marriages in the US for reasons related to the protection of women by the country's laws and authorities.

Summary

This chapter has presented the interview data on the kinds of marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States, the factors that contributed to those problems, and what helpful recommendations could be made to the couples to strengthen their marriages. Collected data have been reported with a view to making the findings as informative of the project's objectives as possible.

Two methods of gathering the data were utilized in the study, namely, case studies and field interviews. Data was gathered directly from the Kenyan immigrant couples regarding their culturally-related experiences in the United States with respect to the couples' marriages, given that sharp differences existed between the cultures of Kenya and the United States.

The researcher has presented data gathered from three case studies involving Kenyan immigrant couples and spouses in three different parts of the United States as well as data gathered from field interviews of ten Kenyan immigrant couples in the South Bend/Mishawaka/Elkhart metropolis in Indiana, United States. The three case studies involved a Kenyan immigrant couple's encounter with their Americanized children; a Kenyan immigrant couple's domestic episode that led to their divorce; and two divorced Kenyan immigrant spouses formerly married to each other.

The ten couples interviewed, though residing in the same metropolitan neighborhood, were randomly selected from within a church family, on the basis of the formula stipulated in Chapter Four, which dealt with the research methodology. Each spouse responded to questions that had been designed to solicit responses that would inform this project on the kinds of marital problems the Kenyan immigrant couples

experienced, the factors that contributed to those problems, and relevant insights the couples themselves thought would be helpful solutions to these problems. The three case studies were selected on the basis of the contributions they made to the research project.

Chapter Six will be the final chapter in this project. The chapter will summarize the findings of the study on the kinds of problems experienced by the Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States and the factors causing those problems. The chapter will make conclusions based on the findings and then use the overall findings to evaluate this study's assumptions and hypotheses. In the light of the verified data, recommendations will then be made to the Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States on how to maintain stronger marriages.

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Project Overview

This chapter culminates this research, which was initiated after the researcher had received reports that Kenyan immigrant couples in the US were experiencing marital problems. Chapter One defined the problem, unveiled the project's background, and presented the research methodology. It argued the research's significance for the broader church, outlined its assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, and clarified meanings of terms. Chapter Two undertook a theological discussion of the sanctity and permanence of marriage in the context of culture and argued from biblical and practical theology how cultural diversity, both theoretical and practical, impacted marriage. Chapter Three reviewed literature on similar subjects, cultural differences, and culture and marriage and made references to literature on Kenyan/African cultural marital customs and marital trends in the US. Chapter Four outlined the data acquisition methodology, including secondary library research, description and documentation of interviews, and compilation of case studies. It also articulated the project's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter Five presented the study data, consisting of three case studies and ten interviews, and utilized tables to analyze the data.

Chapter Six concludes the study by presenting a summary of the research findings and the project's accomplishments before using them to make certain conclusions and recommendations. The researcher, therefore, identifies the nature of the marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the US, unveils the factors that cause the problems, and makes recommendations on how the couples could strengthen their marriages. The researcher also makes recommendations for further research.

Project Hypotheses

This research project is based upon the hypotheses that 1) Kenyan immigrant couples in the US experience cultural dissonance due to cultural differences between Kenya and the US; 2) marital problems among the couples result from their experiences of cultural dissonance; 3) it will be possible for these couples to still maintain stronger marriages; and that 4) the project's findings, discussions, and recommendations will be helpful to the couples.

Project Objectives

The research project has the following objectives: 1) to explore the marital problems experienced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States; 2) to identify factors contributing to those marital problems, and 3) to make recommendations for the couples to maintain stronger marriages.

Project Research

There were three case studies: the first an episode between a couple and their children, the second the case of two divorced former spouses, and the third a newspaper report of a Kenyan immigrant couple that divorced following a domestic episode.

Cultural issues that dominated the case studies were the immigrant couples' claims about the status of women, men, and children in the US; the cultural differences between Kenya and the US; and the need for Kenyan immigrant couples to adjust themselves to the US culture as well as the consequences of failing to do so.

There were also field interviews of ten Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States. Cultural issues that emerged from the interviews were the couples' appreciation of certain US cultural traits; encounters and ways of coping with social, moral, marital, economic, and children-related cultural conflicts; perceptions of divorce in Kenya and the US; benefits from their interactions with the US culture; and their recommendations to fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the US.

Findings

Principal Concerns

These were categorized into: (1) aspects of the US culture that the couples appreciated; (2) aspects of the US culture that conflicted with the couples' Kenyan culture; (3) the couples' coping skills; (4) the couples' gains from their interactions with the US culture; and (5) the couples' recommendations to their fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the US.

Cultural Appreciations

The couples primarily appreciated the protection and independence of women (55% of interviewees) and the availability of job and schooling opportunities (30%).

Cultural Gains

Some of the interviewees affirmed that they had gained mutual unity through interacting with the US culture (40%). Others acknowledged that some immigrant husbands had been “Americanized” and were appreciating their wives more and helping with work in the house (25%).

Cultural Conflicts

The couples’ experiences of cultural conflicts were mainly due to (1) merged gender roles (70% of interviewees), (2) the culture of overworking, which interviewees said was denying family members time with one another (65% of interviewees), (3) their perception that in the US men were powerless, disfavored and harassed by the law and authorities, and disrespected by their wives (two case studies and 60% of interviewees), and (4) their perception that women were overprotected, too independent and powerful, and abusing their privileges to harass men (two case studies and 45% of interviewees).

Others were the couples’ views that in the US marriage was lightly esteemed and temporary (65% of interviewees); divorce was too easy and divorce rates too high (45% of interviewees); and that the children were overprotected by the authorities and were too free and rebellious, which resulted in diminished parental authority (67% of cases studies and 50% of interviewees). Other issues were gay marriages and loose sexual morals (45% of interviewees) and individualism and lack of communal living (45% of interviewees).

Coping Skills

The interviewed couples said they had coped with the US culture by sticking to their Kenyan culture, including teaching Kenyan ways and languages to their children

(90% of interviewees); having united views and compromising with each other's interests (70%); and accommodating themselves in the US culture, accepting its good aspects and rejecting its bad ones (65%). They had also coped through faith and prayer (50%) and teaching God's Word and good behavior to their children (50%).

Recommendations

The interviewees mainly recommended to their fellow immigrant couples to maintain united views and avoid differing on cultural issues (70% of interviewees) and to stick to their Kenyan/African roots and remain who they were (65%).

Paradigm Shifts

As earlier discussed in Chapter Five, the interviewed couples, by their views on the major cultural conflicts, had categorized themselves into two age groups of six older couples, aged over 35 years, and four younger couples, mostly aged under 35 years. The interview responses, moreover, unveiled an emerging reality of the younger Kenyan immigrant couples gravitating towards abandoning their Kenyan/African cultural ways and accepting the US culture, whereas the older couples were generally more culturally conserving and inclined toward preserving their Kenyan/African culture.

Older Couples' Versus Younger Couples' Divergent Cultural Views

The study's interest was directed toward the cultural direction that each of these two age groups appeared to take, because they did not raise or support the same cultural issues. The older couples also appeared to have taken more interest in the cultural discussion and provided higher percentages of responses in most of the issues as shown in Table 30 (See Table 28 in Chapter Five) below.

Interview Responses of the 6 Older Couples (12 Spouses) and 4 Younger Couples (8 Spouses) Compared

CULTURAL ISSUES	OLDER COUPLES		YOUNGER COUPLES	
	Number of Responses	Percentage	Number of Responses	Percentage
Husband indicating he is “head”	6	100%	1	14%
Men powerless, disfavored, and harassed	11	92%	1	14%
Marriage lightly esteemed in US	10	83%	3	38%
Merged gender roles in US frustrating	9	75%	5	63%
Women too protected, free, and powerful	9	75%	0	0%
Culture of overworking frustrating	9	75%	4	50%
Children too powerful, parents weak	7	58%	3	38%
Divorce too easy and divorce rates too high	7	58%	3	38%
Absence of communal living frustrating	6	50%	3	38%
Spouse indicating he/she is “conservative”	6	50%	0	0%
Spouse indicating he/she is “moderate”	5	41%	8	100%
Increased mutual unity	1	8%	7	88%

Table 30

Older Couples’ Conservatism Versus Younger Couples’ Liberalism

According to the data in *Table 30*, the older couples were more dissatisfied with the US culture and more inclined toward maintaining their Kenyan cultural roots, whereas their younger counterparts appeared to be more flexible and appreciative of the US culture. This reveals possible cultural migrations of older generations of Kenyan immigrant couples in the US towards increased cultural conservation and younger generations towards increased cultural flexibility.

Conclusions

Study findings supported and challenged this study's hypotheses that marital problems among the Kenyan immigrant couples were caused by cultural dissonance, and that the dissonance arose from cultural differences between Kenya and the US. This next sub-section reports findings that were in support of the study hypotheses.

Findings that Supported the Study Hypotheses

Many Kenyan immigrant couples in the US have been experiencing cultural conflicts and consequently been frustrated in their marriages. Table 31 below (See Table 29 in Chapter Five) lists the major cultural conflicts encountered by the couples.

Major Instances of Cultural Conflicts among the Kenyan Immigrant Couples in the USA

	<i>Cultural Issues</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
1	Merged gender roles denying men leadership roles	70% (Interviewees)
2	Marriage lightly esteemed, marriages temporary	65% (Interviewees)
3	Culture of overworking denying families mutual time	65% (Interviewees)
4	Men powerless, disfavored, harassed by their wives	60% (Interviewees)
5	Children too powerful, parental authority diminished	50% (Interviewees)
6	Women too protected, free, independent, powerful	45% (Interviewees)
7	Easy divorces and high divorce rates	45% (Interviewees)
8	Individualism and the absence of communal living	45% (Interviewees)
9	Gay marriages and other loose sexual morals	45% (Interviewees)

Table 31

According to data received from the interviewees:

- Merged gender roles have resulted in mutual husband-wife disrespect, competition over family headship, and unfair distribution of house chores between husbands and wives. These conditions have led to a number of Kenyan immigrant couples losing their marriages.
- The marriages of many Kenyan immigrant couples have been weakened as they have been influenced by the US culture of light esteem of marriage, individualistic and temporary marriages, and easy divorce.
- Many Kenyan immigrant spouses have been strained by the US culture of overworking to the point of losing their affection for one another, developing affection for their workmates, and renegeing on their parental responsibilities.
- The US society has rendered men powerless while women are too protected, independent, powerful, and disrespectful to their husbands. This has frustrated many Kenyan immigrant men and caused many immigrant divorces.
- Kenyan immigrant couples have been frustrated by their inability to spank their children, due to what they termed as the overprotection of children in the US. This has precipitated disagreements and tensions between the immigrant spouses as they have traded accusations over their children's behavior.
- Kenyan immigrant couples, hailing from a communal society where marriage is a property of the community, have experienced profound cultural conflicts in their marriages while living in the American individualistic society, where people believe and do what they want and often break their marriages at will.

- Loose US sexual morals, like perversions and the easy availability and acceptance of sex outside of marriage, have encouraged husbands to quit their marriages and affected many Kenyan immigrant marriages.

Findings that Deviated from the Study Hypotheses

Some findings, however, appeared to indicate that (1) not all marital problems among the couples were caused by their cultural experiences in the US, (2) not all the couples experienced much cultural dissonance, and (3) some of the couples had accepted and accommodated themselves into US culture. This study has established that:

- Many Kenyan immigrant couples who divorce in the US had some problems even before they left Kenya but were held together by their African culture until they came to the US, where the culture supported their separation.
- Some of the interviewees appreciated certain aspects of the US culture. (1) Thirty percent of the men appreciated the empowerment of women in the US; (2) Twenty percent of the couples appreciated the protection and boldness of children in the US; (3) One husband appreciated the culture of individualism and the absence of communal living as being conducive to couples' privacy; and (4) thirty percent of the couples appreciated the availability of jobs.
- Some Kenyan immigrant couples had successfully adapted themselves into US culture and had limited experiences of cultural conflicts. Others, like the younger couples, appeared to be less inclined toward preserving their Kenyan African culture than their older counterparts.

- Some of the immigrant spouses' views and activities represented sharp departures from traditional Kenyan/African cultural tenets. One immigrant husband took care of the babies and house chores while one immigrant couple agreed over the wife taking time out all by herself on her own business, contrary to normal Kenyan practice.
- Some 30% of the women interviewees, contrary to what the researcher had expected, disapproved the levels to which, according to them, women in the US had been overprotected, too empowered, and consequently become disrespectful to their husbands.

Recommendations

This section utilizes the study findings to make recommendations to the Kenyan immigrant couples in the US on how to strengthen their marriages and also make recommendations for further research. In the process, the section revisits the theological and experiential rationales for the sanctity and permanence of marriage as well as the evaluation of marriage and divorce from biblical perspectives that had earlier been presented in this study.

Current Study

In this sub-section, the researcher builds on the recommendations of the Kenyan immigrant couples in the US that he interviewed to outline ways of maintaining strong immigrant marriages in the US. He also builds on the skills that the couples had utilized to cope with the US culture and gains they had made in their interactions with the culture of the US.

Marital Resiliency

Some of the interviewed spouses urged their fellow Kenyan immigrant couples to remain in their marriages. According to the biblical view of marriage discussed in Chapters Two and Three, God's ideal is lasting marital unions. There are only two clear grounds for divorce in the Bible: one partner engaging in sexual immorality and one partner abandoning the other, especially for faith-related reasons. The Scripture says: "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."⁴³¹ Again, the Scripture says: "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."⁴³² Once one marital partner engages in sexual immorality, the other partner may exit the relationship. Jesus said this, however, to permit rather than command divorce on the ground of infidelity. The offended partner, hence, may still choose to forgive the other and save the marriage.

The other biblically acceptable ground for divorce is the desertion of one marital partner by the other for faith-related reasons. According to the Scripture:

¹⁰ Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. ¹¹ But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.

¹² But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*. But God has

⁴³¹ Matt. 5:32.

⁴³² Matt. 19:9.

called us to peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?⁴³³

Note that the unbelieving spouse must be unwilling to stay in the marriage for the divorce to be biblically permitted. This scenario represents a case where two persons get married while they are both unbelievers, then one of them gets converted. Still, if the unbelieving spouse does not reject his or her converted partner, the marriage should continue.

All other grounds for divorce accepted by the church today, for instance, the incompatibility of two spouses or the extreme abuse of the marriage by one spouse, as appealing as they might sound, are not taught in Scripture but are based on human wisdom, logic, and common sense. This study strongly recommends to the Kenyan immigrant couples in the US, therefore, to recognize the sanctity and permanence of marriage, humble themselves and sacrificially reach out to each other, sort out their differences, and remain in their marriages.

Conflict Management

As many of the interviewed couples affirmed, spouses must learn to resolve their marital differences, whether those differences are caused by cultural conflicts or other factors. The difference between a successful and an unsuccessful marriage is the couples' ability to sort out their mutual differences. There are no perfect spouses or marriages without differences. Spouses must admit that they are human, accept and bear with each other's weaknesses, forgive each other, and avoid piling up unresolved issues.

Daniel J. Rogers, CEO of Cherry Street Mission Ministries, Toledo, Ohio, teaches that forgiveness means "to give up all claims on account; to grant relief from payment of

⁴³³ 1 Cor. 7:10-16.

a debt; to cease feeling resentment against an offender; to cancel a debt.”⁴³⁴ Saying that “a person’s most immature, destructive, and self-sabotaging behavior patterns can always be traced back to hurts from their past invading and controlling their present in ways they don’t understand,”⁴³⁵ Rogers lists the following “ten indicators of unforgiveness:”

(1) Cutting off relationships or avoiding people who have offended you; (2) Finding it hard to concentrate or get back to normal activity in the wake of an offense; (3) Frequently flashing back to memories of people who hurt you and/or incidents in which you were hurt; (4) Intentionally or unintentionally doing or saying something that hurts or inconveniences another person; (5) Persistently feeling inappropriate and/or experiencing negative emotions toward another person; (6) Losing desire and/or motivation to trust, worship, serve, or obey God after someone hurt you; (7) Wishing, hoping, or praying that someone who has hurt or offended you, will meet with harm or disaster; (8) Withholding, even in subtle ways your attention, affection, communication or help from someone who previously enjoyed these; (9) Using work, sleep, food, sex, spending, “ministry” or any kind of substance to get your mind off of what someone else has done to you; and (10) Entertaining the idea or believing in any way, that what someone else did to you, ruined your life.⁴³⁶

The witness of experience to the adverse effects of marital breakdown as expounded in Chapter Two of this study, moreover, should compel every couple considering a divorce to rethink their intentions. Divorce permanently injures the two spouses emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and even physically, and negatively affects their social and economic stabilities. Similarly, divorce also injures the children emotionally, mentally, and spiritually and brutally deprives them of their home and the privilege of growing up under the care of two married parents. Divorce, in addition, affects the couple’s parents and other family members as well as the churches and

⁴³⁴ Daniel J. Rogers, “Rescue and Forgiveness,” (Toledo, OH: Biblical Rescue, 2006).

⁴³⁵ Rogers.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

communities involved. This study, therefore, strongly recommends to the Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to resolve their conflicts and remain in their marriages.

Marital Counseling

Some of the interviewed couples recommended that fellow immigrant couples seek counseling from pastors and other professionals when needed. Couples do not need to struggle alone with difficult marital conditions and situations. As the Scripture teaches, “where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety;”⁴³⁷ “a wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel;”⁴³⁸ and “the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.”⁴³⁹ Some marital problems, moreover, melt down when exposed to the wisdom and counsel of persons having deep perceptions of the marital life and its adversities. The researcher and his wife, in their ministry of marital counseling, have witnessed problems between spouses almost literally “evaporate into the air” just because he and his wife took time to talk with the couples concerned. It is, therefore, recommended to Kenyan immigrant couples in the US that they seek wise counsel regarding their marital conflicts.

Cultural Conservation

The study couples indicated that they had coped with US culture by sticking to their Kenyan culture and recommended to their fellow immigrant couples to remember their roots and remain who they were. It is true that Kenyan immigrant couples do not

⁴³⁷ Prov. 11:14.

⁴³⁸ Prov. 1:5.

⁴³⁹ Prov. 12:5.

need to abandon the good aspects of their Kenyan/African culture or adopt the corrupt aspects of the US culture in order for them to accommodate themselves in the country's culture. The reason for this is because there are no perfect or evil cultures anywhere in the world. Rather, there are good and bad tenets in all the cultures of the world. A good example of this fact is that, as earlier observed, some of the US cultural traits of which the couples disapproved are, admittedly, also found in Kenya to some extent. On the other hand, as our study couples also observed, the US/Western culture is commendable for upholding respect for women and the humane treatment of children.

The African community, nevertheless, embraces the solemnity and permanence of marriage, whereby couples stick together for life. The communal accountability of the African society also helps to sustain the marriages of many African couples because the couples have to consult with their immediate and communal families before they may break their marriages. This study, hence, recommends to Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to conserve only the good aspects of their Kenyan culture and be ready to adopt the good aspects of the US culture, as discussed below.

Cultural Adaptation

The interviewed couples indicated that they had coped by accommodating themselves in US culture, selectively accepting the good and rejecting the bad aspects. They advised their fellow immigrant couples in the country to do the same. Thanks to modern technology, the global community has been reduced into a village neighborhood, with cultural globalization threatening to merge the world's cultures into one universal culture. This is why, generally, the same movies, music, pictures, sexual perversions, and

other practices, may be found in almost all the big cities of the world, even in regions like the African continent that are culturally conservative.

Emerging generations in most cultures of the world do not appear to be keen on preserving the traditional cultures of previous generations. Kenyan immigrant couples in the US will therefore be wiser, for the sake of their Americanized children, to retain only those aspects of their Kenyan/African culture that are helpful and relevant to decent modern lifestyles, while simultaneously adopting helpful tenets of the US culture.

Christian Communion

Christian Kenyan immigrant couples in the US also need to cultivate fellowship with their American brethren. The body of Christ is indwelt and united by God's Spirit, universally. Many American brethren do not take marriage lightly, do not believe in divorce, and do not approve the US cultural tenets disapproved by the Kenyan immigrant couples. Kimberly Smucker (MSW), a young wife and social worker in Toledo, Ohio, for instance, attributes high divorce rates worldwide to selfishness, unwillingness to make individual sacrifices, and the lack of communication skills. She notes:

I believe there are three factors that contribute to high divorce rates worldwide. **The first and highest contributing factor to divorce anywhere in the world is selfishness--period.** It is not a lack of money, it is not the fast paced American lifestyle, it is not materialism and it is not a lack of time. The driving force behind all sin is our collective, relentless focus on self--the idea that my sense of wellbeing is more important than yours. Elevating self means that we are ensuring that our wishes and desires are gratified over the good of the family...the good of our spouse...the good of the community. Those who in any way are affected by our choices or behaviors are necessarily put into a lower level of importance. As we focus on self-interest, the good of others must come in second. What is the corresponding result on those we love? Their sense of mutual love and respect and trust is eroded over time. Love dissipates and this person's sense of self protection, self-preservation begins to take hold as well. The relationships

suffer further until such time as it becomes a convenient, though selfish, way to walk away from a relationship bound by God.⁴⁴⁰

One of the recommendations made by the interviewed couples was that spouses should make sacrifices for each other as well as compromise with each other's interests. Recommending the need for married partners to "make individual sacrifices for the sake of the marriage," Smucker also urges that spouses carry the burdens of each other's sins. She explains:

Similarly, another factor is an unwillingness to make individual sacrifices for the sake of the marriage. Our sin is hurtful and burdensome to God and others. No person feels the burden of our sin more than our spouse. Ideally, partners in a marriage will strive to put off their sinful nature and put on the likeness of Christ, but there are two things to consider in this. One, shedding the practice of sin can take time. Two, there are no guarantees that one's partner is even interested in becoming more Christ like. Because of this, there is ample opportunity to carry the burden of our partner's sin in the same way that Christ carried the burden of our sin to the cross. This is no easy task, nor is it a fun one. We are more apt to stand upon "our rights" as equal partners in a marriage and demand that our spouse carry his/her "equal share" than we are to graciously carry that burden for them as an act of love in which there is no demand for any payment in return.⁴⁴¹

On her part, Smucker urges partners to especially learn "to communicate in the midst of conflict" and advises the partner who is better at communicating to "carry the burden of the bad communicator" in the same manner that the partner would carry the sin of his or her partner, as she urges above. Smucker explains:

And lastly, the final factor is a genuine lack in communication skills. Good communication skills are not very complex in theory, I think. They are just hard to put into practice. Especially when it comes to communication in the midst of conflict. I think couples (or individuals in a marriage) either have not learned how to communicate in an effective, healthy way or *have* learned but struggle to put what they have learned into practice. Communication takes two, so the ignorance or inability of one spouse can definitely affect them both. In that case,

⁴⁴⁰ Kimberly Smucker, Written article sent by E-mail to Author, Toledo, Ohio, December, 2012.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

let's hope the good communicator is willing to carry the burden of the bad communicator, as described above. If not, attempting to resolve conflict can quickly become counter-productive.⁴⁴²

Smucker's views, which represent those of many American Christians, are no different from those held and expressed by many of the study couples or the researcher. By forging close spiritual fellowship with American believers like Kimberly Smucker and others, the Kenyan immigrant couples will not only assimilate into the American society in more productive ways, but also enhance the universal unity of the Body of Christ. This study, hence, recommends to the Kenyan immigrant couples to promote communion with their American brothers and sisters.

Devotional Commitment

The study couples also indicated that they had trusted God and remained in prayer for their marriages, and recommended that their fellow immigrant couples do the same. Despite the need for spouses to make the right choices and work hard to maintain their marriages, the surest anchor for any successful marriage is faith and trust in God, the author of marriage. Couples need to spend time in God's Word and prayer for their marriages and relationships. God's word says that "unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" and "unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."⁴⁴³ A marriage that is founded on faith in God, therefore, will overcome negative cultural experiences. This is why couples need to approach God in prayer for his wisdom and guidance, especially during hard times in their marriages.

⁴⁴² Smucker.

⁴⁴³ Ps. 127:1.

Owners of cars and other machines always rush to consult their manufacturers' manuals, especially when they face difficulties in operating their machines. Engineers, mechanics, and technicians all consult manuals in their work and operations. Yet when it comes to operating the more complex institution of marriage, many fail to see the need to consult its manufacturer. In an article entitled, "Turn it over to Jesus," M. Sellers writes:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. ~ Proverbs 3:5, NLT

I read a story the other day about a man who owned a Model T Ford that broke down on the side of a road. Now this man knew a lot about cars and specifically this car, so he went to work. He tried different things and each time he went back to try and crank the engine, it still wouldn't start. Now, like a lot of us guys, he was a little stubborn, so rather than call for help, he continued to work. He tried different things and still nothing. The car just wouldn't start.

A few minutes later a large limousine pulled up beside him. Out stepped an old man who just stood and watched him for a few minutes. Finally the old man looked at him and told the younger guy to adjust a specific part on the engine.

The guy figured he tried most other things so he might as well give this a shot even though there was no way this old guy could know more about this car than him. So he adjusted the part, got in the car and sure enough, the engine cranked to life. He was surprised and asked the old man, "How did you know what to do?" The old man said, "My name is Henry Ford and I invented this car."⁴⁴⁴

Just as Henry Ford was the maker of the Model T automobile, the Lord God Almighty is the author and manufacturer of marriage. He has provided marital partners with his manual, the Bible, containing all the needed instructions. At times, nevertheless, just as it became necessary for this motorist to receive help from Mr. Ford, it becomes necessary for the marital partners to turn to the manufacturer himself to fix the problems for them. This study advises Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to put their trust in

⁴⁴⁴ M. Sellers, "Turn It Over to Jesus," in "Overcoming Addictions-Help for Christians," Christian Broadcasting Network, <http://blogs.cbn.com/battlingaddictions/archive/2011/12/08/turn-it-over-to-jesus.aspx> [accessed February 20, 2014].

God and spend time in prayer for their marriages and families and to consult God, the designer of marriage, when the going gets tough.

Marital Mutuality

The interviewed couples, in addition, said that they had held mutual discussions of issues and mutually resolved their conflicts, and they recommended to their fellow Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to maintain a united approach and avoid differing on cultural issues. They also urged them to be humble and self-sacrificial, compromise on each other's interests, and maintain open communication with each other. Disunity and discord, conceit and arrogance, and selfishness and miscommunication in a couple's relationship gradually precipitate separation and ultimately result in divorce. God's Word poses the question: "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"⁴⁴⁵

Respect and love should not be taken for granted, demanded or seized, but earned, deserved, and given. Many spouses who demand respect and love from their partners hardly deserve to be loved and respected. Spouses must work hard through humility, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, to earn love and respect from their mates. Marital partners should be so efficient in their performances that each respects and loves the other without him or her needing to demand or ask for it. They should be so sacrificial and their marital commitment of such high quality that they become impossible to replace. This study, hence, recommends total marital mutuality to Kenyan immigrant spouses in the US.

⁴⁴⁵ Amos 3:3.

Personal Discipline

Certain marital problems among Kenyan immigrant couples in the US might have been caused by the spouses' personality problems and lack of marital discipline. In the second case study, for example, Kibet might have been selfish and conceited, excluding his wife from the family's financial management. Judy, on the other hand, might have been stubborn and disrespectful and failed to exercise courtesy toward her husband. Such conditions would cause marital problems even if the couples were living in Kenya.

In some cases, individuals simply develop wrong attitudes and make bad choices. A husband who resists his wife's freedoms and a wife who disrespects her husband, for instance, may not necessarily be doing so under the influence of the US culture. Spouses, hence, need to discipline themselves and be courteous and respectful to each other, practice financial transparency and accountability, and recognize and allow room for each other's rights, etc. This study, hence, recommends that Kenyan immigrant couples in the US cultivate and exercise personal discipline in their marital relationships.

Intensive Parenting

According to many of the interviewed Kenyan immigrant spouses and data from the case studies, children in the US are overprotected and rebellious. On the other hand, today's children face serious danger from the influences of the Internet, TV programs, children's video games, and wrong teachings, among others. Parents who neglect their children, therefore, allow them to be shaped by strange forces and become wayward.

Such parents are answerable to God for those children, whether the family lives in Kenya or the US. It is the responsibility of all parents to raise godly generations for God⁴⁴⁶.

Scripture says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."⁴⁴⁷ The best time to mold the clay or put marks on the wax is while they are soft. St. Francis Xavier said: "Give me the children until they are seven and anyone may have them afterwards."⁴⁴⁸ Parents must train their children while they are little and shape their adult lifestyles. Little children are not in positions to make informed choices. Parents should pour their beliefs and values into their offspring before others do so. This is a full-time responsibility and commitment. This study, hence, recommends to Kenyan immigrant couples in the US to exercise intensive and intentional childrearing.

Family Companionship

The interviewed couples recommended to their fellow immigrant couples that, despite the busy schedules of the US, they make time to spend with one another and their children. The couples observed that the failure to spend time with one another, caused by the US culture of overworking, led to many spouses losing affection for one another and developing adulterous affections for other persons. The couples also indicated that leaving the children on their own led to the children becoming wayward.

This study, hence, recommends to Kenyan immigrant couples in the United States that they create and spend time with one another, to nurture their marital affections, and

⁴⁴⁶ Mal. 2:15.

⁴⁴⁷ Prov. 22:6.

⁴⁴⁸ St. Francis Xavier, "St. Francis Xavier Wisdom Feed," Wisdom on Demand, <http://www.iwise.com/zihBS> [accessed March 6, 2014].

with their children, to teach them the ways of God as well as expose them to good aspects of the Kenyan culture. Although US work schedules are tight, this study still recommends, as one interviewed spouse advised, that the couples work around their busy schedules and make time for their families.

Missionary Presence

Many of the interviewed Kenyan immigrant couples appreciated some US cultural tenets and economic opportunities and affirmed that they had learned some good things through interacting with the US culture. Just as Kenyan immigrant couples in the US have benefitted from the country, they can also benefit the country. By their very being in the country, the couples should consider themselves as God's messengers to the US. They should, hence, avoid thinking that they are in the US only to benefit from the country's economic and educational opportunities, but should work to impart to their American hosts the good virtues that God has invested in them through their wealthy Kenyan Christian heritage.

The Kenyan immigrant couples should, therefore, intentionally share the Gospel with their American neighbors, work colleagues, and fellow students. They need to consider the following words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁹ Matt. 5:13-16.

The immigrant couples, hence, should also integrate with the American populace by joining and attending American churches and participating in American neighborhood activities, as opposed to creating Kenyan communities, neighborhoods, and churches throughout the country. The immigrant couples, moreover, need to lead exemplary marital lives in order that they may speak without words to the American people to return to valuing the marriage institution and remaining in their marriages.

Positive Attitudes

Interacting with the cultural tenets of the US, or those of any other society, may cause comfort or discomfort, depending on one's attitudes and/or choices. Kenyan immigrant men in the US, for instance, may choose to celebrate the newly found freedom and independence of their wives in the country or to agonize about it. Kenyan immigrant women, on the other hand, may choose the honor of respecting their husbands without compulsion or the shame of abusing their protection by US laws and disrespecting their husbands. Similarly, Kenyan immigrant children do not have to be unruly and rebel against their parents simply because they are protected by US laws.

Again, even as many of the interviewed couples acknowledged and appreciated, there are positive sides to some of the cultural traits that many Kenyan immigrants might find uncomfortable. The value and protection of women in the US, for instance, has made the country a safe haven for many formerly oppressed women, while the value and protection of children in the country has also saved many children from parental abuse. There are also many remnants of good US cultural traits that have died or are in the process of dying. Many American couples, young and old, for instance, are hanging together in their marriages without any intention of divorcing each other. Despite the

country's culture of individualism and lack of communal living, also, many Americans donate to charities, locally and internationally, to help others in need.

Despite intense spiritual battles against the American church for decades, in addition, a cross-section of the church in this country continues to stand against the enemy's attacks and to preach the Gospel, both at home and abroad. Despite the country's spiritual deterioration and gradual decay of cultural and moral values, there is enough Kingdom business happening in America to move the Kenyan immigrant couples in the country to trust God for spiritual revival in the US. Kenyan immigrant believers should encourage Americans who have given up on their country to stop believing the enemy's lies and believe in and pray for America's spiritual renewal. The couples should encourage Americans to consider their Judeo-Christian roots and the great spiritual awakenings that their country has experienced in past times. This study, hence, recommends to Kenyan immigrant couples to cultivate positive attitudes towards the US and to explore and seek to bring out the good aspects in their host country.

Further Research

This study was undertaken with limited sources on various key aspects of the research. The researcher, also, did not expect to secure detailed information from interviewees, due to the sensitivity of marital issues. The small number of interviewees, also, may not represent all Kenyan immigrant couples in the US, though it offers valuable lessons. The researcher, again, did not study the subjects involved but focused on Kenyan immigrant couples in the US and their marital problems. Documentation on Kenyan immigrant divorces was also unavailable. The study, hence, did not either handle or

exhaust the issues outlined in this sub-section and, therefore, recommends them for further research.

Biblical Teaching on Marriage

This study did not exhaust the biblical teaching on marriage. Research on this subject would explore more deeply what the Bible teaches on the institution and spiritual dimensions of marriage, as well as the significance of the marital union. The research would also explore scriptural teaching on the solemnity of marriage as well as the relationships between husbands and their wives.

Cultural Globalization in Kenya Today

As earlier discussed in this chapter, modern technology has accelerated the process of cultural globalization and threatened to create a universal cross-cultural lifestyle, especially in cosmopolitan settlements. Research on cultural globalization in Kenya is desirable. It will establish the extent to which Kenya has, for instance, adopted certain Western cultural trends like divorce, homosexuality, or single parenthood. This will create better understanding of how newer generations of Kenyan immigrants to the US may respond to the primarily Western US culture and how much it should be expected to impact their marriages.

Marital Cultural Trends in Kenya Today

Again, as earlier hinted, cultural trends within the major urban settlements of third world countries are different from those in the interior/remote regions of those countries. In Kenya, for example, the cultural trends prevailing in the modern and populous cities of Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu, among others, are different from the traditional cultural

tenets still observed in Kenya's rural areas. Research is needed to compare the two categories. This could enable researchers to better understand the differences in patterns of cultural adaptation among Kenyan immigrant couples depending on where, in Kenya, such couples had lived prior to immigrating to the US.

Domestic Laws in Various States in the US

The researcher's discussion with various Americans has led him to desire further understanding of the domestic laws in effect in the various states of the US. Research in this area would examine US laws on the protection of women and children and seek to verify or nullify claims of Kenyan immigrants in the US that the country's laws are biased toward protecting women against their husbands and children against their parents.

Current Societal Views of Marriage in the US

As the interviewed Kenyan immigrant couples observed, the institution of marriage is lightly viewed in American society, which has led to easy divorces and high divorce rates in the country. There is need for further research to establish the views of Americans on questions like divorce, the importance and/or essentialness of marriage, gay practice and marriages, and extra-marital sex and/or parenthood.

Kenyan Immigrant Domestic Episodes/Divorces and Their Causes

There have been scattered media reports on marital episodes and divorces involving Kenyan immigrant couples in the US. A survey is needed to establish how many domestic cases and/or divorces involving Kenyan immigrant couples and their children in the US have been registered. The survey will also seek to examine the issues that have surrounded those domestic cases and divorces.

Non-cultural Causes of Kenyan Immigrant Marital Problems

As earlier discussed, certain marital problems among Kenyan immigrant couples in the US could arise from causes other than the couples' experiences of cultural dissonance. Research would be appropriate to establish what non-cultural factors might have caused marital problems among the couples. The study might also examine certain individual behavioral responses to the US culture among the immigrant couples.

Effects of Cultural Differences upon Immigrant Marriages

This research did not exhaust the effects of cross-cultural changes upon the Kenyan immigrant couples and their children. Further research will (1) establish the effects of the liberal Western culture upon couples from third world countries where strict adherence to cultural traditions has produced strong and long-lasting marriages, (2) find out how such cross-cultural effects happen as well as examine their sociological explanations, and (3) make comparisons of the proportion of Kenyan immigrant couples that get divorced to those of other immigrant groups and non-immigrants.

Non-Kenyan Immigrant Couples in the US and Their Experiences

There is need for research into the culturally-related experiences of non-Kenyan immigrant couples to the US. The research will compare these couples' culturally-related marital experiences to those of their Kenyan counterparts. The study will establish, for instance, how these couples have responded to the US culture and what insights this would provide regarding the experiences of Kenyan immigrant couples.

Historical Studies of the Growth of Divorce in the USA

Research needs to be made into historical studies of the growth of divorce in the US to establish how that might be relevant to the issues faced by Kenyan immigrant couples in the country. Donald Godfrey, a professor at the University of Toledo, Ohio, notes: “When I was young, divorce was extremely rare in the USA. Once it became accepted as a solution to marital problems, the divorce rate grew gradually to its present high level.”⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁵⁰ Donald Godfrey, Notes to author, Toledo, OH, April 19, 2014.

APPENDIX A:
DATA PUBLICATION PERMISSIONS

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As I earlier mentioned, I obtained all the study data from Kenyan immigrant couples and divorced former spouses in the United States, with the exception of the second case study, which I obtained from the media. I gathered all information from all the interviewees with their permission and understanding that the information requested was for use in my research project for the Doctor of Ministry. I obtained permission from all of them to publish the data I gathered from them and pledged to protect their privacies by concealing their identities.

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