

Montemorelos University

Faculty of Theology



THE ADVENTISTS COMMUNITY AND THE PRACTISING OF
POLYGAMY IN THE BIBLE

Tesis

Presentada como Requisito para Obtener el Título de
Licenciado en Teología

Por
Sam Mzimcul Poosho

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Montemorelos University

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SUMMARY

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Advisor: Abner F. Hernandez

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Theology Faculty

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Investigator: Mzimcul Sam Poosho

Advisor: Abner F. Hernandez (PhD)

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Introduction

It is not the matter of being the polygamist or not, but the fact of the matter is that salvation is personal. Having said so, we serve God who is merciful enough to pardon our sins and can re-write our story. The God who will never judge us according to our ignorance of our dark ages in our past life.

Purpose

The purpose of this investigation is to bring the clear picture of how God had handled polygamy in both Old and New Testament to help the church to find solution of how can it deal with the polygamists converts who entered matrimony before knowing the Adventist message.

Methods

Thematically, exegetically and historically the research was well completed, the professors and some church leaders were being interviewed and a lot of study on books of family ministry. The Logos application was also used and Bible concordances to fulfil the requirements of this research.

Results

Finally, in this analysis we see that God had never supported polygamy from the Old Testament and in the New Testament too. All those who entered polygamy though they turned back to God but the majority had to reap the terrible consequences. We already saw that during their polygamous state they did not serve God well but on their way back God accepted them back. Jacob suffered, David and many more. The same problems which occurred in the family of those whom the Bible registered even today continue in the families of those who practice polygamy today. The conflicts multiply between the children and the wives. The hatred and the love grow colder on such families. In short polygamy does not have any blessing in it rather it separates us from God. The scripture testifies that, "But thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord 2 Samuel 11:27). Sin does not have any measurement before the eyes of the Creator, and the results of it they are always bitter. Later due to his behavior David had to suffer a bit regardless of being a man after the heart of God. Abraham, Jacob and many more who polygamized before their recuperation, they suffered a bit.

Conclusion

Finally, having researched and studied deeply about this research of Polygamy, we find that from the historical part of the Bible including the exegetical part of it, there is nowhere in the Bible where God ever supported Polygamy. Apart from that, since from the beginning God has instituted the monogamy and blessed it and never turn away from His plans. Genesis 2: 24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. This was the first matrimony and was monogamy.

According to the book of James 2:10-11. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offended in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. The conclusion of the whole matter, doing what is good at the right time always brings peace and harmony, if the polygamists converts before they could be baptized they can have the sessions of family ministries biblically, hopefully their consciousness will make them to take good final decisions. They were guiltless before knowing God but after the true knowledge if they cannot take a good decision they are guilty. Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism. We are being baptized because we believed and agreed that we will live accordingly to the God's call.

Key Words: Monogamy, Remarriage, Polygamy, Divorce

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Principal Advisor
Dr. Abner Hernández



The Advising Reader
Dr. Emmer Chacón



Methodologist Advisor
Dr. Alberto Valderrama



Director of Theology Faculty
Dr. Juan José Andrade

28 February 2019
Date of Approved

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Culture has its roots from practice and habits which do not necessarily have their background or roots on Godly believes but superstitions. Then the major challenge is how does Christianity relates with culture, especially on polygamous cases? Polygamy derives from the Greek, polygamy “it simple means the state of marriage of many spouses”. It involves marriage with more than one spouse. And we have types of polygamy, for example, when a man is married to more than one wife at the same time, it is called Polygyny. Having said so, when woman is married to more than one husband at the same time, it is called polyandry. Finally, if marriage includes multiple husbands and wives, it can be called group marriage. So, the purpose of my study is specifically based on Polygyny whereby man marries more than one wife. The focus would also touch to some internal and external parts of the family itself in order to find the best solution of how does the church handle some issues like this one if people got into polygamy before they could know about gospel.

Background

It is time to take a fresh look at how we “do church” in Adventism. Many local churches stand in desperate need of rejuvenation. As a result, we listen to the latest vogue and try it out in the church. Some fads are good—some are miserable

failures. Rather than simply accepting the latest ideas to hit the circuit, it would be far better for us to examine the Scriptures, our Adventist heritage, and the writings of Ellen White to discover God’s plan for how we should “do church”.¹ Now, pertaining to the marriage part here is what another Seventh Day Adventist author say,

Surely the time has come for the Church to emphasize those components essential for creating and sustaining a good, satisfying marriage. By presenting the biblical view that marriage is companionship and working partnership based on notions of mutual commitment, personal responsibility, and social accountability, the ministry of the church can provide effective nurture and guidance in an age of uncertainty and discontinuity.²

The book of Genesis provides a concrete account of the institution of marriage. The first two chapters of the Bible deal directly with the question of human sexuality. These opening chapters of Scripture are determinative for a Biblical theology of sexuality, since here the pattern is established and pronounced “very good” (Genesis 1:31). From Genesis 2:21-24 it becomes clear that this marriage took place between one man and woman. The repeated use of singular nouns and pronouns in this passage is noteworthy: God decides to make “a helper” for “the man” (2:18), He selects “one” rib from “the man” (2:21), and fashions it into “a woman” whom He then takes to “the man” (2:22), “the man” says that “she shall be called Woman” (2:23), thus, “a man” leaves his parents and is joined to “his

¹ Russell C. Burrill, *The Revolutionized Church of the 21st Century* (Fallbrook, Calif: Hart Research Center, 1997), 14.

² Bryan Craig, *Searching for Intimacy in Marriage: The Role That Emotion Plays in Creating Understanding and Connectedness in Marriage* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 2004), 14.

wife” (2:24). In this distinct way, the original marital form can be seen to be monogamous.

As John Calvin states: But though here no mention is made of two, yet there is no ambiguity in the sense, “for Moses had not said that God has assigned many wives, but only one to one man, and in the general direction given, He had put the wife in the singular number. It remains, therefore, that the conjugal bond subsists between two persons only, whence it easily appears, that nothing is less accordant with the divine institution than polygamy”. Wright and Thompson correctly note that “monogamy is implicit in the story of Adam and Eve, since God created only one wife for Adam.” O.J. Baab concurs, stating “the Creation account in Genesis writes of the first marriage in clearly monogamous terms.” Even Eugene Hillman, who unsuccessfully tries to prove that polygamy was legitimate according to Mosaic Law, admits that “if we accept it as divinely revealed truth that our species started from only one pair of human beings¹, then, certainly the original marriage must have been monogamous.²”

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have believed in the permanence of the marriage institution. Basing their belief on the Genesis model of marriage and other passages of Scripture, Adventists find additional support for their position in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:32) and in his statement, that: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Whosoever shall put

¹ Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered African Plural Marriage and Christian Churches* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 1975).

² Otto J Baab, *The Mythological Aspect of the Foreign Influences on the Old Testament Conception of the Kingdom of God* (United States of America: Garrett Biblical Institute, 1950).

away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committed adultery: and whoso married her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matthew 19:6,9; Mark 10:9-12).

Statement of the Problem

The companionate variety emphasizes a male-female egalitarian partnership in which company, communication, support, healing, the exchange of feelings and sexual satisfaction are of paramount importance. It is no longer the discharge of social roles but the quality of the relationship that matters. In vague and ill-defined way, it is love that matters. This companionate relationship is no longer just about children or families, or stability, or mutual comfort. It is primarily about the quality of the relationship between a man and woman. And when relationship is not working for one or both of the partners, this can very quickly be seen as the death-knell of the marriage.¹ Now the word polygamy itself derives from Greek language and it means the practice or condition of having more than one spouse, especially wife at the one time.

Here is the important part Polygamy is having multiple of spouses or multiple marriages, not husbands or wives in particular. The opposite of polygamy is monogamy. Poly is the Greek root for many. Mono means one and *gamos* is marriage. However, the following points should be taken into consideration, 1. Polygyny’s creation of a pool of unmarried Low-Status men. 2. Polygyny’s effects

¹ Werner Neuer, *Man and Woman in Christian Perspective* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991).

on male parental investment. This simple means that the father in that kind of marriage is not a good father at all. 3. Polygyny, age of marriage, the gap, and gender equality. And lastly, more speculative predictions. The major problem is for those who entered into polygamy first and meet the Adventist message along the way, should the church accept them as they are or not? Having the great understanding that salvation is personal and the church is not in the business of promoting polygamy then what must we do with such couples in our congregations especially in some continents whereby polygamy is legal?

Research Question

How does the practicing of the polygamy face Christianity in the Seventh Day Adventists Community at the 21st century according to the Bible?

Purpose

It is well known that the culture and lifestyle and perception or anything for that matter, generally contradict Christianity when they oppose the life Christ lived, what He had uphold and the life He wants us to live, which he shared through his Word. So, the major purpose of this study is to find out what is the truth pertaining to polygamy, especially in the cases whereby man marries more than two wives, we will deeply examine the scripture from the beginning when God created man and woman. We will investigate about the first family before sin and the life after sin.

Speaking as an African from Ndebele/Zulu tribe whereby polygamy is still being practiced my greatest concern is to help another fellows Africans. Apart from

that the expectation is to have the best solution about the polygamies converts to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Finally, not ignoring the existence that there is culture, but I am saying that God and His culture existed before any other cultures and practices, actually if it was well we would evaluate culture using Godly practices as a standard. But unfortunately, most of the time we do it vice versa to say God practices and culture found us with our culture and where there is contradiction of the two is when we leave God behind.

Specific Objectives

Divorce and remarriage has become a challenge for societies and churches. Ideas of the postmodern age are also influencing Christians. Some abandon the concept of absolute truth. Pluralism is partially accepted. The human has become the ultimate goal. Abundant life is defined as feeling well and being well only. Pain and suffering have become unacceptable. Although there are very difficult circumstances in some marriages, we must recognize that sometimes people may get out of their marriages too easily.¹

Justification

It was God who authored human diversity. This fact calls all of us to deal with cultural diversity, sees it as he sees it as good and honor it as the handiwork

¹ Samuel Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, eds., *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church* (Berrien Springs, Mich: Adventists Affirm, 2005).

of the wise and sovereign Creator.¹ So the importance of this research and study is to reveal out the conflicts which brought by the culture into Christianity and to expose how does the culture contradicts with Christianity in the 21century inside the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Having said so, at the end of this study the expectation is to gain knowledge of how to handle the cases of the polygamists' converts who got married before knowing the truth about God specifically polygyny marriages.

Furthermore, this study will explain better about the God's purpose of marriage from the beginning before sin could entered to the world and will also explain how did polygamy entered to the world. Moreover, pertaining to this matter of dealing with the polygamists converts we will try by all means to safe the dignity of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and at the same time we will be looking some best ways of saving those souls for Christ without hurting them too. This study will be 100% supported by the Bible and Ellen G, White writings. Lastly the following verses from the Old Testament and some from the New Testament we will be approaching them with all carefulness in order to have real meaning of them pertaining to marriage and polygamy. 2 Chronicles 11:21, Deuteronomy 21:15-17. In the New Testament, we will be looking at the following verse, Exodus 21:10-11 Matthew 19:4-9. All this is biblical based so it will be beneficial to church and the members at large.

¹ Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 23.

This research is capable to help fellow Adventists in this present time even for the future use it will be sustainably. It may not completely eliminate the problem but it will simplify the life for the church leaders. So, basing on the fact that Bible stands for the monogamy as the law of marriage for humanity and requirement and the covenant between those who entered into marriage and their Creator, and polygamy has been discovered as the violation of God's law, the counsel to all Christians is that they must abstain totally the practicing of polygamy.

Feasibility of the Investigation

The reasons that indicate that this research is viable, it is possible to do it, it can be done are as follow, we have the best professors here in the University of Montemorelos who are well trained and have the capacity to help the students on their academical researches. Apart from that, since the church worldwide once face the problem of the polygamists converts some years ago and there are some church leaders who had wrote some books about the same problem, this means that some of the reach information can be found in their writings. Finally, as an African who is from where the polygamy is being practiced I have the good access to interview some of the church leaders who are leaving there so that they may tell how do they normally deal with the problem. However, some limitations and delimitations of the work are presented below.

Limitations

This investigation or study focused on the problem of polygamists converts in the Seventh Day Adventist Church community at the 21st century. Having said

so, will tabulate more from the scripture, especially the formation of the family from the beginning in the Old Testament and the marriage after sin. The major concern will be about how to solve the problem of polygamy and saving souls for Christ at the same time without hurting anyone. It has been discovered that some topics like remarriage and divorce and circumcision might be very close to this topic but to make a point clear those ones are not the main issue to be discussed unless if its necessarily and relevant to the topic. Having said so, the discussion will be highly limited to the Old and New Testament passages that are related to polygamy and some other writings that gives out the information about the theological principles for the church and its policy. Lastly the major focus or practical part of this study is to be beneficial to the entire world not only on specific place.

Delimitations

Many denominations support social-service programs and social-actions committees or agencies that serve families. These agencies and boards are considered ministries beyond the communities of the local churches which support them or as responses to those needs that require professional competence beyond the resources and capabilities of congregations. Examples of these social ministries include residential child care, shelters for the homeless, pregnant teenagers, and abused families, family counseling agencies, facilities for persons with

AIDS, professional lobbying and government legislation watch committees, and community development services.¹

Expected Results

The expected results of this investigation are to help the Seventh-Day Adventist church with the basic methods of how to handle the polygamists converts who are converted to Adventism after getting to polygamy. Having said so, this will also be useful for the missionaries who are going to do the mission work in some countries whereby polygamy is legal, so this powerful research will help them to do the mission work better and effectively. Preferably, as the research shows that since from the beginning God had established monogamy as the law and pillar of marriage for humanity, there is no evidence whereby God had ever sanctified the polygamy or blessed it. So, though it the discoveries has been found on some Old Testament text whereby some people were practicing it, it does not mean that God had permitted it, apart from that we found what is contrary to it, however to solve this matter, those who passed through divine intervention in their lives, went through transformation, resulting in the termination of polygamy, together with proper care of all members of the family.

Philosophical Background

On the basis of the sociological research and statistics we have examined, it is possible to suggest some criteria for a successful marriage. Personal maturity

¹ Diana S. Richmond Garland and Diane L Pancoast, *The Church's Ministry with Families: A Practical Guide* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1990), 82.

and a healthy outlook are foundational to a good relationship. Common backgrounds and common interests also increase the probability of a stable marriage. A courtship of sufficient support, also portends a successful marriage. From a Christians perspective, the primary basis for a marriage is a shared faith (2 Corinthians 6:14-16, 1 Corinthians 7:39). The Scripture also call for a lifetime commitment (Genesis 2:24)¹

There is a real sense in which marriage is a stage on which spouses play a multitude of roles. It is helpful to think of marriage as a role to be anticipated, learned, and played. Among the terms sociologists use to explain the process of adjusting to marriage are role taking, role playing, role conflict, and role making. Before two people marry, they have each formulated in their minds a role for themselves and a role for the person they are to marry.

This subjective anticipation of new roles before ever entering them is known as role taking. Humans use their rich vocabulary and elaborate thinking ability to run a maze in their mind. In fact, before two people decide to get married, they both probably run through an elaborate symbolic maze by imagining what it would be like to be married to the other person for the rest of their lives. We constantly engage in role taking in anticipation of the new roles we will eventually assume. An important ingredient in the achievement of marital adjustment is the ability to take on the role of another person.

¹ Stephen A Grunlan, *Marriage and the Family: A Christian Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2013), 98.

Definition of Terms

Polygamy from late Greek, πολυγαμία *polygamia*, “state of marriage to many spouses” is the practice of marrying multiple spouses. When a man is married to more than one wife at a time, sociologists call this polygyny. Polygyny, the practice wherein a man has more than one wife at the same time, is by far the most common form of polygamy. Polygyny is legally accepted in many Muslim majority countries and some countries with a sizeable Muslim minority; it is also accepted in some secular countries to varying degrees. Polygynous marriages fall into two types: sororal polygyny, in which the co-wives are sisters, and non-sororal, where the co-wives are not related

Polyandry is when a woman is married to more than one husband at a time. Group Marriage it is the marriage which includes multiple husbands and wives. Serial monogamy refers to remarriage after divorce or death of a spouse from a monogamous marriage, i.e. multiple marriages but only one legal spouse at a time (a series of monogamous relationships). Monogamy is the marriage consisting of only two parties. It is a form of relationship in which an individual has one partner during their lifetime alternately, only one partner at any one time. Poly means multiple and Mono means one, gamy means marriage.

Summary

Overviewing chapter one, it is divided into some parts which inter-combined chapter 2, 3 and 4. Chapter it guides us towards the problems brought by polygamy and demonstrate to us the problem the church faces because of the polygamy. It tabulates more about the sources of the problem and chapter 3 it

deepens our thinking by relating the issue with the original biblical implications, while the chapter 2 consists of the original marriage in Eden to determine God's purpose in establishing this institution. On the statement of the problem we learn about how culture and polygamy and religion interrelates. The background whereby we have seen that the church should recheck the matter and analysis the problem and deal with the source rather than controlling it must prevent the problem.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An understanding of biblical texts is vital for any useful formulation of services with families in a church for two reasons. First, though Christian denominations may vary dramatically in their organizational structures and processes, and individual churches may come in all sizes and with varying cultural contexts, there is a shared belief in the Bible. In particular, the New Testament stands as a source book for the values and life strategies by which the church's common life ought to be structured. An understanding of the Scripture gives the stranger to a particular church community or to a particular strain of Christian tradition a beginning for understanding the beliefs of that social system.

Second, the Bible is used to intervene in the ongoing life of a church community. For centuries, social activists have used Scripture as the foundation for their causes. Christians' understanding of the intention of their Scripture has motivated them to found alternative communities, from monasteries to communes, challenge oppressive social structures such as racism and child labor, and strive to meet the needs of persons in their own communities and faraway places with

social and medical services (Leonard 1988). It is essential that an approach to family services be firmly rooted in Scripture.¹

For the radical Christian, the whole world outside the sphere where Christ's Lordship is explicitly acknowledged is a realm of equal darkness; but cultural Christians note that there are great differences among the various movements in society, and by observing these they not only find points of contact for the mission of the church, but also are enabled to work for the reformation of the culture.²

The Pattern Established in Eden

The book of Genesis provides a concrete account of the institution of marriage. The first two chapters of the Bible deal directly with the question of human sexuality. These opening chapters of the Scripture are determinative for a Biblical theology of sexuality, since here the pattern is established and pronounced "very good" by God Himself.³ J. Kerby Anderson aptly observes: "Foundational to a Christian understanding of sexuality is God's plan in Creation found in Genesis 1 and 2."⁴ While some information is to be found in Genesis 1, the primary focus of this section will be on Genesis 2, where most of the data relating to the marital

¹ Diana S. Richmond Garland and Diane L Pancoast, *The Church's Ministry with Families: A Practical Guide* (Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 1990), 20.

² George W. Coats, *Genesis, with an Introduction to Narrative Literature*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, v. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1983), 106.

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 483.

⁴ J. Kerby Anderson, *Marriage, Family, and Sexuality: Probing the Headlines That Impact Your Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000).

arrangement is located¹. The passages that specifically relate to the institution of the first marriage are located in Genesis 2:18,21-24 and 1:27,28.

Then the Lord God said, “it is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” So, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man said, “This is now the bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh. And God created man in His Own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. And God blessed them, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”.²

The Originator of Marriage

Some have posited that marriage is merely a societal or secular institution, or one of “the optional variables of Western culture, as noted above. For example, J.S. Wright and J.A. Thompson give the following definition: “Marriage is the state in which men and women can live together in sexual relationship with the approval of their social group. If this is so, then whatever form of marriage a society approves, whether monogamous or polygamous, heterosexual or homosexual,

¹ Joseph Heller, *God Knows* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2004).

² Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 484.

interfaith or contra-faith, enduring or temporary, must be considered acceptable. However, beyond being simply a sexual relationship approved by society, marriage in the first chapters of Genesis involves a divine dimension. Genesis 1:27 says that God created them, “male and female,” and charged them to be fruitful and multiply” (1:28).¹

This conjugal relationship is explicated further in the following chapter. Genesis 2:18 records the words of God “I will make him a helper.” (2:18, TEV) for the man. Thus, both passages specifically state that God is the originator of the marriage relationship. Clearly, as Geoffrey Bromiley states, “God was the Author of this union.” He was the One Who instituted marriage in the beginning². Samuel Dresner notes that “the Midrash suggests that God Himself performed the first wedding ceremony for Adam and Eve. Or, as Ellen White observed, “God celebrated the first marriage. Thus, the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe.”³

The Significance of the First Marriage

The passage in Genesis 2:24 that forms the closing statement about marriage, begins with the Hebrew term *al-keñ*. While in the New American Standard Bible (NASB) it is interpreted “for this cause,” several English Bibles render it “therefore”. An investigation of the Pentateuch indicates that the Bible

¹ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, 484.

² Geoffrey William Bromiley, *God and Marriage* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock Pub., 2003).

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 485.

writer frequently utilized this concept when making explanatory statements about an occurrence. This happens when people or places names were being identified.¹ More importantly, this usage also occurs in passages where the writer explains the reason behind the observance of certain regulations and laws. In this regard, Angelo Tosato points out the use of `al-kĕn in the fourth commandment of Exodus 20:11: “On the seventh day of Creation He rested, for this reason [`al-kĕn] He ordered that the Sabbath should be observed.” -Tosato recognizes that Genesis 2:24 is similarly structured. He posits: “The initial `al-kĕn (‘therefore’), in fact, certifies beyond any doubt that he [i.e., Moses, the inspired Bible writer] intends here to explain something.”² Thus, he concludes that this passage “speaks of marriage in a normative way”.³

The Number of Partners

Ronald A.G du Preez, he penned down the following points to describe the issue about the number of partners, “from Genesis 2:21-24 it becomes clear that this marriage took place between one man and one woman. The repeated use of singular nouns and pronouns in this passage is noteworthy: God decides to make “a helper” for “the man” (2:18), He selects “one” rib from “the man” (2:21), and fashions it into “a woman” whom He then takes to “the man” (2:22), “the man” says that “she shall be called Woman” (2:23), thus, “a man” leaves his parents and is

¹ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, 489.

² A. P Hastoupis, *The Mythological Aspect of the Foreign Influences on the Old Testament Conception of the Kingdom of God.* (Evanston, Ill.: Garrett Biblical Institute, 1950).

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 489.

joined to “his wife” (2:24). In this distinct way, the original marital form can be seen to be monogamous. As John Calvin states:

“But though here no mention is made of two, yet there is no ambiguity in the sense; for Moses had not said that God has assigned many wives, but only one to one man; and in the general direction given, He had put the wife in the singular number. It remains, therefore, that the conjugal bond subsists between two persons only, whence it easily appears, that nothing is less accordant with the divine institution than polygamy.”¹

Based on the fact that God made only one wife for Adam, Robert Hitches suggests: “Had He intended for man to be polygamous He would have created several wives.” Similarly, Mavumilusa Makanzu, aware that God “did not create two or more women, but one,” maintains that this divine institution of monogamy has been clearly expressed ever since Creation.²³ As Walter Wegner aptly remarks:

If we are correct in viewing the union of Adam and Eve of Genesis 1 and 2 as the family as God wants it to be, then there can be no doubt about the fact that the marriage held up for the emulation of ancient Israel was a monogamous one.⁴

Thus, as Geoffrey Parrinder concludes: “The fact that the first human beings are represented as having been one man, with one wife, clearly sets up monogamy

¹ Ron Du Preez, ‘Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology’ (1997).

² Makanzu Mavumilusa, *Can the Church Accept Polygamy?* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1983).

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 486.

⁴ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, 486.

as the original intention of God for the human race”¹. In Ellen White’s words: “This first marriage is an example of what all marriages should be. God gave the man one wife, had he deemed it best for man to have more than one wife, He could as easily be given him two; but He sanctioned no such thing.”⁶ Since the first marriage is seen to be unambiguously monogamous, this marital form is thus understood as a representative of the “will of God”.²

The Gender Issue and Matrimony in OT

From both Genesis 1 and 2 it becomes plain that this marriage took place between two people of the opposite sex. The repeated use of contrasting gender terms illustrates this; God creates a “male” and a “female” and charges them to be fruitful (1:27,28); He fashions the rib He took from the “man” into a “woman”, and then takes out of “Man” (2:22), the man calls her “Woman” because she was taken out of “Man” (2:23); thus a “man” leaves his parents and is joined to his “wife” (2:24). In this well-defined manner, it can be easily noted that the original marital form was heterosexual.

The obvious complementary anatomical differences serve to further illustrate this point. In addition, the fact that the commission to “multiply” (Genesis 1:28) can only be fulfilled by means of people of the opposite gender, and God was decisively heterosexual.³ In commenting on the first Biblical passages concerning

¹ Bromiley, *God and Marriage*.

² Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 486.

³ Du Preez, ‘Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology’.

the creation of the human species (Genesis 1:27), Samuel Dresner recognizes the fact that “heterosexuality is at once proclaimed to be the order of Creation¹.

Though not as explicit, Andrew Dearman concurs with this assessment in his article in a book dealing with homosexuality and Biblical ethics, saying: “In the Genesis accounts one finds the theological basis of marriage rooted in the complementary nature of humankind as male and female created in God’s image.²³

The Faith Factor in the OT

Now while the above concepts of monogamy and heterosexually can be quite plainly seen from the text of Genesis, the issue of the similarity of the religious faith of the marriage partners requires a deeper search. Genesis 2:18 records God’s words: “I will make a helper suitable for him.” The Revised English Bible (REB) states: “I shall make a partner suited to him.” Similar to the REB, other versions interpret the crucial phrase as “a suitable companion” (Today’s English Version), “one like himself” (Bible in Basic English), and “who is like him” (Smith & Goodspeed).

¹ Samuel H Dresner, *Can Families Survive in Pagan America?* (Lafayette, La.: Huntington House Publishers, 1995), 98.

² Robert L Brawley, *Biblical Ethics & Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=41132>.

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 487.

These Bible versions better capture the true essence of the Hebrew term *kenegdo*, which means a “counterpart,” one “corresponding to him.”¹ Obviously, for Eve to be a truly suitable partner to Adam, she had to have the same basic faith perspective as her spouse.² Studies by Umberto Cassuto and others appear to bear out this contention that the Bible indicates a compatibility of ethical and religious beliefs as a part of the original marital pattern.³ The Expositor’s Bible Commentary suggests that the context of Genesis 2:18 shows that the woman is to be a partner with the man in the areas both of family and worship⁴.

A second passage in the Creation story that suggests this indispensable religious concord, is located in Genesis 2:24. The man and woman are to cleave to each other and become “one flesh”. This is a covenant partnership, a mutual dependence and a genuine reciprocity in all areas of life, which is impossible for two who hold differing religious convictions. The bible from the book of 2 Corinthians 6:14, says, “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” finally, Deuteronomy 7:3-4, says, “You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or their daughters for your sons, for they would

¹ Christo Van der Merwe, *The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* (Bellingham: WA: Lexham Press, 2004).

² Du Preez, ‘Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology’.

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 487.

⁴ Samuel Koranteng Pimpim, *HERE WE STAND Evaluating New Trends in the Church* (United States of America: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 487.

turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.¹

The Enduring Nature

Admittedly, no statement in Genesis 1 or 2 directly deals with the issue of the permanence of the marital bond. However, a more careful reading of Genesis 2:24 sheds additional light on this aspect. The Hebrew term **dābaq** is translated in various ways, such as, “cleave” (King James Version), “joined” (New Revised Standard Version), “unites” (New English Translation),² etc. This is a strong term, which in the Old Testament “is often used as a technical covenant term for the permanent bond of Israel to the Lord.” Gordon Wenham notes that the phrase, “and be joined to his wife,” suggests that “permanence should characterize marriage.”³

Having said so, we also find the interesting statement of Jesus in the new Testament, “In His discussion with the Pharisees concerning divorce, Jesus directed His listeners back to the original institution of marriage in Eden, then added: “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Commenting of this statement of Jesus, Larry Chouinard observes that “God originally ordained that marriage be an inseparable bond.” Or, as William Hendriksen recognized: “Jesus did indeed so regard marriage as an indissoluble

¹ *ESV Study Bible: English Standard Version.*, 2016.

² Jay Green, *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew - Greek - English with Strong's Concordance Numbers above Each Word*, 1 vol. ed. (London: Hendrickson, 2011).

³ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 488–89.

bond.”¹ Biblical marriage according to Genesis is not to be dissolved, but is an enduring nature.²

Samuel Koranteng, quotes Ellen White indicated that, “heaven looks with pleasure upon marriage formed with earnest desire to conform to the direction given in the Scriptures.” Referring to the Edenic original, she noted: “When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and moral nature.” If conscientiously adhered to, this plan for marriage will prove to be “one of the greatest blessings ever given to the human family.”

The Matrimonial Backgrounds

The major preparation which people bring to marriage is their unique experience of having grown up in their particular family of origin. Accordingly, in most cultures marriage involves more than a uniting of two individuals, in reality, it is also a uniting of two extended families. The meshing of these two families is very important to the establishment of a strong marital unit. We begin therefore, with a consideration of family background. Now having all the above-mentioned background of the family, the major issue is to know whether the Seventh Day Adventist Church can baptize the polygamists, and what are some expectations after that, will the family be allowed to continue as polygamy or what? I personally

¹ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, 488.

² Du Preez, ‘Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology’.

interviewed most of the church leaders and some adults from my local community and they have different answers, 1. The majority say that before they could be baptized, the husband supposed to divorce other wives and retain with one preferably the first one.

And the question still remains who will support the others and their children and what will happen with the children, the man had with other wives. Couldn't this matter bring more problems especially the conflicts between the growing children and wives? Apart from that who will fulfill the sexual part of the divorced wives? Or will the man be allowed to support them both sexually and financially? 2. Other people say that, as long as they are still holding on polygamy, let them not to be baptized. 3. Baptize children and women and not man. 4. Baptize all on the testimony of faith. Above all this salvation is personal, one of the major duty of the church is to complete the great commission, Matthew 28:19-20, Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

By so saying, looking unto God as the establisher of the marriage and monogamy not polygamy, we also realize that, the establishment of a covenant between God and the nation of Israel has become an important focus in developing a theology of family. God's plan in creating male and female in complementary relationship achieves the purpose of interdependence and co-operative interaction between people. This idea referred to as co-humanity. The application of the concept of grace in family relationships is a challenge when we are working out family structures, roles and rules. Grace means that order and regularity are

present for the sake of each family members need and enhancement and not as means of repressing and limiting them.

Family in the Old Testament

The Bible does not dictate any single sociological definition of the family. One finds in the Bible family structures that would be not only unusual but also illegal in modern industrialized nations. Abraham married his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). Amram, Moses' father, married his paternal aunt (Exodus 6:20). Levirate marriage, a kind of ancient insurance plan in which if a husband dies childless, a surviving brother is required to cohabit with the widow to provide offspring for his brother's name and keep wealth within the family, was enjoined (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Concubinage was not unfamiliar, and many notable biblical heroes, David and Solomon, to name two, practiced polygamy. The most important thing to remember is that Solomon in his faithful life he was practicing monogamy. Joseph Heller in His novel, *God Knows*, parodies David's situation with seven wives and budding relationship with Bathsheba who complains, "You never say you love me except when we're alone." David exclaims at this suggestion, "Are you crazy? I'm a married man! I don't want Michal, Abigail, Ahinoam, Maccab, Haggith, Abital, or Eglah to find out about us" (Heller 1984, 276)¹.

¹ Heller, *God Knows*.

The Church as a Context for Professional Practice

Professionals who work with families in church settings need to consider the role and function of the local church as well as understand the congregation's perception of itself as a service provider. Here I will be addressing the key issues in professional practice in church settings. Examples from various Christian denominations will be used to illustrate central concepts and principles. Church settings can be considered either primary or secondary settings. In primary settings, providing a supportive context for professional practice is a primary organizational or agency function. By contrast, secondary settings host the family professional's practice but do not identify primary with the professional's goals.

Summary

As we end up this chapter, the most important things we had learned in it are as follow, the Originator of marriage and the purpose of Him as the Creator, the book of Genesis confirms that, marriage in the first chapters of Genesis involves a divine dimension. Genesis 1:27 says that God created them, "male and female," and charged them to be fruitful and multiply" and later we learn about the conjugal relationship is explicated further in the following chapter. Genesis 2:18 records the words of God "I will make him a helper." (2:18, TEV) for the man. Thus, both passages specifically state that God is the originator of the marriage relationship. Having said so, we had to learn about the number of partners whom God had purposed them for matrimony.

Finally, according to Genesis 2:21-24 we clearly learn and understand that the marriage took place between two people. We must be clear that it took place

between man and woman. We also encountered some details pertaining to the faith factor of those who entered matrimony. It ends up with the enduring nature, which is all about the bond and the duration of the spouses. This includes the holiness and the purity of marriage and its blessings. And several authors who wrote about the similar topic were being referenced as to grasped the entire information about the polygamy.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Studying the Word of the Lord profoundly it is always a privilege, by so saying this investigation is totally based on the scripture. It is thematic research so the hermeneutical principles had been used, the word by word interpretation, the original biblical languages like Hebrew and Greek were highly consulted in order to get the reliable interpretation. Translate and analyze the grammar and syntax of polygamy in the Old and New Testament in order to clarify any special interpretation of the text may elucidate. Study the contextual use of polygamy and historical background to understand the larger picture of the situation. The biblical foundation of the family ministry will also be taken into consideration.

The cultural distance, the historical background and the affected communities had been assessed Biblically. Finally, we will be dealing with the issues of the law and marriage and the church vision towards the marriage and polygamy. This means that both Old Testament and the New Testament are included even the issues which affects us today or the way church has visualized the situation.

Type of the Investigation

Thematical research because it is examining and explaining the major passages of the Bible pertaining to the issue of polygamy and the formation of family. An understanding of biblical texts is vital for useful formulation of services with families in church for two reasons. First, though Christian denominations may vary dramatically in their organizational structures and processes, and individual churches may come in all sizes and with varying cultural contexts, there is a shared belief in the Bible. The New and Testament stands as a source-book for the values and life strategies by which the church's common life ought to be structured. An understanding of the Scripture gives the stranger to a church community or to a particular strain of Christian tradition a beginning for understanding the beliefs of that social system.¹

Second, the Bible is used to intervene in the ongoing life of a church community. For centuries, social activists have used Scripture as the foundation of their causes. Christian's understanding of the intention of their Scriptures has motivated them to found alternative communities, from monasteries to communes, challenge oppressive social structures such as racism and child labor, and strive to meet the needs of persons in their services (Leonard 1988). It is essential that an approach to family services be firmly rooted in Scripture.²

¹ Diana S. Richmond Garland and Diane L Pancoast, *The Church's Ministry with Families: A Practical Guide* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1990), 20.

² Gerd Theissen and Margaret Kohl, *Social Reality and the Early Christians: Theology, Ethics, and the World of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 38.

Materials and Resources

As the research is thematical and historical, the materials used are as follow, books which particularly have the information about family ministry, polygamy and the formation of the family, most of the books are theological books and psychological books. The bible had also played the very important role, the biblical dictionaries, the concordances, the scientific articles, the Adventist Official Web-page, the internet to find the accurate statistics about the countries which allows or permits polygamy legally and finally the direct interviews to some church leaders and the pastors.

The Process of Information

Considering the Seventh Day Adventist church as worldwide church and the church with the mission of baptizing, and making disciples of Christ everywhere in the world, the challenge is that in some continents due to cultural differences some of the things become stumbling blocks, such as polygamy because to some places due to culture it is legal and the church at the same time is expected to complete its mission. The question remain unanswered, how can the church interfere without violating God's law.

The Countries Whereby Polygamy is Legal.

The figure one below shows a statistical of polygamy to some of the countries. And from it we can see how the world has been affected especially in the Muslims countries. The other advantage which we can learn from this chat is that, so far it has scoped the Muslims countries and if the 19 countries are being

represented here this means that including the Christians countries will be the greatest challenge for the church to solve the problem of polygamy. Most of the countries here are from Middle East, North Africa and part of East Africa. The leading country with the highest number is Guinea with the percentage of 53% of the legalization of polygamy and in the same country the practice of Islam/Muslim is 85%, the lowest country in this chart is Jordan and Morocco with the percentage of 5%, Jordan has 93% of practicing the Muslim while Morocco is 99% Muslim.

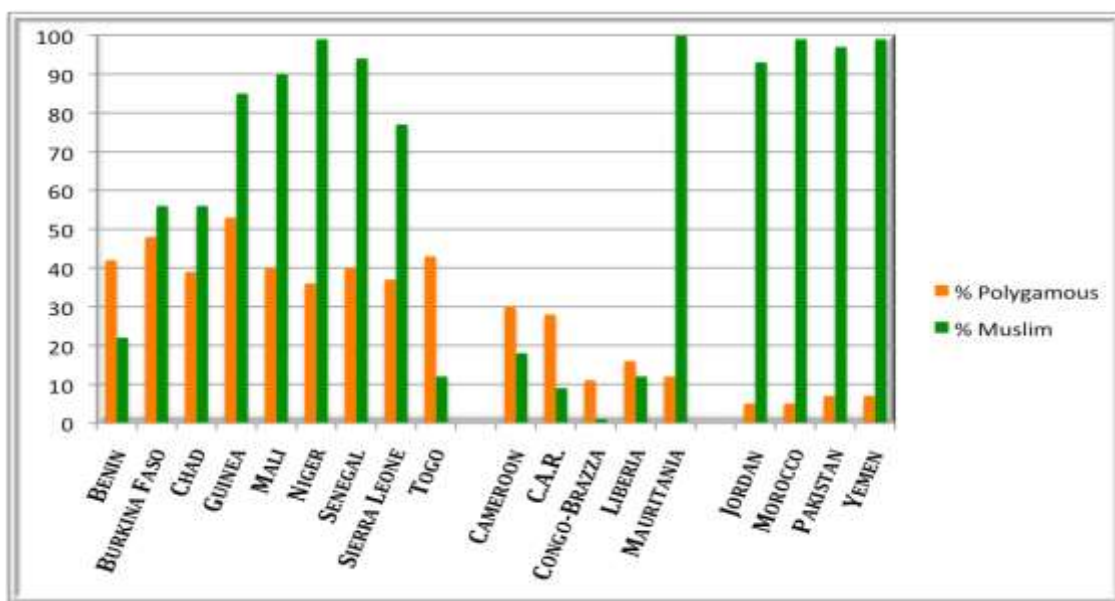


Figure 1. The Bar Chart polygamy

The figure two is the worldwide statistics of the countries whereby the polygamy is official and to some of the countries is not official but being practiced. The light blue color the polygamy is legal and we can see that it almost covered the whole African continent, some parts of Europe and Asia. In some countries is being practiced but it is illegal.



Figure 2. Map whereby Polygamy is legal

Summary

This chapter has considered the multiple passages from the Old Testament whereby they are related to the marital issues especially in the polygamous cases. The introduction to this study we get it from the book of Deuteronomy 22:28,29

requires the man committing a sexual crime against an ungagged virgin to marry the woman some concluded that this law would require polygamy in the case of a man already married. The very same law is found in Exodus 22:16,17. Having said so, in the book of Leviticus 18:18 reads, “And you shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness; in words, this was the regulation on Marriage to two “Sisters” in the Old Testament. It also details that in latter part of the Old Testament, God’s relationship to His people was often described in terms of family ties. Polygamous marriage symbolism appears in Ezekiel 23, and some have suggested that it shows that God is not against plural marriages.

CHAPTER IV

POLYGAMY IN THE BIBLE

Polygamy is not the new thing, it has been practiced some ages ago, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament we find the cases whereby the polygamy had been practiced. So, in this chapter we will deal with polygamy from the perspective of the Old Testament and New Testament. We shall deeply check the main causes of the polygamy, the benefits of it, if it has and the negative part of it, if it has. We will also deeply find from the Scriptures the God's position towards polygamy. God as the author of marriage in the Bible, we will also have to revise how did he dealt with the polygamists and what is His position towards polygamy.

Polygamy in Old Testament Passages

Many questions have been raised about the issue of concubinage in the Bible. The Mosaic laws make no mention of concubines. However, the narrative portions of Scripture indicate that the terms "wife" and "concubine" were sometimes used to describe distinct categories, while at other times they were used interchangeable. The difference relates primarily to the more formal aspects of the marriage, while the legal status of a concubine and her children was the same as that of the wife and her children. In fact, these terms are so similar that at times they are linked together to form a "wife-concubine". Only the original wife is never called a concubine in the Bible. Thus, both wives and concubines formed part of

the polygamous homes of certain characters of Scripture. Certain texts in the Bible are sometimes interpreted as permitting or even promoting the practice of polygamy.¹

The Old Testament Law Regarding the Female Slave

The book of Exodus 21:10-11, it brings another idea pertaining to polygamy and female slave in the Old Testament, from the beginning of the chapter it talks about the slave and the Master, it also states the conditions of releasing the slave and conditions of releasing the wife of the slave. Verse 10, If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. 11 And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money. The following words from Hebrew language gives us a clear meaning about the text in detail, the word אַחֵר *another* in Hebrew it means several things, the following, the next, the stranger, the other, later we also see the same use of the word from the book of Genesis 29:30 Then Jacob also went to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served Laban still another seven years.²

The other word from the text is אֶשֶׁר *food* which in Hebrew is also meaning several things, meat, body, flesh and it can also mean kinsman, flesh which signifying a familial relationship. Food, bread, grain and food, body, flesh, nigh. Flesh=tissue. This word appears 16 times in the Old Testament, having said so,

¹ Du Preez, 'Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology'.

² C. H. J Van der Merwe and Inc Logos Research Systems, 'The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible' (Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004).

example uses the word as a subject, Jeremiahs 51:35, Leviticus 25:49, Proverbs 5:11 and Nehemiah 11:1 apart from that the word has been used as a direct object from the following text Micah 3:2, Exodus 21:10 and Leviticus 20:19. Now the clothing תַּיִטֹּבִיץ it also has some several meanings for example, covering, to forgive, to shut off as a protection, conceal, clothing, robe, garment, cloak and vesture. The last phrase on the verse is about marriage rights עֲנָה in Hebrew the word means sexual intercourse, intimacy, conjugal rights.¹

A careful reading of the text in the original Hebrew shows that the slave master did not marry or espouse/designate the woman for himself (v.8), contrary to the way in which most English Bibles have misinterpreted the passage, as Old Testament scholar Walter Kaiser correctly points out. In addition to Young's Literal Translation, the Amplified Bible has rightly rendered the Hebrew as follows: "If she does not please her master, who has not espoused her to himself, he shall let her be redeemed."²³ Once this point is recognized, then it becomes clear that the phrase "if he takes another woman" does not mean "an additional wife," but rather it refers to a woman distinct and different from the first.⁴

¹ Van der Merwe and Logos Research Systems.

² Walter Kaiser, *Love by the Book: What the Song of Solomon Says about Sexuality, Romance, and the Beauty of Marriage*. (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2018), <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=5520379>.

³ Du Preez, 'Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology'.

⁴ Koranteng-Pipim and Adventists Affirm, *Here We Stand*, 603.

The Old Testament Law regarding the Polygamy inheritance in OT

The book of Deuteronomy chapter 21:15-17. It brings another argument about the inheritance in the polygamy family. “15. If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: 16. Then it shall be, when he make his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn; 17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.”

One of the most important things which we have to consider in these verses are as follow, the word wives and the meaning in context basing ourselves to the original meaning of the text in Hebrew language. Now, the word, “אִשָּׁה” the word wives, it can mean women and the word women in Hebrew it stretches the meaning because it states clearly that this person is the person who can bear children or get pregnant, either she could be from Hebrew tribe or family but basing ourselves to the context of use, this female should be the strange woman, different, heterogeneous, unauthorized, non-Israelite, prohibited. The world is super-broad because it allows us to see that, those women, everyone, every harlot’s, were female, were married and the word “every” in Hebrew it means total, in all, all, the whole, everyone, everything. Now, coming to the context, it means neighborhood, neighboring, on all sides, surroundings, vicinity, at among, upon, another, one, first and finally it turns to be indefinite article form.

“The clear translation” verse 15, “if a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated” in the original and all other translations the words are rendered “have had,” referring to the events that have already taken place, and that the “had” has, by some mistake, been omitted in our version, seems highly probable from the other verbs being in the past tense- “hers that was hated,” not “hers that is hated” evidently intimating that she (the first wife) was dead at the time referred to. Reading these verses carefully we can see and understand that we do misinterpret them and make our own applications which satisfies us not letting the Bible to speak to us by itself.

The Regulation on Marriage to Two “Sisters” in the Old Testament

Leviticus 18:18 reads: “And you shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness.” This text “has given occasion for much dispute.” As one scholar alleged: “The command that a man must not have two sisters as wives at the same time (Leviticus 18:18) implies that he may have two wives who are not sisters.” However even if there could be an option for marrying the second wife does not mean it is Biblical and it does not mean that God had accepted that. Firstly, we need to understand that in the beginning God institutes monogamy and blessed it and polygamy was the results and consequences of sin.

Most frequently Leviticus 18:18 has been classified as a law against incest. However, as Angelo Tosato has correctly indicated, from verse 7 through 17 only, every verse begins with the identical term, ‘erwat (meaning “nakedness of”), and

culminates in *lō' t'egalleh* (rendered “you are not to uncover”), showing that these laws belong together as anti-incestuous regulations, due to “the homogeneity and peculiarity of its formation and content.”¹

The Women and the Problem of Polygamy in Judaism

Legally women were disadvantaged in various ways. They were not allowed to give evidence in court. As in Old Testament times, polygamy was permitted, and that devalued wives. According to the Hillelites (the rabbinic school which followed Rabbi Hillel) a man could divorce his wife for burning his food or if he met a prettier woman. This liberal outlook of the Hillelites established itself throughout Palestine and the diaspora. That this left wives at the mercy of their husband's caprice and power is obvious. To sum up. In the Judaism of Jesus time the woman was valued less highly than the man in religion, law and in morality. This devaluation led to her religious and social oppression, indeed often to her being despised by men.

Despite the indubitable oppression and disadvantage of women in Judaism at the time of Jesus, we must beware of over pressing the trend towards discrimination. In contrast to Roman and Greek attitudes, the Jews had not grown tired of marriage. Marriage example, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus said: ‘Whoever does not practice procreation is like someone who sheds blood. The maintenance of the institution of marriage, which in Judaism was overwhelmingly monogamous, was an important protection for women. With this value placed on marriage went

¹ Angelo Tosato, *Il Matrimonio nel giudaismo antico e nel Nuovo Testamento: appunti per una storia della concezione del matrimonio* (Roma: Città nuova, 1978).

an explicitly high status of the woman as a wife and a widespread honoring of her as mother. The rabbis often exhort the man to love and honor his wife, because 'the wife is her husband's good fortune, his life, his wealth and his crown'¹. But the rabbis' positive remarks all relate to the married woman, not to women in general. As a person in her own right the woman is nobody. However much at least some of the rabbis' praise wives and mothers, they do little to recognize that the woman has value in her own right if she is not actually a wife or mother.²

Laws on sexual Relations with an Unengaged Woman in the Old Testament

Since Deuteronomy 22:28, 29 requires the man committing a sexual crime against an unengaged virgin to marry the woman, some have concluded that this law would require polygamy in the case of a man already married. However, a very similar law is found in Exodus 22:16,17. As various careful Bible scholars have noted, this Deuteronomic legislation is a repetition and expansion of the Exodus, where the guilty man is not required to wed the woman. In brief, when these regulations regarding sexual offenses are properly seen as parallel, they do not condone or command the practice of polygamy.

¹ Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Gerald Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer: (The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great) according to the Text of the Manuscript Belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna* (Breinigsville, Pa.: Nabu Press, 2011), 67.

² Werner Neuer, *Man and Woman in Christian Perspective* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1991), 94.

The Polygamy Problems Multiplied in the OT

From the book of 2 Chronicles 11:21 21 And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.) Before we enter details into the story we must observe some several things, 1. Type of the marriage the bible narrates here. The culture of that certain time. 2. The position of God as the Creator, did He ever accepted that or encourages to take place? The Old Testament contains 37 occurrences of the word “concubine” (שְׁלֵמָה, pilegash), of which 12 occur in Judges 19. Later texts use the term “concubine” in reference to the royal household. The Bible contains additional allusions to the practice of concubinage without using the actual term. The word concubine in Hebrew language it has a deep meaning שְׁלֵמָה from the King James Version we have 39 results in 37 verses pertaining to the word concubine and frequently appeared from the book of Judges.¹ The word concubine is paramours, woman, wife, can also apply to female animal. Having said so, it means the harlot, harlots, deeply mean were married. This simple means that the woman who is having sexual relationship with a man but is not officially married by that man. We can shortly say it is adultery.

¹ Van der Merwe and Logos Research Systems, ‘The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible’.

Distinction between Wife and Concubine

The distinction between a wife and a concubine in the ancient world is somewhat ambiguous. The Hebrew language has no special term “wife”; rather, a woman is designated as a wife in a genitive construction—” woman of (name of man).” The Hebrew texts often use the same vocabulary to describe taking a wife or a concubine.¹

Legislation on the Marital Status of the King

The law concerning royal polygamy is found in Deuteronomy 17:16,17 “Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, “You shall never again return that way”. Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. Many concluded that, as Disani Senyonjo put it: “This is not a verse against polygamy” but simply a warning against the abuse of an acceptable practice.²

Others disagree, such as A.O. Nkwoka, who says: “If God forbade the king who had the command of his nation’s resources from going into polygamy, then most of the reasons for justifying polygamy cannot hold.”³ First, the language and content of the law in verse 17, shows that this prohibition is not against possessing

¹ A. S Waldstein, *English Hebrew Dictionary* (Tel Aviv: Mizpah Pub. Co., 1960).

² Disani C Senyonjo, ‘Polygamy, Monogamy and Divorce: A Major Project’ (Univ. Microfilms International, 1984).

³ A. O Nkwoka, ‘THE NEW TESTAMENT DEMONOLOGY AND SOME PASTORAL CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA’, *BIBLE BHASHYAM 27* (2001): 90–105.

silver and gold per se, but rather against hoarding great amounts of wealth. Second, the prohibition concerning the accumulation of animals needs analysis. Other passages, such as Isaiah 31:1, shed light on this prohibition: “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord! The issue here was reliance on others rather than on God.

Symbolism and Marital Forms

In the latter part of the Old Testament, God’s relationship to His people was often described in terms of family ties. Polygamous marriage symbolism appears in Ezekiel 23, and some have suggested that this shows that God is not against plural marriages. Roland de Vaux, cautions that this comparison “is merely to adapt the allegory of chapter 16 to the historical conditions which prevailed after the political schism.” In fact, if these two kingdoms were to return in faithfulness to the Lord, they would come back as one united people. Thus, the illustration would end with God in a monogamous relationship with His chosen nation, just as at first. Clearly, it is inappropriate to conclude that the use of this allegory implies that God condones or sanctions polygamy in any manner”.

Summary of Old Testament Passages on Polygamy

When the crucial Old Testament passages on marital forms are contextually examined and analyzed, none of them can be seen to command or condone the practice of polygamy. On the contrary, the Pentateuch records explicit laws forbidding the practice of polygamy. Both the prohibitions of polygamy as well as

the other passages relating to marriage reveal an underlying harmony and basic accord with the monogamous marriage institution as originally set up by God Himself in Eden.

The Polygamy in the New Testament

Matthew 19:4-9: He answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?¹

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committed adultery: and whoso married her which is put away doth commit adultery. Here -Jesus does not play the game according to their rules. In his response, he undercuts the ground on which his questioners stand. According to the matter they brought before Jesus it was clear that no man is allowed to divorce except the matters of Adultery and it was very that the man who might marry the divorced has already committed fornication. Having said so, the Bible authorized what is beyond our imagination. “He moves back beyond the days

¹ *ESV Study Bible.*

of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings to the time of creation, a period boasting both chronological and spiritual priority.” He moves back before Moses to God (15:4; 22:31), 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir. 22:31 and see also the Antitheses in 5:21-48), back to the beginning. In the beginning, we come into contact with God’s primal, original intent. In the beginning (13:35) God made them male and female and said, A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and then two shall become one (Genesis 1:27; 2:4).

Verse 6 Jesus draws the conclusion, so they are no longer two but one, a single living being. What therefore God has joined together let no man, no human being, no human ruling or tradition, put asunder or separate. Not if you want to boast that you are living as God would have live. And on verse 7, they protest, did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce? Jesus responds that Moses did not command divorce but only allowed it. Moses took a realistic view of human frailty and he compromised. Well acquainted with hardness of heart (18:35), with humanity’s adamant stubbornness, he made concessions.

But from the beginning it was not so. The original, primal intention of God expressed in the narratives of Genesis was that marriage should be an indissoluble bond. And anything less, even if condoned and regulated by Mosaic legislation, is evidence of fallenness and hardness of heart and stands in opposition to the original vision of God. 9. Jesus concludes with words nearly identical to words in

the Sermon on the Mount. Trampling the marriage bond tramples the will of God (5:31-32).¹

Paul's Position towards Matrimony, Divorce, Religion and Converts

I Corinthians 7:10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. 12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. 16 How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? ²

Concerning divorce, to the married (who are still married) I have charge, not I but the Lord, that wife should not separate from her husband or “man” the word is used to denote the male, whether single or married (but if she does the reference

¹ Robert H Smith, *Matthew* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Pub. House, 1989), 229.

² *ESV Study Bible*.

can only be to a separation which earlier occurred, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband) and that the husband should not divorce his wife. There is no “counsel” here (v.6), no expression of a desire (v.7), no distinction between the “good” and the less good (v.8), no reference to what is “better” (v.9). The word of the Lord I charge, not I but the Lord settles the matter. From the comparison of these two verses with the tradition of Jesus sayings concerning divorce as deposited in the Synoptic Gospels, it is clear that Paul and the evangelists have drawn from a common source.

With one exception, however (Mark 10:12), that tradition assumes the male as initiator of a separation or divorce (Matthew 5:32-33; Luke 16:18). In other words, the tradition is shaped against the background of Jewish law (Matthew 19:3-9). Paul then, as did Mark later, altered the tradition to suit the circumstances prevailing in a non-Jewish context, the context of Greek or Roman law, according to which the woman possessed the right to divorce her husband. The words I give charge, not I but the Lord are thus not a slip of the tongue and its correction, but the sovereign application of the necessarily restricted Jesus tradition to the new altered circumstance on the part of the apostle and charismatic, Paul. The I and the not I, but the Lord are single authority.

No Divorce, No Marriage

Carlos Camarena on his thesis of the Markan Divorce bring the fresh debates pertaining to divorce and marriage and quotes the following scholars, Healy is one of many voices that have interpreted the Synoptics’ teaching in an absolutist way. She says, “No human being is authorized to dissolve that bond once it has been

made. . . [and that] on his own authority Jesus has just taken away a concession given in the law of Moses.¹² In the same vein Moloney suggests that “as Jesus breaks onto the scene proclaiming the advent of the kingdom of God (1:14-15) [and] the restoration of God’s original design initiated,”³ divorce, as such, is no longer permitted under the new rules of the kingdom. Hooker posits that the general attitudes among the people towards divorce in the first century CE were much stricter than those espoused by the rabbinic schools of the time.⁴ Martin, for example, considers that the Jesus of the Markan account is challenging the rabbinic views in his “concern to uphold the ideal of indissolubility of marriage. . . on God’s primal intention declared in his paradise will [Gen 2:24; cf. Mark 10:6-9], that marriage is an equal partnership and expresses a life-long commitment on both sides. ” Martin finds Jesus’ sayings on marriage binding for as long as the couple lives and that any other meaning distorts God’s view of marriage.⁵ Martin has been echoed by others. Jewett, for example, seems to stretch this concept by stating that “Jesus did not appeal to any technical hermeneutical principle [when he] appealed to Scripture against Scripture” in quoting Gen 1:27

¹ Carlos C Camarena, ‘The Markan “divorce” pericope: An Exegesis’ (2012).

² Mary Healy, *Gospel of Mark, The: Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 197–98.

³ Francis J Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 194.

⁴ Morna Dorothy Hooker, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 235.

⁵ Ralph P Martin, *Mark, Evangelist and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1982), 221.

and 2:24 (Mark 10:6-9). To Jewett, Jesus' appeal to Moses in Mark (10:3) and his "hardness of heart" statement (Mark 10:5) "reflects the cultural, historical realities of life in ancient Israel, not the will of God as originally revealed in Creation;" and that divorce was not something God had envisioned in the creation of Adam and Eve (Mark 10:6) since that would imply a perversion of his original intention of a monogamous and permanent union. The main emphasis of many scholars is that neither polygamy nor divorce was part of God's original design, but were introduced because of this "hardness of heart."¹ In the same line of thinking, Keenan, among others, theologizes that by virtue of the cross divorce should not exist, since a follower of Christ "recovers the primordial relationship" God established in Eden. He states: "The oneness of the flesh exists from the beginning, before the onset of sclerosis of the heart. . . . Thus, Jesus recommends a recovery of that primordial relationship by an abandonment of hardened fixations upon self-definitions."²

Whereas Painter reads Jesus allowing for divorce, he considers that he did not legitimize remarriage.³ Witherington, not taking exception to this position, appears much more forceful as he appeals to the "one flesh" theme of Mark 10:8 in Jesus' appeal to Gen 2:24 when he writes, "What is interesting about this whole verse is

¹ Paul King Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 136–37.

² John P Keenan, *The Gospel of Mark: A Mahāyāna Reading* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 235.

³ John Painter, *Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict*, 1997, 142, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uqac-ebooks/detail.action?docID=240275>.

not just the strictness of it, for Jesus seems to assume that the first one-flesh union is still in force even after the divorce, hence the second marriage is an act of adultery. . . . The upshot of the teaching here is that while Jesus recognizes the realities of divorce, he does not think this legitimizes remarriage if the original couple were joined together by God in the first place.”¹ While scholars such as Davidson may be correct to argue from Gen 2:23-24 for marriage’s covenantal nature, based on the “one flesh” motif,² Heaton’s implied pungent question asks: Since when did the Jewish schools interpret Gen 2:24 even as monogamy? “The folk of the OT were clearly not monogamous,” writes Heaton. “In medieval interpretation the two wives of Jacob [and his concubines], and the 700 of Solomon were interpreted as special dispensations, this was not, however, historically correct.”³

God’s Position towards Marriage and Polygamy

The report on the creation of the world in Genesis 1 reaches its climax in the creation of man: ‘So God created man in his own image, in the of God he created him; male and female he created them’ (Genesis 1:27). This verse affirms human sexuality to be something given from the beginning, and indeed a human characteristic which was intended by God. God did not create man as a sexless

¹ Ben Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 277–78.

² Richard M Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 377–81.

³ Eric William Heaton, *Everyday Life in Old Testament Times* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 69.

spirit, but as male and female. The statement of verse 27 receives additional weight through verse 31: 'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.' To be a man or woman is therefore to enjoy God's wholehearted approval. Men and women are 'very good in God's eyes and therefore must be accepted by humanity as 'very good' too. Verse 28 puts the physical aspect of human sexuality under God's special blessing: 'And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..."' Offspring, a goal of human sexuality, is the fruit of divine blessing and an outworking of God's plan.

1. Genesis 1:27 says explicitly; 'God created...them [not him] male and female.' Gerhard von Rad rightly says that the plural 'them' 'prevents one from assuming the creation of an originally androgynous man', since the preceding singular form 'God created man' leads one to expect a singular 'him' here. At the same time, the expression 'them' shows that the usual translation 'God created them as man and woman' is fully justified in fact, and that it applies represents the sense of the Hebrew text's 'male and female', though it is not a literal translation.
2. The parallel passage Genesis 5:2 confirms our interpretation, for there too the plural form 'them' instead of 'him' is found ('Male and female he created them, and he blessed them...').
3. Genesis 1:28 unequivocally disproves the assumption that verse 27 speaks of an androgynous human being: 'God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply..."' Both the plural ('them')

and the demand to produce descendants only make sense when God is dealing not with a bisexual individual, but with a human pair. The idea of an original androgynous man is not of biblical, but of clearly heathen origin. It is found in Plato, in Philo, a philosopher influenced by Platonism, and in Gnosticism.

The first chapters of the Holy Scriptures are informed by the conviction that the sexes are equal before God. A particularly impressive witness to the equal worth of men and women is 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.' Men and women are here dignified with being God's image. Neither sex has an advantage which makes it more valuable than the other. In Genesis 1:27 'the equal worth of the sexes is emphasized: both together constitute the human species'. In Genesis 1:27 it is evident that 'the idea of man...finds its full meaning not in the male alone but in man and woman' together. According to Genesis 1, humanity comes into existence in both the man and the woman, which both represent equally valuable manifestations of humanity. Genesis 1:27 is the permanently valid biblical 'no' to the devaluation of women in whatever form this appears. Women possesses the full dignity of the image of God. Verse 27 could be paraphrased: 'And God created man and woman in his image, in the image of God he created them.'

Paul's advice to those Who Married

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 And to the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband: 11. But if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his

wife. In these texts, we can see the strongest and argumentative verses pertaining to the marriage rules and divorces and polygamy. God never accepted polygamy nor reject it. However, the verses are declaring directly to the husband and wife with the two options, 1. Depart not. 2. Reconciliation.¹ This completely discourages divorce and the specifying the one wife also gives a lesson, as we noted from the book of Genesis that God Instituted Monogamy not polygamy and here it singularize woman and a man.² While the context indicates that it is correct to consider this biblical passage in connection with the treatment of new believers, three factors seem to have been overlooked in this extension of the so-called "Pauline privilege." The first is the crucial introductory statement, which sets the whole tone for the rest of his instruction.

Nevertheless, Paul on verses 20 and 24 he says, let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 24, Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. This simple means that we are called by God to the different duties and we must fulfil them but polygamy it challenges the moral character and behavior of the person. The same Paul give the instructions and the meaning of One Wife.

¹ Wojciech Kowal and William H Woestman, *Special Marriage Cases and Procedures Ratified and Non-Consummated Marriage, Pauline Privilege, Favor of the Faith, Separation of Spouses, Validation, Presumed Death* (Ottawa: Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 2008), 124.

² Donald J Gregory, 'The Pauline Privilege; an Historical Synopsis and Commentary ...' (Catholic University of America, 1931).

The meaning of Husband of One Wife

From the book of Timothy Paul provide the direct counsel regarding the types of people to be elected as the leaders in the church. 1 Timothy 3:1, 3,12. 1. This is a true saying, if a man desires the office a bishop, he desired a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach. Verse 12 let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. Here it is very clear that no man can serve the Lord with the multiple of wives and anyone who would life to follow Christ will do the right thing at the right time. Finally, Titus 1:5,6 agree with the former verse of Timothy, verse 3. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. All this implication does not apply only to those who are in pastoral visit but even to the members. Finally, we can see that God never collaborated with polygamists and they are unclean biblically¹. On my own observation, we are living in the last days whereby lot of diseases are being transmitted via sexual intercourse so in polygamy this means that not only breaking God's law by practicing it but burden to the partners too because they are at high risks of getting sick.

¹ Victor Mark Halfmoon, 'The Meaning of Paul's Reference To "husband of One Wife" in 1 Timothy 3:2' (2007).

How does the practicing of the Polygamy face Christianity in the SDA community at the 21st century?

The proclamation of Jesus is completely free from every form of open or concealed disdain for women, such as frequently characterizes rabbinic tradition. For example, Jesus breaks with the morally elevated status of men in the Judaism of his time: instead of warning like the rabbis of the danger of men being seduced by women (Matthew 5:27-30). He thereby eliminates any basis for the rabbinic tendency to see women as morally less than equal to men. Instead of warning about the dangers of women, he emphasizes the wickedness of the human heart, which affects both sexes equally.

Jesus does not just address the moral superiority of men in the Judaism of his day (Matthew 5:27-30), but also their legal superiority. In Mark 10:2-12 he condemns every kind of divorce, despite the Old Testament permission of divorce, and thereby protects women from capricious of discharge by their husbands. For both sexes, he underlines the indissolubility of the marriage as the valid will of God. In this passage, he makes it clear that polygamy does not fit in with his view of marriage; this is based entirely on Genesis 2:24, which speaks of one husband and one wife.¹ By his demand for indissoluble monogamy he protects the woman from the devaluation that was inevitably bound up with Jewish divorce practice and legalized polygamy. Marianne Weber correctly writes that Jesus' demand for strict monogamy for husbands as well introduced 'a revolution in the relationship

¹ Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication, 1990).

between the sexes. In committing both sexes to life-long fidelity without the possibility of divorce, Jesus opposed all the legal arrangements of the ancient world which permitted husbands much more liberty with regard to the marriage bond than it permitted woman.

Jesus shows no trace of the tendency in contemporary Judaism to value men more highly from a religious stand point. Women are just as much called to submit to God's rule and threatened by divine judgement as men (Matthew 11:28-9). Jesus proclamation is addressed to all people, and therefore equally to women and men. Through his absolute love command (Matthew 7:12, 22, 23-40 and parallels) he throws out once and for all every kind of male egoism or oppression of women. With this demand, and by making possible love and selflessness, Jesus shows the only way in which the relationship between the sexes, a relationship that has been upset by sin, can be healed. And Jesus himself lived out in exemplary fashion the selfless love which he demanded.¹

Discussion

According to the biblical record, Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon are all identified as having been set aside by God for a specific purpose, their cases are considered together. These men were all called by God before they became polygamous. Abraham and Solomon were monogamous when God spoke to them, while Jacob on Genesis 32:28 God re-called him and change his name and David

¹ Neuer Werner, *Man & Woman in Christian Perspective* (Germany: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication, 1990), 96.

was divinely set aside when they were still single man 1 Samuel 16:1 The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.” This was the call of King David.

Unfortunately, their situation had never pleased God. In Abraham’s case, he took a second wife because he did not trust God to fulfill His promises. Jacob became polygamous due to the deceit and persuasion of others, and not at God’s command. In the cyclical pattern of the life of David, polygamy appears only during the period when he was involved in sin. The structure of the story of Solomon indicates that his polygamy appears during the time when he violated other commands of God and slipped into apostasy. At some point in the polygamy of each one of these men, God interposed either directly or indirectly with some form of judgment, punishment, or direction to break up the polygamous unions. In Abraham’s case, God recognized only Sarah as his wife, and sanctioned the sending away of Hagar as the way to resolve their family problems. Jacob’s encounter with the divine being at the Jabbok apparently resulted in his forsaking plural marriage and returning to a monogamous relationship with his original wife, Rachel. David seems to have accepted the predicted loss of his spouses and set them aside when he returned to power as a transformed man. Solomon, upon recognizing God’s judgments, he continued to live his useless life.¹ 1 Kings 11:5-8.

¹ Du Preez Ronald, *Polygamy in the Bible with Implications for Seventh-Day Adventist Missiology* (United States of America: Andrews University Press, n.d.), 241.

Over and above, both great and famous men in faith, they seem to serve God well before while they were still in monogamy. Both David and Solomon appear to have been involved in temple work only while they were monogamous. God summoned first Abraham and later Jacob to worship Him at a special meeting place only after each had ended his polygamy. The interesting part of the story is the way God ends up with these great men. In almost every one of these cases it appears that after the dissolution of the polygamous relationships, the mothers and the children were properly looked after. Abraham provided for his children who were sent away. Jacob apparently kept the members of his family together and cared for them all his life.¹

Summary

This chapter has investigated the polygamy in the Old Testament and in the New Testament where polygamy had been practiced and the consequences of polygamy in both sides. It also tabulates more about God's plan from the beginning. Also focused on how did God planned marriage before and how polygamy entered. Apart from that it has the explanation of the polygamy in a Biblical perspective and the religious way. The way it was being practiced in the Old Testament and the consequences of polygamy in the families where they practiced it in the Old Testament, e.g. the family of Abraham, Jacob, David Solomon etc. Apart from that this chapter had deeply analysis and observed the

¹ Coats George W, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (United States of America: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication, 1983).

way polygamy had been practiced in the New Testament and the way Jesus explained it, especially in the perspective of Matthew 19 and 1Corinthian 7. The way Paul describe and viewed the challenges of polygamy. We also reviewed how the Seventh Day Adventist Church in the past dealt with the problem and how did Ellen G. White responded to the matter to deal with the problem. Finally, the chapter explains to us the God's stand pertaining to polygamy.

Finally, in this analysis we see that God had never supported polygamy from the Old Testament and in the New Testament too. All those who entered polygamy though they turned back to God but the majority had to reap the terrible consequences. We already saw that during their polygamous state they did not serve God well but on their way back God accepted them back. Jacob suffered, David and many more. The same problems which occurred in the family of those whom the Bible registered even today continue in the families of those who practice polygamy today. The conflicts multiply between the children and the wives. The hatred and the love grow colder on such families. In short polygamy does not have any blessing in it rather it separates us from God.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS Y RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the last chapter of this investigation is the summary of the entire work, the conclusions and the recommendations even the references where the information had been taken.

Summary

We are all called by God for the special purpose and mission and different functions, and unfortunately it seems those whom God had elected them to lead others the devil empowered his authority to disgrace them or demote their character through terrible temptations. Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon were all identified as having been set aside by God for a specific purpose, their cases are considered together. Abraham the father of faith fell unto polygamy, Jacob the man who once wrestle with the angel and told him that I will never let you go until you bless me, he managed to be wrestled with the Angel but failed to wrestle with his behavior, David the man whom God had anointed him and chose him to be the king while he was still a shepherd and he also conquered Goliath and rescue his nation unfortunately he fell into polygamy too and failed to conquer his behavior.

Purpose: The purpose of this investigation is to bring the clear picture of how God had handled polygamy in both Old and New Testament to help the church to find

solution of how can it deal with the polygamists converts who entered matrimony before knowing the Adventist message.

Methodology: Thematically, exegetically and historically the research was well completed, the professors and some church leaders were being interviewed and a lot of study on books of family ministry. The Logos application was also used and Bible concordances to fulfil the requirements of this research.

Results: Regardless of any situation God never supported polygamy neither rejected polygamists. So, the best way for the church to deal with such a challenge is to give polygamists converts special classes about family ministry and explain clearly what was God's plan from the beginning.

Key Words: Monogamy, Remarriage, Polygamy, Divorce

Resumen

Introducción: Todos somos llamados por Dios para un propósito especial, la misión y las diferentes funciones. desafortunadamente, parece que aquellos a quienes Dios los eligió para guiar a otros, el diablo les dio poder para deshonrarlos o degradar su carácter a través de terribles tentaciones. Abraham, Jacob, David y Salomón fueron identificados por haber sido puestos a un lado por Dios para un propósito específico, sus casos se consideran juntos. Abraham, el padre de la fe, cayó en la poligamia. Jacob, el hombre que una vez luchó con el ángel y le dijo que nunca te dejaré ir hasta que me bendigas, logró luchar con el ángel, pero no pudo luchar con su comportamiento, David el hombre a quien Dios lo había ungido y lo eligió para ser el rey cuando aún era pastor y también conquistó a Goliat y rescató a su nación. Lamentablemente, también cayó en la poligamia y no logró

conquistar su comportamiento. **Propósito:** El propósito de esta investigación es brindar una imagen clara de cómo Dios manejó la poligamia tanto en el Antiguo como en el Nuevo Testamento para ayudar a la iglesia a encontrar una solución a cómo pueden lidiar los conversos con polígamos que ingresaron al matrimonio antes de conocer el mensaje adventista.

Metodología: temática, exegética e históricamente, la investigación estuvo bien terminada, se entrevistó a los profesores y algunos líderes de la iglesia y se estudió mucho sobre libros del ministerio familiar. También se usó la aplicación Logos y concordancias bíblicas para cumplir con los requisitos de esta investigación.

Resultados: Independientemente de cualquier situación, Dios nunca apoyó la poligamia ni los polígamos rechazados. Entonces, la mejor manera para que la iglesia enfrente este desafío es darles a los polígamos conversos clases especiales sobre el ministerio familiar y explicar claramente cuál fue el plan de Dios desde el principio.

Palabras clave: Monogamia, Nuevo Matrimonio, Poligamia, Divorcio

Introduction

Having said so, we learned about the theoretical framework which specially details more about the matrimony, the formation of marriage, the chapter is totally based on the Bible. The formation of family from Eden when God created the first person. The word by word interpretation, the original biblical languages like Hebrew and Greek are used to interpret and get the real meaning. The investigation is examining and explaining the major passages of the Bible

pertaining to the issue of polygamy and the formation of family. The God's expectation from the family and the life after sin. If the church would be perfect the investigators would have rested, having said so the purpose of this investigation is to bring the clear picture of how God had handled polygamy in both Old and New Testament to help the church to find solution of how can it deal with the polygamists converts who entered matrimony before knowing the Adventist message. Finally, we learned that many denominations support social-service programs and social-actions committees or agencies that serve families. These agencies and boards are considered ministries beyond the communities of the local churches which support them or as responses to those needs that require professional competence beyond the resources and capabilities of congregations.

Methodology

The methods used in this investigation are as follow; thematic and piece of exegesis because we must know the texts from their original language and we had to deeply know them from Greek and Hebrew language. It is also historical because we talk about what had been practiced in the olden days and continually happening in the actual time. The material used are the books which particularly have the information about family ministry, polygamy and the formation of the family, most of the books are theological books and psychological books. The bible had also played the very important role, the biblical dictionaries, the concordances, the scientific articles, the Adventist Official Web-page, the internet to find the accurate statistics about the countries which allows or permits polygamy legally and finally the direct interviews to some church leaders and the pastors. Church

leaders were being interviewed and the teachers apart from that a deeply study from the Old and the New Testament from different authors were made in order to satisfy the research and fulfil all necessary requirements for the benefit of the church, for example; we have learned about how God had formed the marriage, from the beginning and blessed it, learned about monogamy as the original type of marriage God had created for human family. We also learned about the faith factor of the marriage, the gender issue, the number of partners and polygamy in the Old Testament passages. Finally, we also learned about the significance of the first marriage and the originator of Marriage. Having said so, we examined and explained the major passages of the Old Testament pertaining to the issue of polygamy and the formation of family.

Results

Finally, in this analysis we see that God had never supported polygamy from the Old Testament and in the New Testament too. All those who entered polygamy though they turned back to God but the majority had to reap the terrible consequences. We already saw that during their polygamous state they did not serve God well but on their way back God accepted them back. Jacob suffered, David and many more. The same problems which occurred in the family of those whom the Bible registered even today continue in the families of those who practice polygamy today. The conflicts multiply between the children and the wives. The hatred and the love grow colder on such families. In short polygamy does not have any blessing in it rather it separates us from God. The scripture testifies that, "But thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord 2 Samuel 11:27).

Sin does not have any measurement before the eyes of the Creator, and the results of it they are always bitter. Later due to his behavior David had to suffer a bit regardless of being a man after the heart of God. Abraham, Jacob and many more who polygamized before their recuperation, they suffered a bit.

Conclusion

Finally, having researched and studied deeply about this research of Polygamy, we find that from the historical part of the Bible including the exegetical part of it, there is nowhere in the Bible where God ever supported Polygamy. Apart from that, since from the beginning God has instituted the monogamy and blessed it and never turn away from His plans. Genesis 2: 24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. This was the first matrimony and was monogamy.

According to the book of James 2:10-11. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offended in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. The conclusion of the whole matter, doing what is good at the right time always brings peace and harmony, if the polygamists converts before they could be baptized they can have the sessions of family ministries biblically, hopefully their consciousness will make them to take good final decisions. They were guiltless before knowing God but after the true knowledge if they cannot take a good decision they are guilty. Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism. We are

being baptized because we believed and agreed that we will live accordingly to the God's call.

Recommendations

The investigation has particularly dealt with polygamy and some biblical concepts of marriage from the beginning when God instituted the first matrimony. Apart from that on the recommendation part, we have more to study, such as remarriage. In the book of Deuteronomy 22:13-17. If any man takes a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid; 15, Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto this man to wife, and he hath her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

In future, the careful studies of divorce and polygamy and remarriage needs to be well realized not only compared. The relationship between polygamy and adultery as indicated in the Bible. The culture of the olden days and today's culture. The significance of the baptism and salvation. The church limit and the best interpretations of the Bible. Above all, the church needs the practical methods of dealing with those who entered to the polygamy without knowing that it was wrong, the protection of the church old members and members to be. The best procedures of dealing with the members who are affected by polygamy, and the best way to

apply counsels to them not only discipline, this will draw many to the Savior due to the treatment they get to the church and finally these will give the local members the confidence to share with their fellow neighbors their faith.

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