

Polygamy and the teachings of the Church: the case of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God, the Anglican Church and my family, especially my wife Lydia and my children Cynthia, Reuben, Ebenezer and Judith. Also, to my niece Joyce, nephews, Joshua and Joseph and my lovely and exciting grandsons, Jesse Wuntima and Jayden Wunzuama.

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Abstract

The subject of polygamy has become extremely controversial in Ghana, and there seems to be little consensus on the problem, particularly among African Christians within the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. A particular challenge is faced when adherence to a biblical position on marriage is set against the traditions of the local culture. The problem investigated in this research is the unresolved conflict in the minds of many in the church, between the teaching of the Anglican Church on marriage and the cultural practices in which many have been raised. Adopting a biblical and pastoral approach, this study presents an analysis of biblical statements on marriage, together with some pastoral, theological and practical perspectives. Additionally, it presents the results of a questionnaire administered to a representative sample of two hundred people, including a majority of Christians together with other influential individuals in the Diocese of Tamale. The study finds that there is great variety in how people in this population understand the will of God on marriage and whether the Bible expresses the will of God on polygamy. It finds that monogamy has well established biblical roots, being instituted by God from the beginning of creation, but that most Christians follow the customary or traditional practices rather than the biblical teachings. Through a critical review of the biblical evidence, scholarly research, and views expressed by the respondents to the questionnaire, monogamy rather than polygamy has been established to be the ideal form of marriage. One purpose of the study is therefore, to contribute to a better understanding of polygamy in Africa, using the Anglican Diocese of Tamale as a case study. Another purpose is to provide a theological framework for the subject. The study therefore recommends that the Anglican Church should consider a re-examination of its teachings and policies on polygamy by enhancing the knowledge of its clergy on what the Bible says about polygamy, by correcting some misunderstandings of scientific facts, by considering research on the social disadvantages of polygamy, and by establishing pre-marital and post-marital teaching for couples.

Keywords: *Marriage, polygamy, monogamy, Anglican Church, Ghana.*

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Almost every culture in the world agrees that marriage is an acceptable form of relationship, but the forms of marriage continue to give rise to differing opinions. Polygamy and monogamy are two forms of marriage that have engaged the attention of many cultures and religious institutions globally. And for some time now polygamy has been one of the most debated issues in the African church regarding whether it is a form of marriage acceptable to God or not. In many parts of Africa, marriage means polygamy (especially in places where Islam dominates). In other words, for a person to be called a married man, he must have more than one wife. This is why men with only one wife are called bachelors in many African societies. They are considered bachelors because according to such societies, in the event of a dispute between husband and wife, and in the case where the woman decides to quit the marriage or when the wife travels for a long time, the man is said to fall back into the state of being a bachelor. This is not the case when a man has more than one wife. At best, if one wife decides to leave or is absent, there would be another at home to be called wife until either the travelling wife returns or another wife is added. This is said to resolve several family problems including the care of children and husband. Since the man is not able to perform feminine responsibilities, there is the desire to ensure that there is always a woman to perform such roles. "Polygamy is therefore a culturally determined, socially accepted and legally recognized form of marriage practice in many African cultures" (Gaskiyane, 2000:97). Where polygamy is practiced in Africa it is more among patrilineal societies than in matrilineal societies (Ford, 2007). In patrilineal societies, it is the man who owns all the children and in the event that there is a divorce, the woman leaves all the children behind.

However, with the advent of Christianity to Africa and its insistence on monogamy as the most acceptable form of marriage, polygamy has been reduced to a form of illegal or unacceptable marriage even in places where it is considered as part of the daily life of the people. This redefinition of the marriage practice by the church has been received by many African Christian converts with reservations. This is evident in the way some African Christians have reacted to this new form of teaching. A casual

observation in the research area today shows that the practice of monogamy has been resisted by most African Christian converts and this resistance by Africans dates back to the days of early missionary activities. To demonstrate their displeasure, many African Christians have violated the church's teaching against polygamy and taken additional wives. In the Anglican Diocese of Tamale for instance, there have been reported cases of members leaving the Church either because they have married another wife or because they desire to marry an additional wife in the future. This continuous need for additional wives among Christian converts in the Tamale Diocese has persisted for some time now. And this gross disregard for church rule has become the motivation for further investigation into what the church has gotten wrong on its teaching on marriage, how the people have understood this teaching and whether polygamy can ever be ended by the church among converts within this research area.

The content of this chapter includes a discussion on the background and purpose of the study, the historical roots of polygamy in Africa, the social structure of polygamy, and the socio-economic and political purposes of polygamy. These would provide a better understanding of how Africans understand and practice marriage, and how the church has understood and treated polygamy in Africa since the introduction of Christianity. The problem statement, objectives of the study and a summary of the approach used in carrying out this research are also stated.

1.2 Background and purpose of study

The Anglican Diocese of Tamale teaches that "marriage is a union permanent and lifelong till death do them part, of one man with one wife, to the exclusion of all others" (Waddams, 1971:153). The Anglican Church therefore, insists on monogamy as the only form of marriage acceptable to God, and so requires all her members to marry only one wife. Those who violate this law are said to commit polygamy, and therefore have violated a teaching of the Church.

On the other hand, in many African societies it is believed that from the very beginning of human life, God commanded people to get married and bear children. Therefore, marriage is looked upon as a sacred duty which every "normal" person must perform. Failure to do so means in effect the stopping of the flow of life through the individual, and hence the diminishing of mankind upon the earth. For this reason, in most African societies, everything possible is done to educate people for marriage and to make them think in terms of marriage. It is not simply entered into for the

convenience of the couple but is a relationship that brings families and clans into special relationships. One gets married within the context of a family in order to enlarge that family. Therefore, the inability of a wife to bear a child, especially a child of the male sex, is a primary cause for a husband to marry an additional wife. Therefore, in many African societies, monogamy and polygamy are both acceptable and recognized forms of marriage depending on the culture and specific context. This dualistic understanding and practice of marriage is visible in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. Some of her members believe that marrying only one wife is a matter of choice. And many who think like this continue to practice polygamy despite the Church's teaching and preaching on monogamy as the only acceptable form of marriage. Those who violate this teaching and marry more than one wife are usually disciplined by the Church. Consequently, some of these people drift to either the Islamic or traditional religions where polygamy is acceptable. Others also drift to different churches with their polygamous families because they understand that a member is able to join another church while being a polygamist but is only barred from taking another wife once in that church. This understanding may be faulty but functions because such members are new to the churches they drift to.

The purpose of my study is, therefore, to contribute to a better understanding of polygamy in Africa, using the Anglican Diocese of Tamale as a case study, and to provide a theological framework for the subject. The researcher is mindful of the fact that in many African communities some polygamous marriages survive, while some monogamous marriages break, and the reverse is also true. The study makes considerable use of the work of scholars who argue that polygamy is not the will of God as well as those who argue that God has no issues with the practice of polygamy. These commentators include Ghartey (2011), Kunhiyop (2008), Martey (1991), Kaiser (1983), Luck (1987), Benezere et al (1977), O'Donovan (1975), The Lambeth Conference Reports (Waddams,1971), The Roman Catholic Council of Trent Report (Hillman, 1975) and Waddams (1964) who argue that polygamy is not acceptable. Those who are of the opinion that polygamy is acceptable include Coogan (2006), Kyomo and Selvan (2004), Gbongi (2002), Broadt (1984), Eugene Hillman (1975), Hastings (1973), Holst (1967), Parrinder (1958), Muthengi (1995), Inyamah (1972), Barrett (1968), Hunter (1962) and Baloyi (2010).

1.3 Social structure of marriage in Africa

The social structure of relationships in the marriage of a man and a woman as a life-long relationship reflects a pre-Christian, pre-political institution. It has been a cultural building block of society down the centuries and across the world. According to Magesa, the purpose of culture is to preserve itself, and in traditional African societies, marriage is the acceptable social structure for transmitting life (Magesa, 1998:110). Gregory Rich also observes that to understand a culture it is important to understand its preferences regarding marriage, and that the reverse is equally true: to understand marriage, it is important to understand the culture (Rich, 1995:767). Therefore, Mbiti proposes that the African worldview and the concept of immortality provide the basis for understanding the socio-religious structure and significance of marriage in African societies (Mbiti, 1969:26). So marriage is considered a very key element of most African societies.

Explaining the African worldview, Mugambi contrasts the classical Christian division of the universe into heaven, earth and hell with the traditional African worldview: “The traditional worldview is mono-sectional. Spatially, there is no heaven and there is no hell. In traditional African thought, there is only one world—this world in which we live, consisting of the earth, the sky and all therein. When a person dies, he does not go to another world, whether below or above the earth. Rather, he changes his physical mode of existence to a spiritual (ghostly) one” (Mugambi, 1989:51). And Mbiti agrees with Mugambi, stating that the ancestors do not depart but stay around. They observe what their descendants are doing and can influence them for good or evil. The acts of libation (pouring out of beer, milk or water), or giving portions of food to the living-dead, are symbols of communion, fellowship and remembrance (Mbiti, 1969:25-26). The living African is not disconnected from the dead and their way of life is influenced by what they know pleases or displeases the dead. Therefore, if an African is to have immortality, he must have children, and marriage “is the acceptable social structure for transmitting life, the life that preserves the vital force of humans, families and clans” (Magesa, 1998:110). “Whatever else a person has or is, without marriage and children, one is nothing. Indeed such a person is seen to be damned, a lost soul” (Magesa, 1998:100).

This is why an African man together with the entire family is not able to accept a wife who is unable to bear children or a woman who gives birth to only females. Once

a marriage is consummated, the entire family and society members begin to count the days. The expectation is that within a year the woman must have signs of pregnancy. Any moment beyond this period is viewed with suspicion and the talk is centered round her capacity to have a child. For most African cultures, marriage is a means to an end. And women are considered virtually as the possessions of men. This is why in some cultures the husbands are addressed in various forms such as “My Lord, My heart and My Owner.” But Kenyatta argues that “this does not mean that women are regarded as mere chattels of the men. Well-informed anthropologists agree that this is erroneous and a misconception of African’s social custom” (Kenyatta, 1938:158-9). African marriage is thus better described as a chain of ownership. The marriage structure goes beyond the husband and wife to include immediate family, extended family, clan, tribe and society. Each of these ensures that the marriage is working according to the confines of the culture of the people. No one person is able to terminate a marriage that has been built with all the sections of society participating. In other words, what culture has put together, no one person can put asunder.

1.4 Historical roots of polygamy

Zeitzen (2008) observes that polygamy has been practiced by many cultures throughout history. Thus, polygamy cannot be said to be the sole preserve of the African people. Shahzad (2009) is of the opinion that polygamy is as old as human society and cites David and Solomon as just two among many examples in the Bible. In its broader sense from the Greek origin, the term polygamy is understood to include any simultaneous multiple marriage unions for one person, such as female polyandry and male polygyny, also known as polygamy. Gaskiyane notes that “the concept of polygamy is defined as a culturally determined, socially acceptable and legally recognized form of permanent marriage where a man has more than one wife at a time” (Gaskiyane, 2000:97). This means that the adequacy of a marriage is determined principally by the social as well as legal customs of the people concerned. According to Kahiga (2007:120) “different meanings may be inferred contextually, but in essence polygamy refers to marriage where more than one wife is involved”. And Mbiti maintains that “polygamy is one of the customs of African societies because of the views held on the meaning and importance of marriage” (Mbiti, 1975:106). Mbiti’s view on marriage presupposes that polygamy is cherished and special to the African people. Therefore, to understand and

appreciate how Africans view polygamy in marriage requires an in-depth study that cannot be done hastily, haphazardly or with generalization.

Africans attach various aspects of significance to the institution of marriage and the forms it takes. For instance, “marriage means an obligation to bear children, a uniting link in the rhythm of life, the building of a family, creating new relations between families, remembrance of parents after death, regaining a lost immortality, gaining a status in society, gaining a personal completeness, creation of good personal qualities such as caring for one another, love, good character, hard work, compassion, etc.” (Mbiti, 1975:104-106). For this reason, marriage in Africa takes several forms, including widow inheritance, surrogacy (when a woman marries the diseased sister’s widower), sororal polygyny (when a man marries two sisters at the same time), cross-cousin marriage (when a man marries the uncle or auntie’s daughter), infant marriage (betrothal), etc. Polygamy is assumed among many other reasons to provide very significant answers to some marriage challenges. One is the fact that women in their menstruation period are considered as unclean and unfit to prepare meals, to touch the husband, to participate in providing labour on the farm and to perform several other services for the husband. Another is the practice of women going back to their families after giving birth (sometimes for up to three years). Others include the claim that women outnumber men in some societies (mostly resulting from deaths during war and age group variation), that unmarried men and women are considered as social abnormalities, and that there is a felt need for a large number of descendants. These are all reasons for the practice of polygamy in many African societies.

It is challenging to tell whether polygamy is on the rise or decline in Africa. Okorie agrees it is difficult to say whether polygamy is increasing or decreasing but is convinced that it remains a significant and widespread phenomenon in Africa (Okorie 1995:1). And Kahiga (2007:120) is of the opinion that “while polygamy is formalized in Africa, it has also taken the form of anonymous polygamy, with partners or concubines incognito in different locations”. This is to say, men who work in towns would usually have one woman living with him in town and another at the home village. Like Hillman, Kahiga compares Africa with the West and argues that “the cycle of divorce and remarriage in the West amounts to successive polygamy, because either partner is allowed to remarry after the divorce”. Divorce is not a cherished practice in Africa

because most men find it more dignifying to add another wife rather than divorce to remarry. So some Africans are of the view that missionaries to Africa combined with the church in their endeavors to abolish polygamy because they had very little time and understanding to appreciate its essence in the African context. Otherwise, the church would not have condemned polygamy as it does if missionaries had understood the essence attached to its practice. This is why Hillman (1975:182) observes that “although some of the Reformers viewed polygamy as not being contrary to the law, missionaries such as Calvin insisted that monogamy was prescribed by natural law”. Obviously, missionaries were not looking at polygamy in the context of Africa, and their actions were motivated by how they understood the Bible to prescribe marriage. This is why Maillu (1988:1) concludes that “the colonial church, in particular, has been fighting against some African traditions on the basis that they are incompatible with the Bible.”

Numerous divergent arguments have indeed emerged among African scholars and some latter missionaries to Africa on how polygamy has been defined and treated by the church. Hillman observes that while Bishop Josiah Kibira of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania acknowledged the difficulties presented by polygamy and called for a theological study, the Anglican Church in West Africa allowed the wives of polygamists to be baptized, although the same Church in South Africa and elsewhere refused to admit them even to the catechumenate without the authorization of the bishop. The Liberian Lutheran Church elected to accept polygamists and their wives to baptism and Holy Communion, while in 1967 the regional conference in Nairobi asked the Roman Catholic bishops to reconsider the possibility of adopting a new policy regarding polygamy (Hillman, 1975:35). Okonkwo proposes that the issue of polygamy in Africa must be considered apart from Western culture. According to him, “if we seek to identify the main distinguishing feature of African customary marriage as compared with European marriage, there will no doubt be general agreement that the most obvious of such features is the toleration, and even approval, accorded to polygamy” (Okonkwo, 2003:15). Phiri (2007:75) attributes the abuse and violation suffered by women to the church’s misunderstanding of how the African family system works. He says that “when missionaries from the Roman Catholic and the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi insisted that polygamists divorce their wives to remain with one upon conversion and baptism, many deserted women were left with the crippling economic burden of caring for their children and households”.

This is contrary to the African belief that men must care for both their wives and children. For the African man, marriage means wives and children. They are a source of prestige and dignity. To divorce wives means detaching one from social connections. But the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians considers polygamy not only to be patriarchal, but a further form of violence against women. Njoroge (1997) argues that the unlearning of internalized sexist practices, attitudes, beliefs and patterns is one of the greatest challenges facing women in Africa. Additionally, others have observed that polygamy is not only a challenge to women but also to Christianity. This assertion is particularly true for Christians in countries with predominantly Muslim populations, and many parts of Africa are affected (Wunderink, 2009). Since Islam continues to dominate in many parts of Africa, Waruta and Kinoti suggest that “engagement on this topic is still very important and relevant to the contemporary church and its people” (Waruta and Kinoti, 2000:105). Mesenya (2005:188) re-echoes the African attitude towards polygamy when he refers to the Sotho saying, “*Monna ke tshwene, oja ka matsogo a mabedi*” (literally meaning “a man is a baboon, he eats with both hands”). In other words, a man does not cherish eating from the same source always and in the case of women they eat with both left and right. This buttresses the attitude of African men in marriage, which is polygamy.

1.5 Socio-economic purpose of polygamy

The many African cultures which practice polygamy do so for almost the same reasons. These reasons are many and include a remedy for the problem of infertility. Mbiti (1969:105) points to the importance of childbearing in African marriages, stating: “Marriage and childbearing are the medicines against death. While death continues to demolish life, marriage and childbearing keep ahead of it all the time”. Cairncross (1974:69) says: “If a wife is a barren it is indeed her duty to give such consent, and even to exhort the husband to take another companion as Sarah did of old.” This argument is favoured by Maillu (1988:8), who believes that polygamy is the kindest solution in the case of a wife who is infertile, because this is preferable to being expelled from the household, and having to look for another husband. Kofon (1992:52) explains that in Bafut (and other parts of Africa) people marry because they want to have children. This is the principal aim for marriage. There is no marrying simply for personal fulfillment or for mutual pleasure of the spouses. Begetting children is a duty to be fulfilled. This view is echoed by Yamani (2008), who argues that: “A wife's infertility is a valid reason

for her husband to polygamously seek another.” Traditionally, marriage and child-bearing had a cause-and-effect order that was difficult to break (Burman, 1991:36). This is arguably still the case in Africa today. According to Gaskiyane (2000:23), “A few groups within nominal Christendom believe that the bearing of a very large number of physical children brings eternal blessing and that such families continue together forever in Heaven. From this belief some African people believe that polygamy is blessed by God.” These arguments all serve to support Mbiti’s (1969:133) view that “Marriage and procreation amongst the African communities are a unity; without procreation, such marriage is incomplete”. Kimathi (1994:12) and Gaskiyane (2000:10) both agree on the view that some African people invoke polygamy to prevent divorce, particularly in cases where childlessness or barrenness is real or anticipated. In this context Waruta and Kinothi (2000:105) state: “In traditional African society, it was almost inconceivable that a childless marriage could be sustained monogamously.” This practice also became a solution for marriages where only female children were born, since the importance of male children was emphasized (Kyomo and Selvan, 2004:36). Gaskiyane (2000:15) points to the fact that “in traditional cultures, the greatest desire and requirement is to have children, especially male children, to be heirs of property.” So property inheritance becomes a factor in deciding the form of marriage, and childbirth, especially the male child who inherits from the father, is key in the African marriage system.

Waruta and Kinoti (2000:36) emphasize the African attitude towards the birth of male children when they say that “Not only is the birth of a child important amongst the African people, but the gender of the child is also important. Male children are valued, especially in many patrilineal African societies”. Sex also plays a significant role in polygamy and Kimathi notes that “Among some African people it has long been accepted that women may no longer engage in sexual activities once they have entered menopause”. Kimathi (1994:13) explains:

Menopause among many ethnic groups brought an end to the need for sexual activities. A woman with married daughters and sons was regarded as somebody who had finished her sexual role in marriage. She now was considered too old for sexual encounters. This was something that was regarded as a duty for the younger wives. It is not surprising, therefore, that an older woman would tell her husband that it was time he got himself a new wife as an indication that she was ready for exemption from her sexual obligations.

This explanation provides a clear indication, as observed by Baloyi (2013:169-170):

According to some African people, sexual responsibility for women was limited in duration, but that men were allowed to continue to have sexual relations after women were expected to stop. This emphasizes that sexual relations, for African women, were aimed mainly at procreation, which was why, once a woman reached menopause, there was no need for her to continue to engage in sexual intercourse. Thus, Peil and Oyeneve (1998:35) claim that a marriage is considered to have ended once the woman is past child-bearing age. Kyomo and Selvan make the same point: "One reason for polygamy seems to be the old taboo of menopause. Many African people believe that a woman should not have sexual intercourse after menopause". It was believed that a woman who broke this taboo would be physically punished: her stomach would grow bigger and bigger, or else the seminal fluid accumulated in her stomach would flow out through the genital orifice, creating an unpleasant odour (Kyomo and Selvan, 2004:35, 36).

No woman dared to experiment with having sex during her menopause as she feared the consequences. This belief and fear became a reality for many years and cannot be said to have been completely overcome even today.

Some African cultures forbid sexual relations between a husband and wife during pregnancy. Labeodan (2007:46) says that "Most of the women confirmed that once they have 'taken in' (become pregnant), they cease having sexual relationships with their husbands, resuming only after three years have passed and the baby is weaned." In some Asian and Latin American cultures, too, women abstain from sex during pregnancy and child nursing. Kofon agrees with this observation, stating that some African people believe that when a wife is nursing a child, sexual intercourse is forbidden (Kofon, 1992:52). Baloyi (2013:170) writes:

And because many husbands are unable or may be unwilling to wait for three years before resuming sexual relations, they might have more than one wife. In some instances the woman herself suggests that the husband takes another wife, as this may reduce the chance of his being unfaithful during such a long period of abstinence.

In this case, unfaithfulness is seen as having an illegal sex relationship and not the taking in of another wife. It was therefore believed in most polygamous cultures that once a man had more than one wife, immorality and divorce would be unlikely to occur. Kofon (1992:56) summarizes this reasoning as follows: "Polygamy is supported in

Africa for the reason of sexual gratification when one's wife is ill or is delivered.” According to Baloyi (2013:170),

In many African cultures it is a normal practice for an adult to marry with the main aim being to have children. Kimathi (1994:40) describes marriage as “the backbone of African society”, and that Phaswana observes this is why “the status of being single in African cultures has a number of negative associations, in addition to the lack of children: witchcraft, lack of feeling and the desire to break up other people's marriages” (Phaswana, 2005:1).

Thus, Phiri (2002:25) concludes, “there is belief among Africans that being single is a curse. This is why a woman must live and die married”. Kriel notes the Sotho idiom that “a woman's grave lies in her marriage or her in-laws to express the requirement that women should remain in their marriage, even if that marriage is life-threatening” (Kriel, 1991:27). The attitude towards unmarried women no doubt puts them under enormous pressure, and remaining a single woman in an African context is an extremely difficult choice to make. “The belief that every woman must have a husband and every man a wife has created a situation where a woman would prefer to be one of several wives rather than be without a husband, as the latter situation would make her a social outcast” (Gaskiyane, 2000:17). This is why Baloyi (2010:3) observes that: “There are people who get married not necessarily because they want to, but because they feel the pressure of being single”. Such marriages seldom have many desirable attributes of marriage since they will lack love, peace and commitment which are essential for every marriage to survive but bearing the pain and agony of staying in the marriage is the only reasonable solution. There is always in such societies a constant reminder to unmarried women that “they are not living a ‘normal’ lifestyle” (Reynolds, 2008:123). Baloyi (2013:172) writes:

In a traditional African context, the ill health of a wife was not seen as a reason for a husband to abstain from sex. If his wife was ill for a long period of time, the family would encourage him to think of a second marriage, reasoning that this would give the first wife time to recover while child-bearing is not disrupted. It was further reasoned that “the second wife would help to nurse the sick woman and ensure that the children were taken care of” (Maillu, 1988:18). It has also been claimed that if women are regularly absent from home because they work far away, they would ask their husbands

to marry a second wife... The family would not apply the same principle if the husband were the one ill or worked far away from home.

The woman would rather be derided as being inconsiderate, or as a witch who wants to kill the husband in order to take his property. “Moreover, it is unconscionable that instead of supporting his wife during her time of need a man would devote his time to entertaining a new wife” (Baloyi, 2013:172). As Baloyi further notes,

Mbiti (1969:143) and Kathide (2007:40) agree that polygamy, when viewed as a preventive measure against unfaithfulness, allowed a man who worked far from home to take one wife with him to his place of work (possibly a distant city or town) while another wife or other wives continued taking care of children and the household in the rural area. In such a situation, it is claimed the husband would be unlikely to have concubines or frequent female prostitutes in town.... Okorie (1995:3) expresses a similar sentiment, suggesting that polygamy results in less temptation for a man to commit adultery. This, however, is a clearly patriarchal view of sex that seems to promote male supremacy and perpetuates the gender imbalance in society (Baloyi, 2013:172-3).

But it is generally observed that men are more interested in sex than their female counterparts, considering that they are usually interested in having more than one partner. So Maillu (1988:9) suggests that “if a wife is less interested in sex than her husband, this is a justifiable reason for him to take an additional wife”.

Baloyi (2013:173) also notes that Okorie (1995:3) cites a widely held African belief that levirate marriage constitutes a means of taking care of widows: “Levirate marriage is seen as a way of protecting both the widow and her children, who will be taken care of by the younger brother of the deceased. Moreover, it is a way of ensuring stability and that the widow will not become part of another family, taking the wealth of the deceased with her.” This view, Baloyi contends, is supported by Nkhwashu (2012), who cites the example of a young widow who fled from the prospect of being forced to marry her late husband’s younger brother, taking with her the compensation paid out to her by her late husband’s former employer. According to Baloyi (2013:171),

In most African cultures males are generally assumed to be the breadwinners. Stock and crop farming were the common means of survival, and both require strength and

intensive labour. This led Townshend (2008:37) to suggest that “polygamy was originally a means by which men acquired status and labour, as the more wives a man had, the more children he could have and the greater would be his labour force”. Taking care of livestock and ploughing of fields would be easier if there were more people than if this were the responsibility of just one person (the man himself). Thus, labour became a commodity in male-dominated societies where polygamy was customary. This view is what leads Fenske (2012) to point out in the case of Ivory Coast that “the demand for wives is highest in those parts of the Ivory Coast where female productivity in agriculture is highest”. Similarly, Kathide (2007:39) observes that “in Africa where peasant farming is the means of livelihood, the many children born of a polygamous marriage become economic assets and a source of labour in the fields”. It is this link between polygamy and farming that has made others believe that polygamy is mostly practiced by those without formal education. Thus, “the economic motive becomes a very important factor in the context of polygamy (Blum, 1989:98)”.

1.6 Political purpose of polygamy

Phiri (2002:37) recounts that “among the Chewa people in Kenya songs are sung to the effect that she who has given birth to a baby girl is rich, while she who has given birth to a baby boy is poor”. This understanding is true because women are sources of income for some clans in Africa. But this wealth must be controlled and managed and it is the duty of a male child to take over from the father. Therefore, many Africans believe that it is best to train their own blood sons to take over whatever they own: their wealth, chieftaincy titles, status in society etc. Thus for many African families a male heir has always been the major objective of child birth. So Kimathi (1994:12) observes that a marriage into which only girls were born is to be pitied. The mother of girls is often blamed by her husband and his parents for not producing sons. In the past, sonless marriages always stood on shaky grounds. It was often a cause for polygamy. Some researchers have contrasted the celebration attendant on the birth of boys and the less enthusiastic reception given to girls in African families. Milazzo draws attention to the Nigerian culture in West Africa:

Compared to women with first-born sons, women with first-born daughters have (and desire) more children and are less likely to use contraceptives. Women with daughters among earlier-born children are also more likely to have shorter birth intervals, a behavior medically known to increase the risk of child and maternal mortality.

Moreover, they are more likely to end up in a polygynous union, to be divorced, and to be head of the household. The preference for sons is also supported by child fostering patterns in which daughters are substitutes for foster girls, while the same does not hold for sons and foster boys. These results can partly explain excess female mortality among adult women in Sub-Saharan Africa (Milazzo, 2014:No.6869).

Clearly, the preference for male children is demonstrated here. Women who give birth to girls first are likely to have many births because they would continue to give birth until they are able to have a male child. There are instances in the research area when men expecting male births by their wives have walked away from the hospital leaving their wives and hospital bills hanging because their wives have given birth to females. In the research area there is a saying among the Mampruli speaking group that, "*Poa-abi nyala saamma*" (literal meaning, "girls/daughters are visitors"). In other words, girls will not stay in their fathers' home forever because they will get married, but boys will stay, ensuring that the elderly parents will have an heir who will take over from them, take care of them till they die and continue with the family business. According to Turaki (1999:107), "begetting children guarantees eternal life". Apart from guaranteeing eternal life, "a traditional African man needs many children (especially sons) to ensure the survival of the lineage and to increase his power within the clan" (Nhlapo, 1992:143). Therefore, marrying many wives implies having many sons to enhance power and influence in society.

1.7 Problem statement

The problem investigated in this research is the unresolved conflict in the minds of many in the church, between the teachings of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale on marriage—that monogamy is the only form of marriage accepted by God and the cultural practices in which many have been raised. This conflict is causing many of its members to drift from the Anglican Church back to the Islamic and African traditional religions where polygamy is tolerated. Geographically, the Anglican Diocese of Tamale is located in the northern part of Ghana where Islam is the most dominant religion. Here, Islam teaches that God endorses polygamy, and that a man may marry up to four wives if he is able. The majority of Christian converts are drawn from either the Islamic Religion or the African Traditional Religion which both accept the practice of polygamy. This view on marriage has no doubt remained with some members who are

now in the Anglican Church of the diocese of Tamale. They argue that if there is only one God, the standard of marriage should not be different in different religions.

In order for this research to achieve its aim of contributing to a better understanding of polygamy, and to provide a theological framework on polygamy in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale, the following factors will be researched:

- An analysis of the theology of marriage, including relevant biblical material.
- An overview of monogamy and polygamy by referring to relevant books, articles and commentaries on the subject.
- An assessment of marriage practices in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. This includes the geographical and socio-cultural background of the area and the people in which the research has been carried out, the Diocesan marriage context, an examination of people's thoughts and perceptions about monogamy and polygamy and their practices, and how to apply the new understanding of marriage in the Diocese of Tamale.

In this research, the questions asked include these: Does the Bible support or object to polygamy? Why does the Church insist on teaching against polygamy? Do monogamous marriages survive longer than polygamous marriages? What is the average Christian understanding on the teaching of the Church on polygamy? What does polygamy mean to African Christians in the Diocese of Tamale today? Can polygamy be abolished among the Christian members of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale?

1.8 Aim and objectives

The main aim of this study is to contribute to a better understanding on monogamy and polygamy and to raise ethical and moral issues that may have been overlooked in the Anglican Church's rulings about polygamy. In order to achieve the aim of the research, the following objectives have been identified and appropriate resources consulted:

- To study the views of scholars on monogamy and polygamy in order to produce a better understanding of polygamy.
- To examine monogamy and polygamy on the basis of Scripture.
- To make an assessment of the practical situation in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale, particularly the views of church members and other Christians and non-Christians on the subject.

- To re-evaluate the teaching on monogamy and polygamy in the light of the outcomes of the above objectives.

1.9 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the teaching of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale on marriage—that monogamy is the only form of marriage accepted by God—does not resonate with all her members. This stance of the church needs a scientific assessment in view of diverse claims that the Bible is not clear on whether polygamy is acceptable or not, as well as the non-unanimous position of scholars on the matter. In addition, a practical strategy to guide the Church is needed in order to contribute to finding a solution to misinterpretation and misunderstanding among members.

I have not taken a philosophical approach but a biblical and pastoral approach, which necessitates an understanding of and respect for the cultures in the research area. Also, I do not discuss any theories of Scripture and Culture and do not base my research on a particular theory. This is because the Bible is the authoritative Scripture which is held in common by both monogamists and polygamists in the Anglican Church in the diocese of Tamale, and I take its authority as given. I take a biblical approach in order to seek greater understanding and clarification of its teachings regarding this topic. I take a pastoral approach by careful reading of the writings of scholars on both sides of the debate and attentively listening to views of people expressed in the research survey. These people are on both sides of the debate and reside in the research area. Though I give serious attention to cultural understanding and practices, I take the view that Christian Scripture has a higher authority than that of any culture. My final chapter aims to bring a pastoral and practical application of research findings to the specific geographical and cultural context of the Anglican Church in the diocese of Tamale.

1.10 Research methodology and design

This study is theological, ethical and practical. It involves the study of relevant biblical texts, the examination of relevant literature, and an engagement with people domiciled within the area designated as the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. In order to understand the specific context, I have outlined relevant historical aspects to the problem and the

debate. The study is carried out within the Anglican tradition. To this end, the following approaches and methods have been employed:

- Literature analysis to determine and evaluate the background of polygamy in Africa and an examination of the arguments for and against monogamy and polygamy. In this context, the works of scholars such as Eugene Hillman (1975) and Wilbur O'Donovan (1995) and several others have been consulted.
- An exegesis of relevant biblical texts on marriage has also been done to provide the theological framework on polygamy.
- Interviews, questionnaires and documentary reviews as prescribed by Bell (1993) have been considered in dealing with practical aspects in the Diocese of Tamale. The data triangulation method (Kusi, 2012) is also used. This is because it is able to involve multiple instruments of data-gathering such as semi-structured interview schedules, participant observation and focus group discussions. This type of data collection instrument is flexible, open and interactive, and did not only permit the use of explicit thematic categorization but also enabled consideration of other implicit themes that emerged as key issues for analysis. The focus group interviews enabled the researcher to bring group members from distances apart to one convenient place and hold discussions at the same time. Field research by way of one-on-one interviews was also anticipated and applied. These methods of interview are good because “they offered the researcher access to primary data on what people really know and feel about the research problem” (Seidman, 1998; Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). Interviews came from ‘information-rich’ sources. These included pastors and priests, church elders, polygamous families, monogamous families, adult children from polygamous and monogamous families, polygamous and monogamous adult children, opinion leaders and ordinary members of the Islamic faith, court and social work staff that deal with issues of marriage and family life on a daily basis.
- A questionnaire was developed and administered to a representative sample of two hundred (200) Christians and other influential individuals in the Diocese of Tamale. Apart from Anglicans, six other different churches were drawn at random from different denominations within five regions in northern Ghana, an

area which also makes up the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. These six denominations can conveniently be grouped into three: the Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal churches. Two churches from each of these six churches were selected purposively. This enables the researcher to focus on particular characteristics of the population that are of interest as they are best able to answer specific research questions. Ten church members from each of the six churches as well as nine pastors/priests from these denominations participated in the study.

Anglicans are the main research target; those who participated in this category include one retired bishop, one incumbent bishop and ten priests purposively drawn from the twenty-five priests of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. Five Anglican parishes were selected at random from the fifteen parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale, and ten laity drawn at random from each of these five parishes. Through the snowball method, ten polygamous males and ten polygamous females plus ten monogamous males and ten monogamous females were selected at random and interviewed. In addition, ten adult children from polygamous families and ten adult children from monogamous families participated. Also, three court staff and four staff from the Department of Social Welfare who are conversant with issues on marriage ordinance and family life were purposively selected. Finally, seven Muslim clerics and 5 Muslim women were selected purposively because of their influence on marriage in the research area. In all, two hundred persons with rich and credible information on the phenomenon of polygamy were involved in the research.

Although my research methodology focuses primarily on quantitative results, I include some questions that allow respondents to give more qualitative answers. One of the research designs used is a qualitative phenomenological design, which according to Russell and Stone is the most appropriate for an explanatory study (Russell & Stone, 2002). The phenomenological research method was used to aid in describing how participants brought their experiences to bear on the phenomenon at stake. The phenomenological design also guided the researcher to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences, feelings and responses to the particular situation. Since the goal of the research is to describe a living experience of a phenomenon, the phenomenological approach was considered most desirable. As this is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, it was envisaged that the methods to analyze its

data must be quite different from more traditional or quantitative methods of research. So, as alluded to by De Marrais & Lapan (2004:56), the phenomenological design enabled the researcher to examine every day human experience in close detailed ways. The use of this method also enabled the researcher to explore experiences and sensory perceptions (different from abstract perceptions) of the researched phenomenon, and the formation of understanding based on these experiences and perceptions.

The study also uses a modified van Kaam phenomenological method described by Moustakas (1994) based upon the responses to semi-structured questions recorded and professionally interpreted to capture the views and opinions of selected samples. Berg (2004) argues that qualitative research provides a good framework to understanding social and psychological phenomena of social settings of individuals. This method proved useful in this study that seeks to understand individual opinions on marriage in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale. This research method also allowed participants to express their views without any boundaries, on the teachings on marriage within the Anglican Diocese of Tamale and the effect of such teaching on the growth and development of the Church and society.

1.11 Population

The population for the study is drawn from ten categories of participants (polygamous families, monogamous families, lay Anglicans, members from other church denominations, Anglican bishops, priests and pastors, court staff, social workers, Muslim clerics and ordinary Muslim men and women). To enable a clear understanding of the reasons for polygamy and its effects on individuals and the growth of the church, the study deliberately included the sons and daughters of polygamous as well as monogamous families. They all shared useful experiences including the strengths and weaknesses of each of the practices.

1.12 Sample size

The sample size includes two hundred (200) participants out of which 118 (59%) are male and 82 (41%) are female. The ages of participants range between 18 years and 50+. Participants all enthusiastically agreed to be interviewed after the researcher had explained the reasons for the research. The researcher also received the consent of respondents to make direct quotations of their opinions.

1.13 Sample procedure

Neumann (2003) states that samples of potential participants represent the population of interest. The study therefore employed, among others, the purposeful and random sampling procedures capable of representing the population under review as well as achieving maximum results. The purposive sampling is a non-probability sample that is selected on the basis of characteristics of the population and the objective of the study. This type of sampling is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. This type of sampling is very useful in situations where one needs to reach a target sample quickly, and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern. There are seven types of purposive sampling, each appropriate to a different research objective. My research used the maximum variable/heterogeneous sampling type, which is one that was selected to provide a diverse range of cases relevant to a particular phenomenon or event; this was because my study population is derived from different sectors of the society. The choice of this kind of sample design provided as much insight as possible into the events or phenomena under examination. The method also enabled the researcher to mobilize information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 1990). The target population selected is either married or affected one way or the other by the issue of polygamy. The participant sample was identified by the researcher on the basis of his understanding of the participant profile and the participants' willingness to engage in the research study, reflecting a snowballing technique for establishing a valid sample frame. Also, the simple random sample procedure was used to offer every member or set of members an equal chance of being included in the study.

1.14 Method of inquiry

Semi-structured interviews were used as the research instrument. This is a method of research used most often in the social sciences. While a structured interview has a rigorous set of questions which do not allow one to divert, a semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interview in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored. Most of the interviews were conducted on meeting the participants in person to ensure accuracy of the participant's understanding and response to questions. Kvale approves this kind of approach when he defines a qualitative interview as "an interview, whose purpose is to gather description of the life-

world of the interviewee which represents the interpretation of meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1983:174). Cassel and Symon (2004:21) add that “the qualitative research interview is ideally suited to examining topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored.” Thus, this instrument no doubt brought out the best in respondents and provided the needed flexibility during interviews.

1.15 Instrument selection

Semi-structured interviews, which are useful instruments in qualitative research, were used to solicit information from respondents. Most of these interviews were conducted in person by the researcher and his assistants. Each participant was provided with a complete account of the purpose of the study and their consent was implored to present their original views in the study. Data for the interviews is coded to reduce attributions to component elements of causes and outcomes of marriage in the Diocese of Tamale.

1.16 Data analysis

There are many ways that qualitative data can be analyzed to generate findings. However, there are some analysis plans that are specific to certain qualitative research designs. For phenomenology, the major data analysis plan is the modified Van Kaam approach that was popularized by Moustakas (1994). There are a couple of key steps to this analysis plan that were adopted to make the data analysis unique, the first being the amount of detail required for the analysis. This analysis plan provides a rich understanding of participants’ lived experiences of the phenomenon without altering their narrative, experience and stories. It also allowed the researcher to explore the participant’s lived experiences deeply, in order to understand the essence of the phenomenon through the voices of those who have lived it. Some of the steps used are those recommended by Moustakas’ modification of the Van Kaam analysis for qualitative research (Moustakas, 1994:120-122). They include the following:

1. Listening and preliminary grouping of every relevant experience
2. Reduction and elimination of extraneous data to capture essential constituents of the phenomenon
3. Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents to identify core themes of the experience

4. Final identification and verification against the complete record of the research participant to ensure explicit relevancy and compatibility
5. Constructing for each co-researcher an individualized textual description of the experience based upon the verbatim transcripts answering relevant and valid invariant constituents and themes.
6. Constructing for each co-researcher an individual structural description of the experiences based upon individual textual description and imaginative variation.
7. Constructing for each participant a textual structural description of the meaning and essence of the experiences.

Each individual textual-structural description is used to develop a composite description of meaning and essence of the experience representing the group (Moustakas, 1994:121).

1.17 Conclusion

Before the advent of Christianity to the Anglican Diocese of Tamale, there was already an established marriage system that was esteemed and espoused by all the ethnic groups and cultures within this geographical location. Polygamy was not seen as an issue of shame, misconduct or against the will of God. Instead, polygamy was viewed as a practice reserved for the powerful and opulent and every young man and woman desired to practice it since it signified a change in status in the eyes of the society. It is interesting to note that in this part of the world a good farm harvest year is synonymous with the marrying of many wives. Those with only one wife desire to take an additional wife. It is therefore not surprising that polygamy is rooted deeply in the culture of the people of Northern Ghana where the Anglican Diocese of Tamale operates and where this research is being carried out. To change this attitude no doubt requires significant efforts from the Church. It will require more time, effective skill and outstanding diplomacy and lobbying by the Church to achieve its goal of ending the practice of polygamy among its members.

For the church to achieve its goal to end polygamy, critical and honest engagement with the people who carry out this practice is very necessary. This engagement between church and society will provide clues on how the church might be able to design the most appropriate strategies to resolve the issue of polygamy.

Additionally, the church will be better positioned to discuss the issue under review if it is willing to re-evaluate its own teachings on polygamy. The research has therefore gathered the views of a representative population of the Diocese of Tamale and consulted the views of divergent commentators as well as an exegesis of some key texts from Scripture. A number of canonical and pastoral proposals are made with all of these consultations in mind to support the Anglican Diocese of Tamale's doctrine and mission to evangelize societies within its predominantly Muslim and traditional religious environment.

Since this is not the first time that the issue of polygamy has been discussed with regard to Africa, some experiences will be drawn from other similar situations but with modifications to fit the current situation. Under similar circumstances, Lyimo (2011:262) suggested approaches under seven headings, namely, the concept of evangelism, inculturation and the evangelization of cultures, evangelization in polygamous societies, communicating the good news, the diocesan pastoral plan, the apostolate of women, and justice and peace. Note has been taken that the implementation of these canonical and pastoral approaches require the effective collaboration and commitment of both the Church and society. Those who are directly or indirectly involved or affected in the practice of polygamy, and those who have the authority to influence how marriage should be regulated in the Church, all have a significant role to play. This study therefore contributes to a better understanding of polygamy and raises ethical and moral issues that may have been overlooked in the Anglican Church's teachings and rulings about polygamy. The research will also serve to remind African Christians about the possibility of re-examining aspects of their culture that will facilitate effective church-going. It is envisaged that the practical strategy provided by this research will guide the Church in its teachings and approach to polygamy. My expectation is that this thesis will contribute to the solution of the problem of polygamous Anglicans in the Diocese of Tamale and reduce the drifting of its members to other churches and religions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The issue of the marriage practices among the Israelites in Old Testament times and related discussions in the New Testament which determine the standard for many Christian marriages today continue to engage the attention of scholars, church institutions and ordinary church members. According to Baab, records of the Old Testament reveal that the Israelites practiced both polygamy and monogamy (Baab, 1962:278). But whether God allowed the practice of one and forbade the other has not reached a unanimous agreement among scholars. Therefore, issues of scholarly debate center mostly on whether God allowed polygamy to be practiced and what God's original plan for marriage may have been. In Genesis 2:18, God said it is not good for man to be alone but did not add whether it is good or bad for a man to marry more than one wife or for a wife to have more than one husband. That God created only one woman for the man is not debatable but this act of creating only one woman has generated many speculations on the intention of God for marriage. Did God intend that mankind should practice monogamy by creating only one woman? Or did he simply introduce people to the act of marriage using one woman, but then will allow them to use their own discretion to decide on what number of women to marry? These and many other questions continue to dominate the conversations on the Christian stance on marriage and the will of God in all of these.

Therefore, this component of my study reviews some relevant literature for how polygamy and monogamy have been understood and treated over the years by both church and scholars, as relates to my context in Ghana. The point is that, despite the noticeable challenges it poses to many families, polygamy continues to thrive in the research area. This apparent resilience of polygamy does not suggest that the practice will end anytime soon within the said location. Therefore, questions that must be investigated include the following: Is there anything about polygamy that seems to be overlooked by the church? Or is there anything beneficial in polygamy that has been suppressed? And if so, by whom or what? These questions among others are necessary against the backdrop of the culture of the research location, where, contrary to some Christian views that marriage hinges on love, love for a woman in marriage primarily

means the ability to protect and provide care for her and her children that result from the marriage. This is why polygamy is predominantly practiced by men with wealth and power, an idea Instone-Brewer agrees was the same factor that influenced the practice of polygamy among the Israelites (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75). All of these views, though commonly held in Africa, will need to be tested against biblical and scholarly views on marriage.

To do this, I examine literature that makes two different claims: 1) that polygamy is an unacceptable practice and 2) that polygamy is an acceptable practice. I show views on both sides throughout this chapter. The different opinions will provide the needed understanding that will feed into how ordinary Christians, who are assumed to be the majority readers of the Bible, react towards the issue of polygamy in the research location. This is necessary because while the church seeks to establish canons to moderate the way of life of her members, some scholars express views that may be intended to meet personal curiosities and interests rather than the real needs of ordinary people. It is worth noting, however, that there are also other scholars who seek to research real issues that are of practical relevance, concern and importance to ordinary Christians. This is because they too, are in the midst of the same practical life issues and want to use their skills to help other ordinary readers dealing with similar concerns. This notwithstanding, the way of life of the ordinary Christian is daily regulated by how he/she understands what they read from the Holy Bible, which is generally considered a daily guide for living. For the ordinary reader, what the Bible says is not a theoretical debate but relates to a practical life experience. Polygamy in this discussion will refer to polygyny (unless otherwise specified) which is the form of marriage in which a man marries two or more wives, as that is the only alternative to monogamy practiced in the Old Testament and in the research location.

2.2 Scholarly views on polygamy as either acceptable or unacceptable by God

The Old Testament is considered by some scholars to view marriage as a kind of covenant. Vine observes that the term covenant is generally used in the Bible of agreements between persons (Genesis 21:32; 1 Samuel 18:3) or between a person or community and God (Genesis 6:18; Deuteronomy 29.12). In each case, the parties are to carefully keep all the conditions or commandments of the covenant. God's covenant is a relationship of love and loyalty between the Lord and his chosen people (Vine et al., 2000:50-51). By implication, the covenant with God requires obedience, loyalty and

complete submission. In the Old Testament, the relationship between God and Israel is described as a form of marriage in which both parties commit to the terms and conditions of the agreement. For instance, “Hosea 1-3 and Jeremiah 2:2 assert that God would have no other wife but Israel, just as Israel would have no other husband but Yahweh-Jehovah” (Longman & Dillard, 2006:406). This is why Old Testament prophets consistently used the metaphor of marriage concerning God and his relationship to the Israelite people (Longman & Dillard, 2006:405). The metaphor of marriage concerning God and his relationship to the Israelites is relevant in understanding the views of God concerning marriage today. This is because the standards he sets are not refutable. Thus, one would desire to examine whether the metaphor of marriage acknowledges that God is monogamous or polygamous. One common observable fact about marriage is that it is not common for a marriage covenant to be established between one man and several women in the same covenant ceremony.

Longman and Dillard argue that God’s attitude to marriage is generally associated with his relationship to Israel: “God desires Israel to be like a faithful wife” (Longman & Dillard, 2006:406). Here, the ‘wife’ is viewed as a collective singular. Although Israel is made up of many individuals, the marriage image is applied to Israel as just one people. Christopher J.H. Wright supports this view when he says, “To this could be added passages in the wisdom literature which advocate, or at least would seem to presuppose, faithful monogamy (Proverbs 5:5-20; 18:22; 31:10-31; Song of Solomon) as well as the implication of the figure of marriage used for the exclusive relationship between God and Israel” (Wright, 1983:176). Some scholars, including Henrietta Mears, say that “the Song of Solomon is not just love poetry to report the passionate longing of two lovers for marriage to each other, but to illustrate the love between Jehovah and his people” (Mears, 1998:217). These suggestions imply that marriage is viewed as a sacred relationship between only two persons: a man and a woman. This is why Kahiga (2007:127-128) argues that, if marriage entails that a man gives himself to a woman and a woman gives herself to a man, what then is left to give to another (third person) woman? The man would not be available unless as a fake man, an illusion, a mere physical and not mental, spiritual complete presence to the other. In this case the woman would be taken as an object but not as an equal subject, a means but not an end in herself. Therefore polygamy or anonymous polygamy is a lie and an intellectual dishonesty.

This sacred agreement which is supposed to be kept between two persons or parties must be handled with respect and in high esteem. This is why the Bible respects the institution of marriage in the same way it respects other recorded covenants. Michael Guy explains that respect in marriage means valuing each other's opinions, valuing their interest and talent, and valuing their contribution to the marriage (Guy, 2004:108). Therefore, marriage is not to be regarded as the fulfillment of a man's craving and passion but as the accomplishment of God's ultimate plan for the happiness of mankind. It is also significant to note that, in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul says Jesus will marry only one bride, the church (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:4) This is another use of the collective singular, as in the Old Testament. Many have therefore argued that the practice of monogamy means accomplishing God's plan in marriage, and what follows this plan is happiness for those who practice marriage according to God's way, which is monogamy. According to John Gharthey, "after God presented Eve to Adam, his expression of joy and satisfaction reveals that the provision of a wife was the best thing that ever happened to him at creation. Marriage is God's design and never man's desire, and that is why we should play only by his rules. To distort this plan implies a fulfillment of man's craving and passion" (Gharthey, 2011:12).

Polygamy means two or more women sharing a man, but Chapman believes that sharing is not for any woman. He advises every woman to open her eyes so that she can recognize when she is sharing her man with someone else. He observes that "too many women pretend that they can share in order to have a relationship and then end up overwrought with anxiety" (Chapman, 1986:28). Gaskiyane agrees with this assertion when he claims that there is plenty of evidence to show that no woman really wants to share the affection and love of her husband with another woman (Gaskiyane, 2000:10). So Nenny Shashaidah, a High Court Judge considered to be the face of Islamic Law in Malaysia, explains that she always wants to hear from a first wife before permitting her husband to marry a second wife: "I ask her, 'Do you really agree with your full heart or have you been forced to agree? If she is smiling, I say yes, she has truly given permission. But if her face wants to cry in front of me I will ask her carefully in detail, try to get the point – why actually (does) she not agree?'" (Carrick, 2020). Nenny seems to suggest that in some cases women are forced into polygamy but she also observes that some women are willing to go into polygamy, maybe as a way of accepting a predominant practice. It is probably this level of anxiety and uncertainty in polygamy

that makes Bryson Arthur assume that there is no real union and companionship in polygamous marriages. He claims that “in polygamous marriages the husband, wives and children are all lonely people” (Arthur, 2001:117). Surely, given the opportunity, women would not willingly desire that their husbands marry an additional wife. This is because it is heart-breaking to note that your husband is falling in love and willing to marry another wife. Asked how she would react if her husband told her he planned to marry a second wife, Judge Nenny said, “As a woman it would break your heart” (Carrick, 2020).

Indeed, for many women, polygamy is a practice that has the ability to cause permanent frustration or even death. Some men may want to share and see no problem in doing so, but women are far less likely to think that it is genuinely possible to share. If she is a first wife, her approval of a second wife or entry into a polygamous marriage is highly conditioned and pressured by what she thinks is necessary. But Guy observes that men are more willing to marry more than one wife because “in general, a man with two wives does not treat either any differently than he would an only wife” (Guy, 2004:86). This idea is supported by Ezekiel Sitienei, writing about marriage among the Nandi: “In polygamous families it is always hard to know an infertile wife, because all children belong to all women and every child lives in every home” (Sitienei, 2001:51). The Nandi are part of the Kalenjin, a Nilotic tribe living in East Africa. The Nandi ethnic group live in and with close association and relationship with the Kipsigis tribe. They traditionally have lived and still form the majority in the highland area of the former Rift Valley Province of Kenya in what is today Nandi County. Thus, Sitienei assumes there is rather better unity and companionship in polygamy among the Nandi. This claim is one of the main purposes of polygamy among many African societies, but whether today this can be said to be the case in many polygamous homes is yet to be established.

In the opinion of O’Donovan, “God’s plan for marriage is that there should be one man and one wife because at creation God made only one woman for the man he created (Genesis 2:22-24) and God intends this partnership to last forever.” He maintains that “polygamy breeds discord and leads to unfaithfulness, adultery and divorce, and from the time that Abraham took Hagar as a wife there was never peace in Abraham’s home” (O’Donovan, 1975:290). Four issues are inferred from O’Donovan’s claim. First, unlike other commentators, he admits that Abraham took Hagar as a wife; second, that because God created only one man and one woman at creation he was

intending marriage to be monogamous; third, that God intends marriage to last the lifespan of a couple; and four, that polygamy is a reason for the absence of peace in a marriage relationship. O'Donovan's assertion, however, appears to be an over-generalization since it is problematic to simply assume that polygamy introduces a particular kind of stress into a family that monogamous families do not have. The claim also over-stresses the duration of marriage whilst underrating the significance of mutual love, trust and peace, which are among the primary essential aspects of marriage in both the Bible and in real life experience. For instance, Adam, the first man, did not simply marry a woman but one that was well furnished with almost all the qualities that he probably needed for life. It is therefore not surprising that when he saw the woman God made for him, he declared, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23). Thus, a marriage is not likely to be lifelong if other factors that favour a good relationship, such as mutual understanding and respect for each other, are not present.

The form of confidence expressed by Adam at his first sight of the woman suggests that he was satisfied with what was being presented to him, but whether this kind of attitude in a marriage relationship has the tendency to ensure a lasting relationship is yet to be assessed. However, it is important to note that satisfaction and confidence as expressed by the first man are useful foundations for a lasting relationship. Thus, with this attitude, a couple may claim their marriage is the plan of God while expecting divine guidance and sustenance of the marriage. Gharthey agrees that "God in his plan intended marriage to be a lifelong agreement between a man and a woman, a relationship exemplifying unconditional love, reconciliation, sexual purity and fruitfulness" (Gharthey, 2011:13). For both O'Donovan and Gharthey, polygamy is viewed as an act of unfaithfulness because being in a marriage relationship with more than one woman implies not being faithful to each of the wives, and God will not endorse such a relationship.

Some scholars describe polygamy as a practice that deliberately violates God's command, and therefore should not be practiced. For such thinkers, polygamy is unacceptable, and God must be disassociated from its practice. They argue that God's plan for marriage from creation has always been monogamy, and those who marry more than one wife violate the command of God regarding matrimony. Thus, Alexander claims that matrimony is "an intimate and complementing union between a man and a woman in which two become one physically in the whole of life" (Alexander, 1996).

M.Z. Banungwiiri (2020:16) observes that although many issues have disfigured the divine purpose of marriage, monogamous marriage actually reflects the God-ordained ideal from the beginning. He asserts that God established marriage between one man and one woman as the normal pattern for humanity. Similarly, Grunlan claims that God's will in marriage is "a marriage between only one husband and one wife" (Grunlan, 1999:34). And Baab is convinced that "many of the Hebrew laws strongly imply a monogamous form of marriage (Exodus 20:17; 21:5; Leviticus 18:8, 16, 20; 20:10; 21:13; Numbers 5:12; 5:21, 22:22; 24:5 etc.)" (Baab, 1962:281).

Contrary to this claim, however, Instone-Brewer observes that polygamy is implied in Exodus 21:10f and Deuteronomy 21:15-17 and in the laws that a man who seduces an unbetrothed virgin (Exodus 22:16) or rapes her (Deuteronomy 22:28) must marry her, because it does not state that the man must be unmarried (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75). Epstein agrees with Instone-Brewer when he says, "the Law assumed polygamy in Exodus 21:10, Deuteronomy 21:15 and Leviticus 18:18". He lists among polygamists of the Old Testament Lamech, Abraham, Esau, Jacob, Simeon, Gideon, Elkanah, Saul, David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Jehoash, Abiah, Manasseh and Shesharaim (Epstein, 1927:3-7). However, Malachi 2:14 explains that the lack of faithfulness to the wife of one's youth was condemned in a revealing championship of fidelity in marriage to one woman (Baab, 1962:281). But the fact that Baab observes that "many" and not all the Hebrew laws strongly imply a monogamous form of marriage gives room to speculate that he admits that some of the laws were favourable to the practice of polygamy among the Jews.

For this reason, though proponents of monogamy admit that the marriage of more than one wife was a practice among ancient Israelites, they yet maintain that it was unacceptable. Those who hold such a view have therefore played down the involvement of patriarchs in polygamy. After all, they were the mouthpiece of God and enjoyed his great favour. Dwight (1836:7) argues "the practice of having more than one wife was acceptable among the people of Sarah's time but in the case of Abraham, Sarah persuaded him to practice polygamy." Dwight's argument, like that of all other scholars, hinges on the premise that the wide practice of a certain act does not necessarily imply acceptability in the sight of God. That Sarah persuaded Abraham to practice polygamy is probably the reason why the subsequent narratives claim that God did not approve the action of this family, so God refused to give his blessing to the son who resulted from such an arrangement. However, the narrator does not seem to imply that God refused to

accept the son because Abraham practiced polygamy. What seems obvious in this case is that the promised son was to come through Sarah and not another woman. This may suggest why God disapproved of the couple's action—it was not because an additional wife was taken. Considering their advanced ages, both Sarah and Abraham doubted that God's promise to give them a son could be fulfilled, thereby failing to wait for the appointed time. This aspect of the couple's failure to trust God seems to be overlooked by Dwight's view on why God disapproved of Sarah's action. Abraham had been specifically called by God to leave his people and to begin a new people under God. This was not the way God told Abraham to do it. He needed to heed God's instructions as to how to begin with this new people and have a son. They had already left a pagan society to follow God, but Sarah's idea was simply a reflection of what happened in the pagan society and one cannot assume that Sarah was not aware of the right of a second wife under such circumstances. The lack of trust in God's promise and the fact that there were other alternatives available through which the chosen couple could obtain a son motivated Sarah into taking the action to offer her maid to her husband.

Kaiser uses a different argument to disassociate the patriarch Abraham from the practice of polygamy. Unlike Dwight, who finds fault with Sarah for persuading her husband to participate in a wrong practice, Kaiser claims that "Sarah talked Abraham into having a temporary sexual relationship with Hagar" (Kaiser, 1983:18). For Kaiser, the relationship between Hagar and Abraham was not intended to last and should not be considered as marriage. However, there is no scriptural evidence that women could be given out temporarily to husbands to realize an objective such as the one intended by Sarah. Sarah would have been aware that "according to the Hebrew practice (whether this practice was borrowed from their neighbours or not) a woman after giving birth under similar circumstances as that of Hagar was lifted up to the place of a legally recognized concubine, even a wife with the rights of such. That means that such a woman has to be cared for ... concerning food, clothing and marital rights" (Jasper, 1969:40). Therefore, one cannot imagine that Sarah was unaware of the consequence of persuading Abraham, assuming that was the case, into such a relationship. To argue that Sarah was making a temporary arrangement for a child would thus be a belittlement of an existing marriage practice.

The elevation to the position of a concubine or wife was usually not the prerogative of the wife who allowed or suggested that the husband enters such a special relationship with another woman. By tradition and cultural practice, the woman

becomes a wife. In the case involving Sarah and Hagar, the Old Testament is clear on this practice when it states, “So Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife” (Genesis 16:3). For Sarah to fail to recognize Hagar as having been raised to such a status after giving her to the husband as a wife was probably the result of disappointment, anger and jealousy. This claim is rife because when Hagar conceived she began to look with contempt on her mistress Sarah (Genesis 16:4). Therefore, one may describe Sarah’s disapproval and harsh treatment of Hagar as the reaction of a superior towards an inferior whose elevation by means of pregnancy seeks to undermine an established status quo. Sarah would have to prove that she is still the boss and would not allow Hagar to stand between her and her husband. Maybe only God is able to find a lasting solution to this issue. It is therefore not surprising that God personally shows concern by sending an angel to intercept and send Hagar back to Sarah in order to get food and clothing (Genesis 16:4-16). To curtail such instances of injustice, God in Deuteronomy 21:15-17 provides guidance for Israel on the issue of marriage. In these verses, God recognizes the possibility that a man could love one wife and hate the other, so prescribes the rights and privileges of both the woman who may be disliked and her son (by implication, children). Marrying more than one wife therefore has some form of scriptural provision similar to divorce: care for the vulnerable people who may be mistreated or neglected by a selfish partner. However, granted that Sarah successfully swayed her husband to accept Hagar, she cannot escape being faulted because she persuaded her husband to do what was traditionally and culturally accepted at the time but not approved by God because of their unique calling. Abraham was called to break with many of the traditions and cultural norms of his family and original home and Sarah needed to support him to achieve this objective.

Some scholars refer to the marriage processes among the ancient Israelites and claim that the process suggests monogamy. Emerson notes that in Hebrew culture it was common for a woman to leave her parents and go to live with her husband’s family in the time of the Old Testament (Emmerson, 1989:382-384). This means forsaking her family and uniting with the husband in his family. The Bible also suggests that the man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to the wife. Thus, if the tradition permits the woman to leave her parents and the Bible commands the man to leave his parents as well, then both the man and woman are required to leave their families and make their own home. They need space and privacy to live alone and learn to resolve their own issues. This is why Trobisch suggests that this couple is expected to be united

(Trobisch, 1971:15). And in Hebrew, to be united means to “stick to each other. In this case, the man sticks to the wife as two papers glued together and nothing can get between the two papers” (Trobisch, 1971:15). This is why the man and woman cannot be separated. They literally become one flesh. And Wright observes that becoming one flesh literally means physically joining in sexual union of husband and wife to make them become close to each other. “In the Scripture, God did not say multiple-flesh as plural but he emphasized one flesh as singular” (Wright, 1983:176). It is for this reason that the couple freely shares their possessions, their thoughts, their feelings and their bodies with each other in the relationship of transparency without shame. They do this without fear, knowing that they love each other as they love themselves. These two views from both Trobisch and Wright elicit the conclusion that the movement and unity expressed is not possible with more than one husband and one wife.

There is no doubt that, like many other social practices, the neighbours of Israel played a significant role in the attitude of Israel towards marriage. It is argued that outside Israel the disquiet with polygamy can be seen in the marriage contracts in Elephantine between 495-399 BCE (Instone-Brewer, 2000:77). Instone-Brewer explains that:

These are not typical Jewish contracts and are affected more by Gentile customs than Jewish ones. Nevertheless, they show the kinds of influences which Greek and Roman customs were beginning to have on Judaism. One of the most significant influences is the move towards monogamy. Some of the marriage contracts state that a man must not marry more than one wife... (Instone-Brewer, 2000:78).

The acceptance of the view that Israel was beginning to drift towards monogamy could imply that monogamy is a practice that Israel borrowed from her neighbours and was not originally the ideal form of marriage practice among the Jews. This is supported by Justin Martyr’s assertion that “the practice of polygamy was a part of Jewish culture” (Dialogue 141).

Though not very obvious in the New Testament for the ordinary reader, some scholars argue that the New Testament is not silent on the issue of polygamy. According to Waddams (1965:130), “Jesus encouraged a view of monogamy when he emphasized that from the creation God made them male and female, and what God has joined together, no man puts asunder (Mark 10:6, 9), to imply that it was intended to be both monogamous and permanent.” Instone-Brewer claims that Jesus spent more time teaching you should have only one wife than teaching that there is only one God or

teaching the grounds for divorce because in Jesus' society polygamy was still legal and relatively common (Instone-Brewer, 2000). Though others have argued that Jesus spoke on divorce and not polygamy, Christopher J.H. Wright explains: "These words spoken by Jesus about divorce could equally be applied to polygamy because the creation narrative implies a monogamous 'one flesh' relationship between one man and one woman" (Wright, 1983:176). This claim assumes that it is God who brings couples together and nothing should be responsible for setting them apart, not even the couple themselves. But questions that remain generally unanswered include whether God any longer dramatically presents women to men as he did at creation. To bridge this gap in the marriage institution today, Christians have emphasized that marriage should not be entered lightly but prayerfully. It is assumed that through prayers the right man or woman would be revealed for marriage. This notwithstanding, to imagine that God has continued to maintain that one man and a woman must form a marriage unit, apart from being challenging, also limits God's ability to do things differently at different times under different circumstances. Today, apart from the popular Christian view that God continues to choose partners for marriage through prayers, many other factors no doubt contribute in keeping a couple together for their whole life. Undeniably, most marriages fail or succeed depending on how couples have learned to listen to each other and have adapted to differences after they have been married.

The Apostle Paul has made some statements in Scripture that lend credence to the argument of some scholars that monogamy is the standard of marriage designed and endorsed by God. In his letters to Timothy and to Titus, Paul says a deacon or overseer must be the husband of one wife (1Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). Paul also argues that a widow must have been married to only one husband (1Timothy 5:9), using Anna as an example (Luke 2:36-38), to qualify to be on the list of widows. Furthermore, Paul, dealing with an issue of immorality, requested that each man or woman should have their own husband or wife to avoid fornication (1 Corinthians 7:2). Like Jesus, Paul also quoted Genesis 2:24 to support his view on marriage. Issues that stand out from Paul's views on this subject matter may include the following. First, deacons and overseers are in leadership positions in the church. All deacons and overseers are Christians but not all Christians are deacons and overseers. Therefore, Saint Paul does not seem to make a generalization on marriage but is being specific in the case of deacons and overseers. Second, a widow qualified only if she was married to only one husband does not necessarily imply that other women may not have been married to her husband. Third,

husbands and wives enter into marriage relationships not only to prevent immorality but also to seal their relationships in the eyes of the society. Paul should have been aware of these dynamics and may only be alerting his congregation that marriage in Christianity comes against other established forms of marriage in the Christian community. He therefore, spells out what should happen to those who want to distinguish themselves in the service of the church. In line with this, Mchami concludes that Paul's view of marriage as a lifelong commitment is certain (Guy, 2004:126) but he does not speculate on whether Paul would accept multiple marriages even by those who do not aspire to become leaders in the church.

The Apostle Paul was no doubt setting standards for Christian marriage. This is why some commentators have argued that note must be taken of the difference between Christian and non-Christian marriages. Waddams argues that "in civil law marriage is a contract and normally becomes subject to the same kind of law as other contracts. In Christian life marriage is not a contract but a status" (Waddams, 1964:131), meaning that marriage is not a man-made institution that can be altered easily as contracts can. Christian marriage is, instead, a sacred institution. This is probably why Paul alerts those who have the privilege to handle divine issues, such as bishops and deacons, to be aware that they cannot treat marriage lightly as others do. Warner agrees with Waddams when he observes the following about the marriage service contained in the Anglican Prayer Book:

The more I examine the marriage service, the less I see of 'contract' and the more I realize that 'status' set up by consent and coitus is at the heart of the whole matter. As this is what Christ taught ('they are no longer two but one flesh'), we ought not to be surprised that the Prayer Book is emphatic about it – Holy Matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted by God (Waddams, 1965:131).

But Skinner points out that "flesh" is synonymous with 'clan', 'family group' in both Hebrew and Arabic usage. As Leviticus 25:49 says, "a new kinsman belonging to his flesh may redeem him" (Skinner, 1930:70). This understanding notwithstanding, both Waddams and Warner seem convinced that the original intent of marriage is monogamy and should not be tampered with or compared with a contract which in their opinion is made by the imagination and design of humans. In this regard, both Waddams and Warner do not appreciate that being one flesh does not only mean being in a marriage relationship but also in a family relationship.

For Boadt, the Israelites had different motives for marriage apart from those indicated by Waddams and Warner. He explains that “marriage was a contract drawn up in the context of Israel for the husband to declare publicly his obligation to take his wife and care for her” (Boadt, 1984:259). Blum agrees with Boadt in the context of African culture that men are primarily expected to carry the responsibilities of taking a wife. He says, “In some cases a polygamous husband may be in a better position to offer a girl (the wife) much greater social and economic security, better lands and a better home, greater prestige within the community and many other goods which are valued in her society” (Blum, 1995:109). But if marriage responsibilities are only seen in relation to the provision of goods and services, including ‘servicing’ a woman so that she may conceive a child, the basic difference between polygamy and monogamy may lie in understanding what marriage is, and what it is for. This view aside, it is not necessarily the case that once a man makes an open declaration to shoulder the responsibilities of a wife he is barred from taking another wife. In most African cultures all marriages, whether first or subsequent, are expected to be declared publicly. The general observation in the African context is that making a marriage public has not prevented the husband from taking another wife subsequently. What each of these publications does is to legalize the relationship according to the tradition of the people and deter other men from desiring the woman concerned. A marriage that is not publicized cannot be said to have sufficient security.

Martey describes polygamy as an act of deception. For him “a man with five wives has five tongues. And to have five tongues means being able to lure five different women into polygamy” (Martey, 1991:140). Martey’s assertion assumes that a man with polygamous intent does not tell his victims the truth. Or probably, that the man always has the ability to make the woman see nothing wrong with becoming a subsequent wife. This assertion assumes also that males who practice polygamy are more clever than their female counterparts and that most women enter into polygamous marriages ignorantly against their will. This assertion may not be true in all instances. For instance, Banungwiiri notes that among some Dagaba communities and clans, the open consent of either the man or woman is not considered necessary, as the power is given to the parents to find a good wife or husband for their child (Banungwiiri, 2020:88). This demonstrates the general practice where betrothals are done by male family members with their own personal interests. So, some girls are betrothed to men without necessarily being enticed by these men who marry them. Additionally, as

observed by Gharthey, “some women have their personal agendas for which they enter into marriage. Such agendas include their dreams of the future which they are convinced are likely to be achieved through men” (Gharthey, 2011:39). These women who feel like this may not be bothered by whether the man they target is already married or not. And in other cases where male family members lead the process of the marriage, the true needs of women entering into the marriage may be considered as secondary to some other family needs and expectations.

Church groups have also expressed different sentiments on the issue of polygamy. The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, for instance, labeled polygamy as “one of the gross evils of heathen society which, like habitual murder or slavery, must at all cost be ended” (Kisembo et al., 1977:104). The Lambeth Conferences of 1971 and 1988 both expressed the Anglican posture towards polygamy. At the first congress in 1971, it was unanimously resolved that “marriage is a union permanent and lifelong ... till death do them part, of one man with one wife, to the exclusion of all others.” At its next conference in 1988, the Anglican Communion maintained its stance, saying that “polygamy should not be allowed in the Church” (Waddams, 1971:153, 175). Like the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Council of Trent said, “If anyone says that it is lawful for Christians to have several wives at the same time, and that it is not forbidden by any divine law, let him be anathema” (Hillman, 1975:97). In all of these postures, monogamy is considered the ideal wish of God while polygamy is unacceptable and against the will of God. However, these views do not seem to meet unanimous standards even though they are expressed by faith-based organizations. Some scholars have therefore described these stances on polygamy as ridiculous. For instance, Hillman remarks that “the Catholic Church’s view on polygamy is rather absurd, because the Bible has no problem with polygamy; therefore the Roman Catholic Church is left having a problem with the Bible” (Hillman, 1975:97). Hillman’s assertion represents how unconvinced some Christians are on the claim of the Church that monogamy is designed by God while polygamy is designed by human lust.

The view of Protestant Reformers on polygamy has been one of mixed sentiments. Barrett (1968:117) expressed this opinion when he said that “the Protestant reformers manifested a great degree of differing opinions with regard to the issue of polygamy.” For instance, Calvin argued that “polygamy was prohibited by natural law and that it hindered domestic peace by creating inferiority complex within each of the

wives” (Hillman, 1975:182). But Luther and Melanchthon both argued that “monogamy is not applicable to every situation” (Barrett, 1968:117). Calvin’s assertion assumes that polygamy is a hindrance to domestic peace as well as creating inferiority among the wives, a thought shared by O’Donovan. But while it is easy to observe that polygamy hinders domestic peace in many instances, it is challenging to assume that it imputes inferiority to women. This is because the wives in a polygamous setting seem to accept the status quo and order of command as pertains in almost every social grouping (though any non-acceptance is felt rather than being spoken). Respect continues to be a very relevant factor. “Without the respect of her husband, a wife is not a human being, and without the respect of the wife, a husband is not a human being” (Guy, 2004:108). This is emotionally expressed in Okot p’Bitek’s *Song of Lawino*, section 2: the woman with whom I share my husband. Lawino does not mind her husband having a mistress. “All I ask is that my husband should stop the insults” (p’Bitek, 1989). Those who are married earlier are acknowledged as being senior to those who are married later irrespective of age by birth. Obviously, if there is only one wife she is not ‘inferior’ or ‘superior’ to another woman, while in polygamy the ordering within the wives necessarily means that some are by status inferior to others. This notwithstanding, there is a general notion among polygamous wives in most parts of Africa that they accept their positions and that this has established orderliness instead of a feeling of inferiority. This claim does not overlook the fact that some societies are more peaceful than others, and hence some polygamous relationships will be more orderly than others.

Early missionaries to Africa did not find it easy dealing with the issue of polygamy but were still resolute in stopping it because in their view it was unacceptable. In the attempt to enforce monogamy various missions refused to accept polygamists and their families into church fellowship, though the treatment of polygamists differed from one mission organization to another. Some refused baptism to polygamists while others baptized the wives and children but not the husbands (Barrett, 1968:117).

This attitude of missionaries towards African converts no doubt generated some form of reaction. This is noted by Hunter who says that “the missionary response to polygamy in Africa did not pass unnoticed by those who practiced it but led to sharp reactions from the Africans” (Hunter, 1962:33). For example, in one large Nigerian city, many Christian converts rejected Christianity after a pastor refused to baptize a rich polygamist (Barrett, 1968:117-118). It is not clear whether the reaction was in support

of the polygamist because of his wealth, but it is most likely that the rejection of Christianity was a protest against the attitude of missionaries towards the cultural practice that had become part of the people over a long period. Barrett therefore argues that “in many parts of Africa, missions made a serious mistake by making hasty judgments on the thorny issue of polygamy. In order to avoid such a blunder, missions should have allowed the indigenous Christian conscience to evolve its own solution” (Barrett, 1968:117-118). Though not the only reason, an interesting connection between the missions’ response to polygamy and African reactions was evidenced in the mushrooming of independent churches in Africa at the turn of the twentieth century. Barrett (1968) has given numerous examples of the phenomenon in question:

One example of polygamy among African Independent churches was Isaiah Shembe, a Messiah of the Nazarite Baptist Church in South Africa, who had four wives; Josiah Oshitelu, founder of the Aladura (Church of the Lord) had seven wives; Johane Maranke, founder of the African Apostolic Church in Zambia and Zimbabwe had sixteen wives before he died in 1963.

This is why Barrett concludes that “missions in Africa interfered with African culture too much and that it is not therefore surprising that separatism emerged as the outcome of clashes between two cultures, the traditional and the missionary” (Barrett, 1968:118-119). And according to Bishop Sebastian Bakare, “when missionaries, who were of course products of their own time and their own cultures, came to Africa, they proclaimed a gospel enshrined and conferred in the culture from which they came—which was not of course the culture in which the ‘Word’ was incarnated” (Bakare, 2002:4-5). It is clear that the church generally favoured the practice of monogamy.

It is, however, surprising that the discussion on monogamy and polygamy continues to assume different dimensions. According to Hillman, “new perspectives on polygamy continue to gain grounds among those who were originally opposed to its practice. The perspective expressed by the Plenary Assembly of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples shows a keen sensitivity toward the African polygamous situation” (Hillman 1982:166). Cardinal Paul Zoungrana of Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) argues: “It is necessary to see and understand polygamy such as it is, in order to grasp the obstacles that it places in the way of evangelization and conversion; then from there, we can find solutions to bring to the problem which has arisen” (Hillman, 1982:166). The Cardinal concluded that “certain forms of polygamy

were legitimate, for example levirate types of marriage” (Hillman, 1982:166). Another Roman Catholic scholar disposed towards a tolerance of polygamy was Karl Rahner. He argued that the African people, for example, the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, could not reproduce the morality of Western Christianity. Rather, they were to live as Maasai Christians, with all the rights of baptism (Hillman, 1982:165). These new perspectives point to admittance that, first of all, the church has been intolerant to polygamy. Secondly, polygamy continues to adopt new ways of resisting the church’s teaching on monogamy, signaling that marriage must be viewed differently from faith.

From all the views expressed above in regard to why monogamy must be considered as the most ideal form of marriage in the church, one observes primarily that Christian Missions in Africa espoused a common view on the issue of polygamy. Commenting on the attitude of the church towards African polygamy, Harries (1953:335-336) notes that “On this crucial issue of polygamy the mission authorities of all denominations have consistently refused to surrender their ground. They have always maintained, and still maintain, that acceptance of polygamy would be fundamentally inconsistent with the teaching of Christianity.” Certainly, the missionaries to Africa were not familiar with the practice of polygamy and would not surrender what they practice and understand better for what they do not understand. This is why Karl Rahner argued that the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania could not reproduce the morality of Western Christianity but should be allowed to practice Christianity as Maasai.

In the Later Prophets, “monogamy was taught as an ideal but polygamy was never made illegal, and God was portrayed as married to both Israel and Judah without any shame attached to it. It is also unlikely that there was any teaching against polygamy in the early history of Israel” (Instone-Brewer, 2000:76). However, it is important to note that Israel and Judah were viewed collectively as one people. They were both part of the original Israel and continued to be viewed as one people who should never have been divided. But there are those who continue to believe that polygamy is not a forbidden practice and that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, which is the main guide, canon or directory for marriage, is not ambiguous on the issue of marriage. Hastings is convinced that “Polygamy is so obvious in the Old Testament that it cannot be overlooked” (Hastings, 1973:77). Making reference to some patriarchs in the Bible, including Moses, Jacob and David, some proponents of polygamy have argued that if it was wrong, they would not have practiced polygamy. Though Saint Augustine is noted to have taken more than one stance on the issue of polygamy, he

does not seem to condemn it unconditionally. On the one hand Saint Augustine considered that the continuous practice of polygamy exemplified by the patriarchs is not acceptable because “the good purpose of marriage is better promoted with one husband and one wife than by a husband and several wives” (Augustine, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 15.Bk 1, chapter 10). This view notwithstanding, Augustine endorsed polygamy, arguing that it was not wrong “as long as its purpose was for the multiplication of the race” (Hillman, 1975:180). This is because “polygamy is neither contrary to the law of nature nor to the law of marriage itself” (Barrett, 1968:116). Aquinas, a contemporary of Saint Augustus, argued that on the basis of natural law, polygamy was not prohibited. He maintained:

A plurality of wives is said to be against the natural law, not as regards its first precepts, but as regards the secondary precepts, which like conclusions are drawn from its first precepts. Since, however, human acts and needs vary according to the various conditions of persons, times, and other circumstances, the aforesaid conclusions do not proceed from the first precepts of the natural law, so as to be binding in all cases, but only in the majority (cited in Hillman, 1975:181).

Like Augustine, Aquinas strongly believed that the primary object and purpose of marriage is procreation and bringing up children, regardless of how many wives are involved. Aquinas observed that “The principal end of matrimony is the good of the offspring. For nature intends not only the begetting of offspring, but also its education and development until it reaches the perfect state of man as man, and that is the state of virtue. Hence ... we derive three things from our parents, namely ‘existence,’ ‘nourishment’ and ‘education.’” (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Supplementum Tertiae Partis, Question 41:1*) Aquinas therefore, places emphasis on the care of children in marriage and not the number of women producing the children.

Some have contended that polygamy was not practiced at creation because there was only one man and one woman. But this situation was not the case when women and men became more numerous and choice was possible. This understanding has influenced the African attitude towards polygamy. Nyanseor (2009:65) explains the rationale given for the practice of polygamy in Africa as provided by two schools of thought, the social and economic, as follows:

Proponents of the social school explained that at the time polygamy was established as the legal form of marriage, the ratio of women to men in Africa was about 10 to 1. As a result, those who were responsible for establishing social institutions, the elders,

including women, decided to come up with a marriage system that would address this problem. Their aim at the time was to provide a balance and equal distribution of social, material security and economic benefits to both women and men.

Furthermore, these social architects or elders felt that if the problem regarding the need of unmarried women were not addressed, what would eventually happen was the snatching away of other women's husbands, or the unmarried women would, for example, engage in prostitution since as a human being, the sexual, social, psychological and economic needs had to be taken care of.

On the other hand, the proponents of the economic school reasoned that polygamy was established to address the prevailing economic issues of the period. They explained that during the pre-colonial era in Africa, the economic activities were centered on subsistence agriculture. This type of farming required lots of manpower. In order to establish the mode of production that was going to be beneficial to the entire society, the polygamous form was preferred. Since this form of marriage emphasized collective responsibility, communal ownership of farms, wealth and economic benefit of the extended family.

The claim that polygamy should be sustained because women are more than men in Africa continues to be speculated in some societies even today. However, some statistics prove otherwise because the man to woman ratio has not maintained this kind of pattern. In the 2010 Population and Housing Census in Ghana, the resident population was 24,658,823. Males were 12,024,845, representing 48% of the population and the female population was 12,609,133, representing 51% of the population. In numerical terms there was an excess of 609,133 females. This trend was not sustained within the next decade. In February 2020, the population of Ghana according to the World population check barometer (www.worldometer.info) stood at 31,072,940 with 15,749,999 (50.69%) being male and the female population being 15,322,946 (49.31%). This shows that the claim by some that there is an imbalance between female and male population thereby justifying the need for polygamy cannot be substantiated. To look at this kind of reasoning further, we should observe that God continues to create an approximately equal number of males and females and the ratio of women to men has not changed dramatically after the first pair. Despite this thinking, the claim continues to be maintained in many parts of Africa where polygamy is practiced that marriageable women are more numerous than marriageable men. This kind of mindset deserves a further understanding, which Ward provides. According to Ward, "in addition to other factors, the thoughts and beliefs children encounter are controlled, allowing them only

to learn polygamist beliefs, thus blinding children from the existence of life outside polygamy” (Ward, 2004:149). Such children tend to believe that the polygamist lifestyle is the only way out and hence they often end up attached to a polygamous lifestyle (Thobejane, 2014:2). This probably explains why the claim that females are more numerous than males continues to be maintained in some African societies as a justification to continue the practice of polygamy.

Contrary to the view that polygamy absorbs additional women, Koos and Neupert-Wentz are of the view that “polygamy creates a social imbalance where few economically well-off men marry many wives and many poor men marry late or never” (Koos & Neupert-Wentz, 2019:1). Thus, polygamy produces excess men who are willing to raid, plunder and rob their neighbors in order to acquire resources when legitimate sources of acquiring wealth fail in order to marry (Koos & Neupert-Wentz, 2019:1). This idea seems to be supported by Jonathan Rauch who claims that polygamy creates a permanent subclass of young men prone to vice and violence (Rauch, 2006). In the opinion of Rauch, “other things being equal (and, to a good first approximation, they are), when one man marries two women, some other man marries no woman. When one man marries three women, two other men don’t marry. When one man marries four women, three other men don’t marry” (Rauch, 2006). Rauch concludes that monogamy is better than polygamy because it gives everyone a shot at marriage and “polygamy by contrast is a zero-sum game that skews the marriage market so that some men marry at the expense of others” (Rauch, 2006).

Both Rauch and Koos & Neupert-Wentz are convinced that polygamy leads to many males being deprived of wives. Koos and Neupert-Wentz observe that economic factors can make men unable to marry and the desire to acquire wealth in order to marry has a tendency to incite unmarried men to commit crime. Rauch believes that polygamy can cause vice and crime but is not specific on what crime. Despite the claim that women are expensive to come by, Koos and Neupert-Wentz also seem to suggest that women are in short supply as well. But Rauch is convinced that polygamy leads to a shortage of females, thereby depriving others of marrying. These scenarios are possible in different parts of the world and in Africa for that matter. In the case of the research location, what is observed is that economic factors influence marriage but unmarried men are not willing to commit crime against their neighbors in order to acquire wealth to marry. What is quite obvious is that men are willing to elope females from neighbouring communities to serve as wives. This attitude is no doubt a criminal act

since in some occasions such girls or women are already married or affianced to another man of the family's choice.

Polygamy, apart from encouraging vice and crime, is also said to have health implications. Ibiloglu et al, 2018:983 claim that men in polygamy marriages are reported to have more psychiatric problems than their peers in monogamous marriages. A growing number of studies also show that, polygamous marriage is associated with depressive and anxiety disorders, somatization disorders and loss of self (ibid: 983). In her article titled "The problem of polygamy," Zakaria (2014) restates the claim that polygamy is often offered as a solution to the problem of destitute women. And that if every man married four of them, some have stated, then all women would have male guardian, a protector, someone to support them. "The reality" she says "of polygamy, however, is often neither this neat nor this simple". According to her a leading newspaper, *The National*, out of the United Arab Emirates, published news of emerging research that reveals how polygamy is injurious to the mental health of women in such relationships, fostering negative emotions and ultimately creating harmful patterns that detract from having a healthy emotional life. Sringi (2010) found that polygamy perpetuates HIV and AIDS as co-wives compete among themselves at having more children leading to not using any protection (cited in Nyathikazi, 2013:18). Again, a study in Swaziland, by Mbirimtengerenji (2007) cited in (Nyathikazi, 2013:18) found that patriarchy and polygamy are strong in the culture and history of the country, making it difficult for the monarch, King Moswati, and his government to reconcile the cultural norm (i.e., polygamy) and the fight against HIV & AIDS. The study found that HIV & AIDS in sub-Saharan region increases where sexual trade, migration, polygamy and teenage marriages are used to alleviate poverty. According to Mbirimtengerenji (2007) "In eastern Uganda, Kwinkumda village, if a man has one wife, he is considered a bachelor and most women in this area are at risk of HIV & AIDS because of polygamous marriages" (cited in Nyathikazi, 2013:18). A UN study in New Delhi (World Prout Assembly-Polygamous husband behind rise in HIV & AIDS in women, 2006) found that the rising number of HIV & AIDS infection among women in monogamous relationships was passed on by polygamous men (Nyathikazi, 2013:20).

Polygamy also affects children's ability to learn. According to Al-Krenawi (2011) learners in polygamous family more commonly face family stress and mental health issues than those in monogamous families. The risk of psychiatric illness is

particularly acute for first or senior wives in a plural marriage and the children are undoubtedly educationally affected in such scenarios (Al-Krenawi, 2011 quoted in Chikwature, 2016:27). Children in polygamous marriages may face abuse, psychological distress, low self-esteem, and marital discord. According to Elbedour et al, frequent marital conflict and distress can cause emotional harm to these learners through conflict, tension, unequal treatment by the polygamous father and jealousy. These children frequently feel discontented with their families. They are often unable to receive the necessary emotional support from their father in particular. The psychological influences that polygamous life might exert on learners have been considered by several researchers (Elbedour et al., 2012 quoted in Chikwature, 2016:27). According to Chikwature, “belonging to a polygamous family can also create confusion for children and mothers because they belong to multiple family systems including: sub-family, main family, extended family, and the tribe. Polygamy in Zimbabwe has both positive and negative impacts on the education of the children” (Chikwature, 2016:27). Despite the many negative effects of polygamy, Ibiloglu et al observe, “some of the women continue to be involved in polygamous marriage” (Ibiloglu et al, 2018:983).

Some commentators have observed that most African men have an urge to marry multiple wives regardless of health related risks, educational and relationship challenges and irrespective of the insistence by the church that monogamy is the most ideal form of marriage. Such views maintain that a man’s desire for more than a single woman is a human instinct that the man is not able to resist. And since this is a natural instinct, God cannot be disassociated from the practice of polygamy. In this regard, questions that naturally come to mind include whether men, and for that matter African men, are by nature polygamous. Are men impressed by what they see in women or what they hear women say? Are men attracted to women because of what they know about them? However, could this partly be conditioned by living in a polygamous society where a man can have several partners? And could it also be partly conditioned by a lack of understanding of the possibility of females being attracted to other men? This is because many instincts are conditioned by what we experience in other people. This leads to a learning of what we should strive for and what we should curb and turn away from.

God must not be held responsible for every natural instinct, because otherwise we would have to hold him responsible for many sins that seem to be instinctual, such

as greed, violence, stealing, lying and cheating. But these questions among others are necessary because of the unpredictable manner in which the first man responded when the first woman was presented to him for the first time by God (Genesis 2:23) and by the continuous attitudes of men towards women even today. The statement made by the man when the woman had not yet spoken and the man was not privy to how she was made, triggers many thoughts on the attitude of men towards women. One would have expected to hear a surprised man asking God what he was presenting to him that looked almost like him. Rather, the man is quite excited, declaring that “this is the bone of my bones and the flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). Obviously, the woman had not spoken yet and the two humans were just seeing each other for the first time. How would the man have reacted if the women were two? The attitude of the man upon seeing the woman for the first time suggests that with regard to women, men are influenced by what they see in them rather than what they know about them and are likely to get intimate with more than one woman. This opinion leaves men at the point of decision making, and different men are likely to make different decisions on how many women to get intimate with. This is probably why among other attitudes, Paul advises men in Galatia to have self-control (Galatians 5:22-23 RSV) because God gave a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7). And a man without self-control is compared to a city broken into and left without walls (Proverbs 25:28).

The most popular Christian belief about marriage is that God created the man first but caused a deep sleep to befall him, thus allowing God to take one of the man’s ribs to make the woman (Genesis 2:21-22). This story has gained so much popularity among some Christians and scholars and has been used to justify why God’s original intention for marriage is monogamy. However, other Christians argue that this popular Christian belief undermines the significance of the first creation narrative in Genesis 1:27 where nothing is said about the use of a rib as the material for the making of a woman. At least, this view brings women at parity with men instead of the former view which makes women by-products of men. Therefore, to claim that the rib of man was used to make the woman to suggest monogamy does not seem sufficiently convincing to most ordinary readers. This claim notwithstanding, Christians who maintain that God intends monogamy in these verses argue that the first creation story is a summary, gives no details about the rib, emphasizes different things, and that the two accounts do not conflict with each other but stress different aspects. The second account is said to be more detailed, takes a closer look at Adam, the garden and the creation of the woman.

Additionally, the second account does not speak of Chapter One happening before Chapter Two. But considering that today men have to choose from a variety of women without God dramatically showing them who is made from their rib seems to lead to many undesirable relationship challenges after marriage. One would expect that once married to the right woman who represents one's rib, there should not be grounds leading to the search for another partner or the quest for an additional wife. Rather than thinking that one must marry a woman made from his rib, other factors have been suggested to account for sustained marriage relationship. For instance, every couple must find things about each other that they did not know before marriage. These things need adaptation, listening, talking and negotiating the best way to work together.

Among the Israelites even up to the time of Jesus, marriage was not based strictly on the 'concept of the rib'. Instead, Karris observes that during the time of Christ there were two schools of thought, namely, the schools of Hillel and Shammai. They had different interpretations of why a man will desire to end a relationship with the wife (divorce). The Shammai school restricted divorce to the case of adultery on the woman's part while the Hillel school allowed a woman to be divorced if she was a bad cook or not beautiful (Karris, 1988:889). Keener agrees with Karris when he says that "the school of Hillel discussing the grounds for divorce argued that a man could divorce his wife if he found another woman more attractive than his current wife" (Keener, 2014:93). It is obvious then that a woman could be divorced by the husband if she was considered to be a bad cook, not beautiful or committed adultery. This is probably why Jesus' response on the issue of divorce in Matthew 19:4-9 was revealing and emphatic: "Haven't you read, he replied, that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife'". At least, this union would serve as a check on the man. But the challenge faced by Israelites during the time of the Shammai and Hillel schools about marriage is present today when men attach various reasons to why they have not married the woman representing their rib, a reason they must marry an additional wife who is hoped will provide the needed satisfaction.

Though not everything that is attested implies acceptance, people had cause to divorce and polygamy was practiced as a rare exception in post-exilic Israel (Instone-Brewer, 2000). "The practice began to be criticized and declined during the intertestamental period" (McClintock et al., 1889:59). But "there is some extant evidence of polygamy being practiced even in the New Testament period" (McClintock

et al., 1889:365). The Dead Sea Scrolls show that several smaller Jewish sects forbade polygamy before and during the time of Jesus (Vermes, 1975:76). It is evident that polygamy was practiced but was gradually losing popularity. It is not certain why this practice was declining. However, Epstein observes that “the rabbinic writings have many negative comments against polygamy and states that “He who multiplies wives multiplies witchcraft.” He also notes that polygamy creates strife in a house. As to how many wives a man was permitted to marry, he says, “no more than four wives are permitted so that each gets their conjugal rights at least each month” (Epstein, 1927:19). This is why despite acknowledging the challenges posed by polygamy, some supporters of polygamy claim that God did not openly rebuke people for practicing polygamy in the Old Testament but rather advised the Israelites to treat wives and their children with care. In Deuteronomy 21:15-17, the advice is given not to be “unfair to the sons of your wives” and when an additional wife is taken “the food, clothing and marital rights of the current wife must not be diminished” (Exodus 21:10). These texts do not seem to prohibit polygamy but only provide some form of guidance for its practice. And though in some way they suggest the likelihood that one wife will be favoured over the other, no sense of condemnation for polygamy is directly implied. What seems obvious is that appropriate care and justice need to be shown if a man has two or more wives. The Bible overtly condemns the practice of polygamy only in the case where marriage interferes with the relationship between the polygamist and his creator, as in the case of King Solomon (1 Kings 11:4).

There are views that the phrase in Genesis 2:24 (“the two shall become one”) generally refers to monogamy, but Holst argues that “what keeps the polygamous family together is not the number but the love and desire to live together as one unit of a family” (Holst, 1967:209). While overlooking other polygamous living arrangements where the wives live separately, Holst seems to suggest that what matters in marriage is not the number of women but the quality of life maintained within the family, and that a peaceful and united polygamous family is more pleasing to God than a monogamous relationship in which there is no peace. Holst’s view echoes the claim that, whereas some monogamous relationships succeed, the same can also be said about polygamous relationships. “Clinging to a wife” (Genesis 2:24) is another closely related phrase that some scholars have associated with monogamy. But Coogan disagrees, stating that “such a claim is a belittlement of the historical setting from which the creation story is derived” (Coogan, 2006:12). He argues that “the purpose of this second creation story is

to answer in a somewhat folkloric way, some perennial human questions such as: why humans are afraid of snakes, why people wear clothes, why different sexes are attracted to each other, why life is so difficult and child birth so painful and why people have to die” (Coogan, 2006:12). In the opinion of Coogan, “this phrase from Genesis 2:24 only explains why men and women are naturally attracted to each other and underpins the sexual desire that every human being has for the other” (Coogan, 2006:12). Both Holst and Coogan seem to suggest that the two becoming one or clinging to a wife imply a relationship that is desirable and acceptable among the members of such a relationship, and may warrant the question whether polygamy is capable of doing the same.

However, if the story in Genesis 2:24 is folklore as suggested by Coogan, it would render the entire debate on polygamy using this text redundant. But it is equally important to note that folklores are stories that convey universal and perennial truths in a way that draws the listener into an empathetic experience of the truth. If the Adam and Eve story works like folklore, then it is a universal story about human beings and we should only respond empathetically as we experience it. No doubt the story echoes in human lives and hearts, making them feel that the story is true because it reveals the relationship between human beings. Granted also, that the Adam and Eve story is historical, it will equally be important to note that some human needs vary from age to age and from one generation to another. Therefore, though some cultures and people, such as the case of Israel, may have moved away from the practice of polygamy for obvious reasons (Instone-Brewer, 2000:77), other people and cultures may continue to uphold polygamy, maybe, for equally important reasons including their own understanding on the will of God concerning marriage.

The levirate practice, where the wife of a deceased brother was married by a living brother in order to bear children for the latter, was a general practice among the Israelites. Parrinder challenges those who argue that polygamy is not endorsed by God to pay attention to this practice. He claims that, “If the levirate system was adulterous before God it would contradict his holiness to permit it even in the case of levirate marriage. It was a cultural form of marriage that was permitted by God” (Parrinder, 1958:69). Okorie (1995:3) agrees with Parrinder when he cites a widely-held African belief that levirate marriage constitutes a means of taking care of widows. He notes that “Levirate marriage is seen as a way of protecting both the widow and her children, who will be taken care of by the younger brother of the deceased. Moreover, it is a way of ensuring stability and that the widow will not become part of another family, taking the

wealth of the deceased with her.” Nkhwashu (2012) cites the example of a young widow who fled from the prospect of being forced to marry her late husband’s younger brother, taking with her the compensation paid out to her by her late husband’s former employer. “The levirate system (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) is therefore a mandated form of marriage endorsed by God” (Duncan, 1975:36). “Conversely, there was a strong sense of duty to protect and care for widows, and custom demanded that the nearest relative, in particular a childless brother, had to take the widow into his home and treat her as his own wife and raise children through her in the name of his brother” (Boadt, 1984:255). Shepherd (2000) argues that regarding the levirate practice, the position of the brother-in-law, whether he should be a younger or older brother, is not specified. The most important requirement is that he should be related to the deceased by blood. In addition, his marital status, whether single or married, does not matter. As a matter of fact, the levirate brother is required to take up his brother’s widow regardless of his marital status (in Olanisebe, 2014:7).

To prove that the levirate law was mandatory, the consequence of refusing to marry a dead brother’s wife (whether the person was already married or not) was viewed as a grievous omission and shame. However, women in Israel were noted to have limited rights, and refusing to marry the wife of a deceased brother’s wife was one of the occasions on which the woman was called upon to exercise her right. The wife of the deceased brother had the right to express her displeasure to the brother who refused to marry her by pulling the sandal off his foot, and spitting in his face while saying “so shall it be done to a man who does not want to build up his brother’s house” (Deuteronomy 25:7-10). She would do this in the presence of the elders of the community. Therefore, to refuse to participate in the levirate system was not only inviting curses on one’s head but also bringing shame to the defiant. The brother of the deceased considered himself to be under obligation to perform not just a brotherly and cultural responsibility, but also as fulfilling a divine command. Refusing to do so attracted both a physical and divine penalty (Genesis 38:9). The brother of the deceased is therefore not guilty for taking on another woman whom he has had no previous affection for, except maybe for some brother-sister affection. Indeed, under the levirate law, the first-born child was said to be for the deceased brother but the living brother had great affection for all the children and vice versa because they knew who their real father was. If polygamy means having more than one wife, then this is polygamy encouraged by God through the levirate law. Therefore, despite contrary opinions that

the levirate system was an abnormal form of marriage, especially that only the first-born son was for the deceased brother, it does not take away the fact that the system encouraged the marriage of additional wives, and those who practiced it were mostly happy to do so because in their view it was endorsed by God.

The practice of polygamy during the New Testament era does not appear to be as obvious as it was in the Old Testament times (especially in the Pentateuch). Additionally, while a lot has been claimed to have been said about marriage in the New Testament, comments on polygamy do not appear to be clear, and this has contributed significantly to varying speculations on the issue of polygamy in the New Testament church. It is probably due to this lack of clarity on polygamy in the New Testament that comments on issues of marriage are usually quoted from the Old Testament for teaching in the New Testament. As alluded to by Kunhiyop, “where the content of the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ overlap, appeal to the Old Testament is appropriate” (Kunhiyop, 2008:227). Therefore, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament to confirm and clarify many of his teachings because he was fulfilling the law and not condemning it. He did not fail to recognize the influence of the Old Testament on the lives of the people of his era. But it is also probably feasible to argue that this does not represent a Christian view but rather a Jewish view. For instance, as Christians we do not need to sacrifice lambs, goats and other animals and birds to God in a temple, because the New Testament teaches that it is no longer necessary because of Christ’s sacrifice. If we are Jewish and reject Jesus’ sacrifice for us, we can continue the Old Testament practices. But if we are Christians, we take the teaching of the New Testament as having priority. That means that we accept the sacrifice of Jesus and must not continue the Jewish sacrifices. Since this is not cultural, it is an important priority if we accept Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus affirmed many parts of the Old Testament as continuing in importance for Christians, but the New Testament clearly rejects others. Therefore, the point of authority has shifted from the Old Testament to the New Testament and the New Testament never refers directly and clearly to polygamy. So there is probably no good basis to read polygamy into New Testament texts. There is also no evidence to say that Jesus or any other New Testament writer affirmed any part of the Old Testament teaching or practice of polygamy. The only marriage text brought into the New Testament is Genesis 2:24; Jesus affirmed that text only as having continuing application.

However, Christians cannot be said to belong only to the New Testament since both Testaments are canonized and widely used. And since the life of the church revolves mainly around the Bible, the aspects of Scripture which have the tendency to influence behavior such as those on polygamy should not be based on scriptural verses and interpretations that appear ambiguous but on those that are obvious both to the scholar and ordinary reader of the Bible. This is why it is challenging to shift the discussion on polygamy away from the Old Testament despite claims that the New Testament represents a new dispensation. It is probably for this reason that Hillman argues that the New Testament has no single text relevant in discussing polygamy. He maintains that “polygamy is simply not treated directly and explicitly by the New Testament writers who quite naturally, under the cultural ethos of their particular time and place in history, accepted monogamy as a normal point of departure for any discussion on marriage” (Hillman, 1975:139). Thus, Hillman’s argument leads to only one logical conclusion, namely, that any claim that the New Testament talks about polygamy may be based on inferences or implications. Other scholars who share Hillman’s view include Mann (1989:19), Parrinder (1958:44), Trowell (1956:17), and Taylor (1964:46), who suggest that attention should be paid to the Old Testament when finding answers to the issue of polygamy.

Additionally, since the Christian constituency cuts across several traditions and different people in various locations, it is important to pay attention to the aspects of the Bible which speak directly to the cultures and practices of people. Professor Jaroslav J. Pelikan suggests that “liturgy must adjust itself to the state of spirituality and of the culture among a particular people” (Abbott, 1966:179). It is for this reason that some scholars disagree with those who view polygamy as a sign of unfaithfulness. Mbiti (1969:143) and Kathide (2007:40) both agree that polygamy, should instead be viewed as a preventive measure against unfaithfulness in some societies, allowing a man who worked far from home to take one wife with him to his place of work (possibly a distant city or town) while another wife or other wives continued taking care of children and the household in the rural area. In such a situation the husband would, as a result, be unlikely to have concubines or frequent female prostitutes in town. Maillu (1988:9) also suggests that “if a wife is less interested in sex than her husband, this is a justifiable reason for him to take an additional wife”. Okorie (1995:3) expresses a similar sentiment, suggesting that “polygamy results in less temptation for a man to commit adultery”. These may sound like clearly patriarchal views of sex which promote male

supremacy and perpetuate the gender imbalance in society, but the reality in many African societies at present is that men are considered superior to women, and this is not debatable among most African cultures. This cultural bias is so deep to the extent that when a man in the line of birth comes after even several women in a family, he is prioritized in decision-making meetings over the women who are senior.

It is thus progressively challenging to think that polygamy is bad and monogamy is good or vice versa. Duncan opines that “we cannot use the overall character of a polygamist as a criterion for judging whether polygamy is wrong or good” (Duncan, 1967:28-29). And rightly so, it is observed that monogamy also has its own issues to deal with. It is debatable whether God created a culture for Israel or that God tried to refine an already existing culture. But Haviland explains that “every human being is a member of a culture and a society, because every human culture exists within human society” (Haviland, 1975:14). For this reason, the institution of marriage is influenced by the culture and society, “and the form it takes is part and parcel of the culture of that people” (Omogbe, 1979:368). “Marriage, for that matter, is perceived, chosen and lived within the concrete socio-cultural milieu” (Medonca, 2009:20). This understanding presupposes that polygamy should not simply be branded as bad, and that polygamous relationships and culture are not to be understood and considered apart from each other. In other words, the culture and need of a people would determine their attitude towards polygamy. This suggests why whereas some cultures view polygamy as detestable, they see nothing wrong with divorce and remarriage. On the other hand, some cultures detest divorce and remarriage, and are of the view that polygamy establishes bonds of relationships and ensures that women are not married only to be dumped over insignificant domestic conflicts.

In many African cultures to divorce a wife is to set oneself against a whole clan or tribe. This is because in Africa, where polygamy is mostly practiced, there is a belief that “marriage is not just a union of two people, it unites the families of the couple” (Guy, 2004:84). Marriage is not just an affair of the man and the woman, as may be differently expressed in the biblical perspective, since the bond that unites them as husband and wife also unites at the same time their two lineage groups (Banungwiiri, 2020:88). In Africa, marriage goes even beyond clans to include tribes and communities. “In marriage, the communities involved share their very existence; in reality they become one people, ‘one thing’, as Africans themselves would put it” (Magesa in Guy, 2004:84). It is therefore easier for an African man to marry an

additional wife which increases his social network than to have a divorce which sets him against another clan, tribe or community. This is why no ethnic group in Ghana favours divorce even though the number of divorce cases in the country is on the rise (Banungwiiri, 2020:13). But Lyimo has a different view when he says marriage is absolutely personal and cannot be replaced. Therefore, only the parties themselves can consent to marry each other (Lyimo, 2011:84). Lyimo's view notwithstanding Blum explains:

Polygamy as a form of marriage does not exist by itself in a vacuum but within the concrete context of a human society with its own pros and cons. Hence, in order to understand and appreciate polygamy in the sub-Saharan African context, one must not view marriage in isolation. Rather, it has to be examined as an integral part of the whole of a particular culture and society (Blum, 1989:24).

Meanwhile, Hillman is of the view that there is no difference between polygamy and divorce and remarriage. For him, "they are both forms of polygamy because a series of marriages and divorces and remarriage is serial monogamy which is another form of polygamy" (Hillman, 1975:10).

The views of those who believe the Bible prohibits polygamy may be summarized as follows:

- i. Using Genesis 2:24-25 as the main scriptural reference they argue that God clearly designed monogamous marriage for human beings.
- ii. That because of original sin, ancient Israel violated God's original design for marriage and this deviation should not be sustained;
- iii. That the Old Testament reveals several consequences of polygamous marriages including family quarrels, disharmony and murder;
- iv. That despite Israel's disobedience to the marriage plans and design of God, God still loved them;
- v. That the Bible continues to be the best textbook for the guidelines on marriage;
- vi. That missionaries to Africa were resilient on the stance against polygamy despite being opposed greatly by the attitude of Africans who resisted missionary teaching on monogamy as the most ideal marriage practice.

In contrast, views of the proponents of polygamy as discussed may be summarized as follows:

- a. That men are naturally polygamous;
- b. That polygamy is not contrary to natural law;
- c. That the availability of more women for marriage implies more and better opportunities for men to choose;
- d. That polygamy was accepted and widely practiced among ancient Israelites and their neighbours without a feeling of shame or guilt;
- e. That chosen men of God were noted to have practiced polygamy without being condemned by either God himself or the society in which they lived and worked for God;
- f. That God never openly rebuked polygamy but rather provided guidelines for its practice including the encouragement of some form of polygamy in the name of levirate marriage;
- g. That the interpretation of some biblical verses as promoting monogamy has been inadequate;
- h. That the Genesis story on the creation of man and woman used by many to condemn polygamy is folklore and may not be taken seriously;
- i. That the New Testament has no clear views against polygamy but the Old Testament is clear in support of the practice of polygamy;
- j. That unclear New Testament views are better understood against Old Testament views;
- k. That both polygamy and monogamy have their unique weaknesses and strengths;
- l. That polygamy is a way of life of a people and condemning it means condemning a people with the right to live and associate freely.

2.3 Conclusion

Knowing and appreciating the divergent views on whether the Bible accepts or disagrees with the practice of polygamy is both relevant and critical in finding a lasting solution to the issue of polygamy in the church among African Christians. The views expressed by both sides of the debate on whether polygamy is accepted by God or not show that both monogamy and polygamy present unique characteristics worthy of consideration. These considerations require a deliberate attempt at treating both

polygamy and monogamy with an openness devoid of hasty and quick generalizations from both sides of the debate. This kind of approach can be helpful in dealing with issues on polygamy, especially in a changing and diversified community of Christian believers in this century and beyond. This is especially relevant considering the proliferation of several other interests and pressure groups on sexuality and freedom of association/relationships.

Since both Christian attitudes and the African way of life are expressions of peoples' understanding of their maker, it is important to pay attention to the feelings of both parties without necessarily substituting one for the other. It is true that culture is dynamic and the ability to transform appropriately to meet new trends and circumstances cannot be overemphasized. Bediako opines, "Culture is not just artifacts; it is also history and tradition. Culture in the view of the African is the understanding of God's perspective on what Africans are in the world" (Bediako, 1995:12). No doubt this view has continued to influence Africans even in the church. Many have held strongly to their African understanding on marriage and made deliberate attempts to influence the Christian approach to marriage. They have claimed that, "if you destroy the African marriage system around which culture revolves, you destroy the entire society since marriage is the foundation for man's social relationship in Africa" (TAG, 1994:49). Some have reasoned alongside Bloomberg that the Apostle Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 7:17 that, "Everyone must be allowed to live the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him" (Bloomberg, 1994:145) should be acknowledged. This claim asserts that whatever state we are in when we come to the Lord, we should function faithfully in that state without immediately seeking to change it. This advice by Paul should not be used to alter the marriage practice upheld by the church but should rather be seen as an appeal to Christian evangelists to understand that it will not be accepted immediately by African Christian converts. Until a people understand why change is relevant and necessary (especially, from a religion that is considered as foreign), change will be delayed much longer.

It is therefore not surprising that polygamy has persisted and "different forms of the practice continue to emerge among some Africans as a reaction to the Church's continuing effort to end polygamy" (Auli, 2004:35). The anticipation that some socio-economic factors such as poverty and western education will serve to demotivate the practice of polygamy have not yet yielded the desired results in most parts of Africa. Muthengi confirms this when he says, "the long-standing assumption that polygamy

will disappear with a rise in economic variables has become a fuss as polygamy is rather on the ascendancy ... and a re-examination of the church's view on polygamy is very necessary" (Muthengi, 1995:56). Hastings (1973:72) is of the view that "the Church must proclaim a steadfast but compassionate polygamy not an intolerant one and must do so in a way that makes manifest, instead of obscuring the central gospel precepts of justice, mercy and love." Both Muthengi and Hastings are calling for a better and new approach to dealing with the issue of polygamy in the church which includes the paying of more attention to how marriage is viewed and taught in the church.

Polygamy is rooted deeply in many sub-Saharan cultures. It is a social institution that has been in existence for many centuries, and unless the church proves that what it is offering on marriage is a better alternative, the level of resistance it has offered thus far, as attested by some scholars, should be a matter of concern. Therefore, it will be necessary to undergo an exegesis on some key texts from Scripture as this will prove relevant in providing the basis for any contribution to the debate. This exegesis will also help in suggesting the most appropriate approaches that will help resolve the issue of polygamy in the church, especially in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale.

CHAPTER THREE: AN EXEGESIS OF SOME BIBLICAL TEXTS ON POLYGAMY AND MONOGAMY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter surveys major biblical texts on marriage and focuses particularly on polygamy and monogamy from both the Old and the New Testaments. The importance of marriage to the Ancient Israelites is very clear in the Bible but different scenarios of marriage ceremonies have been given. Vine points out that among the Jews the “marriage supper” took place in the husband’s house and was the great social event in the family life. It is likely that customs varied from one location to another or that the nature of a wedding was determined by the social status of the family. They probably also varied in different periods of time. While the wedding in Matthew 22:1-14 indicates opulence, the wedding at Cana exhibits the way in which a marriage feast was conducted in a more humble home (Vine, 2000:394). Instone-Brewer (2000:76) observes that “while there is no evidence of a polyandrous state in primitive Jewish society, polygamy seems to have been a part of traditional Jewish teaching and practice, though in practice, most men would have had only one wife for financial reasons. It was, therefore, practiced mostly by kings”. How the Hebrew Scriptures view the practice of polygamy will serve a good purpose of determining whether their neighbors had an influence on their institution of marriage, especially as regards the practice of polygamy.

In this discussion, the description of polygamy will include the relationship between one man and two or more women whether married legally or out of common practice. This means that concubinage, where servants bear children for their master or where maidservants are given out by their mistresses as second wives to their husbands, would count as polygamy. Also, included in this discussion for polygamy is the levirate marriage, where a woman had the right to marry her late husband’s brother if he lived in the same town (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Some of the texts to be examined will include the following from both the Old and New Testaments that deal with inferred or real instances of polygamy and their effects:

(a) From the Old Testament passages:

Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:24; Genesis 4:19-24; Genesis 16:1-6; Genesis 21:1-4; Genesis 26:34-35; 27:46; 28:6-9; 29:30; 1 Samuel 1:2-8; 2 Samuel 13:1-39; Isaiah 3:25-4:1; Hosea 2:2-3:5; Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

(b) From the New Testament passages:

Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:9; Luke 16:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 1 Timothy 3:2,12; Titus 1:6.

3.2 Marriage in the Old and New Testaments

The Old Testament provides numerous early perspectives on marriage. Genesis 1:27-28 gives an important account of marriage as designed and instituted by God. Marriage is claimed to have been instituted for the good of mankind. The author of Genesis notes that God made humans in the image of himself: “so 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 god said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...’” (RSV Genesis 1:27-28). Also, Genesis 2:24 states, “Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (RSV Genesis 2:24). For many people, such as O’Donovan (1975:290) and Gharthey (2011:13), Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:24 are statements for the foundation of marriage. These verses are important in discussing marriage because they drop the hint that the unity of husband and wife takes pre-eminence over that of a man and his kindred (Hastings, 1973:63). According to Macleod, “Before marriage, the man’s obligations are to his parents, but now, they are to his wife” (Macleod, 2002:12). Perhaps this suggests the greatest challenge of the Bible to an African society. But this is not only a preserve of Africans because in regard to European society in the past, and even for many Christians of every age, the husband-wife relationship has in many ways continued to take second place to that of the man and his lineage group (Hastings, 1973:63-64). But it is noted that the institution of marriage is older than parenthood. This is because the first man and woman were not created as parents but as husband and wife. The couple in marriage becomes “one flesh”, a phrase that plays a further key role in any meaningful discussion on polygamy. Since man and woman were created in the image of God, they were to be the visible signs of God on earth.

Wright (1983:17), Grunlan (1999:34) and other commentators speculate that there are overtones in Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:24 suggesting God's intention to establish one form of marriage, which is monogamy. This line of thought is premised on the understanding that God created only one woman, meaning that he did not intend for man to have several marriage partners at the same time. However, it is difficult to deny that in the circumstance such as the one at creation, the man had no other options than to be united to only the one woman given to him by God. But as people began to multiply in number, men had options to choose from a multiplicity of women. Genesis 6:1-2 states that "When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose" (RSV). This may not necessarily mean an increase in women over men but that there were now more than one woman to create opportunity for choice. But Instone-Brewer argues that "based on Deuteronomy 17:17, the command to multiply does not imply to multiply wives" (Instone-Brewer, 2000:85). This notwithstanding, one observes that whatever is in multiples no doubt affects the attitude of people towards such things as noted in Genesis 6:1-2.

Again, the two creation stories provide more than one interpretation for both the ordinary reader and the researcher regarding God's will on the number of wives to marry. Whereas one talks of God using a rib of a man to make the woman (RSV Genesis 2:21), the other account (RSV Genesis 1:26f) is silent regarding what material God used to create the woman. However, it is generally noted that the creation story in Genesis 1 is on a macro scale so it is not expected that such details would be given. The second account in Genesis 2 focuses closely on the man in the Garden and is intimate and detailed. Despite these observations on the two accounts, for the ordinary reader, the easiest means of verifying the will of God on marriage is derived from God's reactions to those in post-creation events who married more than one wife.

The statement made by the man at creation in Genesis 2:23 has also been viewed in various ways. The most popular argument is that because the woman was formed from the rib or side of man, and because the man said "This at last is flesh from my flesh," (Genesis 2:23), then the two must be considered as one flesh (Genesis 2:24). The text suggests that marriage is indissoluble because what God has put together no one must separate except in the event of death. The two statements from Genesis 2:23 and 24 suggest that a woman and man shall become one flesh and shall live together till

death parts them. The union symbolizes the complete identification of two people with a common purpose—that of multiplying to fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). Macleod describes this marriage relationship as an intimate, personal, spiritual, and physical union (Macleod, 2002:13). This view no doubt is in line with the teaching of the church, which emphasizes the role of love in any Christian marriage. But in many African cultures where the current research is situated, the fate of a marriage is not determined by the love the husband has for the wife. What sustains the union effectively is her ability to give birth within an expected time frame. What this implies is that a wife who delays in giving birth might be encouraging the husband to take on another wife with the hope that the second wife is able to produce a child, preferably a male child. This may be considered a non-Christian act or attitude, but what is generally observed is that this belief has significant influence on African Christian attitudes towards marriage and cannot be overlooked. A strong desire for children in the African context is debatably a recipe for either divorce or multiple marriages, the latter being the most likely.

It is undeniable that the Old Testament texts contain examples of both monogamous and polygamous marriages, and nowhere in the texts is there any obvious rebuke of polygamy except in the issue of misconduct in the case of King David (2 Samuel 11) or excesses such as the case of King Solomon (1 Kings 11). Some laws in the Old Testament also imply the acceptance of polygamy. Instone-Brewer argues that polygamy is implied in the case where a man who seduces a virgin (Exodus 22:16) or rapes her (Deuteronomy 22:28f) must marry her, because it does not state that the man must be unmarried (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75). God in the design of marriage appears to have over time regulated the standards for the institution of marriage. And what is obvious is that God's purpose for establishing marriage does not seem to be limited by time. But this does not imply that the fall of mankind has affected God's original plan for his relationship with other humans nor affected the marriage plans for humanity. Looking back into the past it is noted that the first record of polygamous marriage in Genesis 4:19 was carried out by Lamech, a descendant of Cain. But Lamech is said to have been a violent man (Genesis 4:23), and this casts doubts on the credibility of Lamech in adhering to the marriage plan of God. In Seth's line, down to and including Noah, there is no mention of polygamy. The case of Abraham continues to engage scholarly debate as to whether he practiced polygamy. These two instances sustain the debate on the original plan of God in marriage.

This notwithstanding, the importance of marriage has been sustained throughout the Old Testament times and beyond. And it is for this reason that important references to marriage exist in the New Testament as well. This means that marriage has continued beyond the Old Testament to play a very significant role in the life of the New Testament generation and remains a relevant issue in the mind of the Creator today, and that God's son Jesus in the New Testament clarifies the meaning of marriage in God's mind and explains truths on marriage and other significant life issues that were misinterpreted over several generations for personal and other interests (John 14:6). The first mention of marriage in the New Testament references the wedding at Cana in Galilee (John 2:1-12). When Jesus was invited to this wedding he chose to attend with his disciples. It is important to note that the mother of Jesus was physically present at this wedding and a request she made brought significance to the marriage ceremony. The couple was in trouble because the wine was running out. Jesus granted the request of his mother by changing water to wine. This is said to be Jesus' first miracle, which carries potential lessons.

Though some argue that Jesus was establishing a theology of marriage, others claim that it was not really Jesus' intention to establish a theology of marriage at this particular time. Ibegbu (1982:126) argues that Jesus did not capitalize on the wedding event to furnish us with his theology on marriage. Rather, "Jesus was expressing his view on how marriage should be understood and treated". Flanagan, in contrast, maintains that Jesus established a theology of marriage here. According to him, "Jesus' miracle demonstrated we are now in a new era, a new dispensation. What changed in this incident was not simply water, but water for Old Testament ceremonial washings. The changing of water into wine signifies the arrival through Jesus of the new messianic age" (Flanagan, 1982:12). In similar thinking, Saint Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "The old things have passed away, behold, new things have come". It is, however, uncertain whether this suggests a different approach to marriage that is apart from what was practiced in the Old Testament.

There is also another implication in Jesus' attendance at the wedding ceremony. Though there is no evidence of Jesus being married, his attendance at the wedding and his reaction to the request of his mother at the ceremony suggest his endorsement of marriage. Ibegbu maintains: "not with words did he teach his theology on marriage but with his presence, which is both significant and active. Significant because by gracing

the occasion with his presence, it means that he approved of marriage. And active not only because he was present but because he took the opportunity to perform his first miracle at the request of his mother, by changing water into wine” (Ibegbu, 1982:126-127). But Ibegbu’s claim does not suggest polygamy and no polygamous marriages are recorded or alluded to in the Gospels or the whole of the New Testament. The context in the New Testament, where polygamy is never mentioned, suggests that this marriage was not polygamous. However, this act saved the bride and the bridegroom from embarrassment. No hint has been provided in the story regarding whether the bridegroom was making his first or subsequent wedding, so we only have the New Testament’s monogamous context. Apparently, what mattered for Jesus was that a wedding was taking place of which he approved. But why he hesitated before acting leaves room for speculation such as whether the marriage conflicted with his ideals or whether this was the right time to perform a miracle.

Saint Paul’s understanding of marriage is also important for Christian marriage in particular. According to Karris, Paul’s understanding of marriage shows the ecclesiastical significance of Christ’s self-sacrifice (Karris, 1988:1196). The husband is challenged to do all within his power to sacrifice for his wife. The most endearing sacrifice the man will make is to love and provide for his wife. This is the type of love Christ had for the church. In any Christian marriage, love is not an option, but a requirement. If the underlying factor for marriage is love, the elements of 1 Corinthians 13 as indicated by Saint Paul are very significant. This chapter reveals that apart from issues exclusive to each type of relationship, these matters are also important in marriage: patience, kindness, not being envious, not boastful, not proud, not self-seeking, not easily angered, not keeping a record of wrongs, not delighting in evil, always protecting, always trusting, always hoping, always persevering in a love that never ends (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8). While husbands are called upon to love their wives, wives are challenged to respect their husbands. Respect for the husband is therefore viewed as a necessary ingredient in any Christian marriage. However, respect is reciprocal, as stated in Ephesians 5:21. Husbands are bound by love to show respect to their wives as well. This reciprocal respect cannot be overlooked in marriage, but what remains unresolved is to what extent the number of wives involved in a marriage is likely able to affect the reciprocal respect for one another in the relationship. All the New Testament instructions relating to ‘one another’ are not specifically written in

relationship to marriage but they are fundamental for all Christian relationships and must therefore be applied to a greater extent to a Christian understanding of marriage.

There are 59 ‘one another’ instructions in the New Testament that every Christian is expected to do on behalf of the family of Christ. ‘One another’ is two words in English but it is only one word in Greek: ἀλλήλων. It is used 100 times in the New Testament and 47 of these in 94 verses of the New Testament give instruction to followers of Christ. Sixty percent (60%) of these commands are said to have been made by Paul. One third of the ‘one another’ commands deal with the unity of the church (e.g., Mark 9.50; John 6.43; Romans 12.16); one third of them instruct Christians to love one another (e.g., John 13.34; Galatians 5.13; 1 Peter 5.14; Romans 12.10) and about 15% of these verses stress an attitude of humility and deference among believers (e.g., Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5). These verses reveal a common theme centred on unity, love and an attitude of humility. These themes hold the church together as a single unit or family. Thus, these same themes are relevant in every Christian marriage if that marriage must sustain and bear good fruit. Thus, love implies a willingness to sacrifice for one another; unity expresses the willingness to live together in peace and harmony and the ability to forgive one another; and humility refers to self-worth and respect for one another. A question is: Can these attitudes be present in a polygamous relationship?

Of special interest is the fact that the Epistle to the Ephesians is one of the epistles that circulated around the turn of the first and second centuries CE in Paul’s name, offering, among other things, codes of conduct similar to traditional Hellenistic Roman mores. Belz is of the view that “the Epistle to the Ephesians stands out for the way it deliberately rewrites the household code of Colossians, a letter also purportedly from Paul, and adds to the more conventional injunction on wifely subordination in Colossians 3:18, an insistence on the mutual subordination of married partners” (Belz, 2013:1). However, this idea of mutual marital subordination makes the household code of Ephesians unusual for its time, in contrast to more conventional Hellenistic Roman household ethics found in both Christian and non-Christian literature of the period (Belz, 2013:217-218). The differences between Ephesians and Colossians 3:18 become problematic because of evidence derived from later manuscripts of scribal emendations modifying the epistle to conform more to Colossians (Belz, 2013:1). Even though some authors are unsure of its authorship, I am treating it as Pauline, as discussion of

authorship is outside the scope of this thesis. Thus, mutual subordination must be viewed as a matter of reciprocity between husband and wife. In this way, marriage becomes a relationship between partners rather than a master-servant relationship. Thus any relationship that does not consider mutuality as key to the working and functioning of the relationship may not be meeting Paul's standard for marriage.

3.3 Some Old Testament Texts on polygamy

This section looks at some polygamous marriages in the Old Testament to examine whether there are any clues in the telling of the story that the polygamous marriage is regarded as a healthy representation of marriage or whether the polygamous state introduces some ongoing problems. In addition, we need to see how polygamy is viewed and practiced.

King Solomon is touted to have been a lover of women (1 Kings 11:1). He is recorded to have lived with seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. He is also said to have been turned by polygamy into the greatest idolater of his time. This is because he allowed his wives to influence him into turning away from God (1Kgs 11:1-8). The Old Testament records that this attitude of the King affected the relationship between him and God. Some of the reasons for this sour relationship include the following:

- a. He married from nations that God forbade the people of Israel from marrying: "Now King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharaoh, and Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, 'You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you...'" (RSV 1 Kings 11:2).
- b. His wives turned his heart away from God: "For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God..." (1 Kings 11:4)
- c. He built altars for all his foreign wives (1 Kings 11:7-8).
- d. Despite repeated warnings by God to stop his relationships with foreign women, Solomon did not desist from following them (1 Kings 11:9-10).

Surprisingly, despite God's anger against King Solomon, he postpones punishment for him until the reign of his son: "Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, 'Since this has been

your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and would give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son” (1 Kings 11:11-12). It is interesting to note that the person to whom God was showing mercy (David, the father of Solomon) was himself a polygamist. This attitude of God towards King Solomon obviously gives room for speculation as to whether God would have punished Solomon at all if he married from among the Israelites, whom probably God did not forbid him from marrying.

Unlike King Solomon, who deliberately desired to have many wives, the case of Jacob becoming polygamous shows a different dimension. In the first place, it is difficult to say whether Jacob would have desired to practice polygamy if he had not been deceived into practicing it. According to the tradition into which Jacob married his first wife, the senior sister was expected to marry before all her junior sisters. But because Jacob was unaware of this cultural practice, he labored for seven years hoping to marry Rachael only to be compelled to marry Leah (Genesis 29:20). When he was offered the opportunity to do something additional before he would be allowed to marry the woman of his heart, he willingly accepted: “So Jacob went in to Rachael also and indeed he loved Rachael more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years” (Genesis 29:27-28). Up until this point one could argue that Jacob was deceived into polygamy. Jacob had only agreed to marry Rachael, so he had entered a marriage covenant with her. In his mind, he was married to Rachael only and not to Leah. So Laban probably deceitfully placed him (and his own daughters) in a terrible dilemma. Jacob had married Rachael by his agreement and understanding but he accidentally had sex with Leah, who, according to her understanding, agreed to marry Jacob but pretended to be Rachael. So Jacob thought he married Rachael. Leah also thought she married Jacob but she was not honest. Leah knew she was part of her father’s deceitful act but she was also getting her right as elder daughter by custom. We can assume that Rachael also knew of Jacob’s love for her and his intention to marry her. So it is highly likely that Rachael also agreed to marry Jacob. In that case, the only marriage that had likely agreement from both the husband and wife was the marriage between Jacob and Rachael. Laban is the person who created the problem and that problem cannot be described apart from polygamy. Laban thus was responsible for arranging this polygamy.

However, the arrangement for Jacob to marry two women, knowing quite well the love for one could not be guaranteed, was a recipe for trouble in this family. The hatred for Leah created a problem between Rachael and her loving husband: “Now, the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and he opened her womb, but Rachael was barren” (Genesis 29:30-34). Why God did not do the opposite to show his disapproval remains unresolved. But when Rachael saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister. In pain, anguish and frustration, Rachael tells Jacob, “Give me children or else I die” (Genesis 30:1). The statement made by Rachael points to desperation and a willingness to commit suicide, a situation she was likely not to have experienced if she had been the only wife of the husband. It is not out of place to imagine that barrenness is enough reason to cause anguish, but it is also likely that barrenness in a monogamous relationship may present different reactions. Critical issues such as being confronted with a mocking sister and a betrayal of social expectations are two significant stimuli that can break down a strong person such as Rachael. Ellicott (1897) in the Commentary for English Readers agrees with this opinion when he argues, “There is an oriental proverb that a childless person is as good as dead, and this was probably Rachael’s meaning, and not that she should die of vexation” (Ellicott, 1897). This explanation notwithstanding, one cannot underestimate the affliction to a Hebrew woman of being barren (1 Samuel 1:10). Indeed, what is obvious is that polygamy sowed a seed of discontent between two sisters and threatened to be a generational issue as both tried to undo each other. Also, Jacob was in a fix as he tried to deal with a woman he loved and another who was giving him children. This led Jacob marrying the maid of Rachael. But at this point one cannot say that Jacob was once more deceived to go into polygamy. This situation faced by Jacob is similar to that in Africa where even ageing women (who already have children but refrain from sex) are willing to give their maids to their husbands as wives, wishing that the children from that relationship would become her children. As much as this appears unrealistic, it is still assumed to be ideal by those who practice it.

When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite (Genesis 26:34-35). Barker et al note that in addition Esau also married Mahalath, sister of Nebaloth and daughter of Ishmael (Genesis 28:9). The Esau genealogy of Genesis Chapter 36 also mentions three wives, but they are identified as Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah,

daughter of Anah, the Hittite and Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaloth (Genesis 36:2-3). Possibly the list has suffered in transmission, or perhaps alternative names or nicknames are used. It may also be that Esau married more than three wives (Barker et al, 1998:47). Matthew Henry maintains that Esau was foolish in marrying two wives together, and still more in marrying Canaanites, strangers to the blessing of Abraham, and subject to the curse of Noah (Genesis 26:34-35). Another dissatisfaction against the marriage of foreign women is demonstrated here, and it is not surprising that “it grieved his parents that he married without their advice and consent, and more so for marrying among those who were deemed to have no portion in the inheritance of their ancestor Abraham” (Henry, 1685). Commenting on the multiple marriages of Esau, Jamieson *et al.* suggests:

If the pious feelings of Isaac recoiled from the idea of Esau forming a matrimonial connection with a Canaanite woman, that devout patriarch himself would be equally opposed to such a union on the part of his children; and we may easily imagine how much Isaac’s pious heart was wounded, and the family peace destroyed, when his favorite but wayward son brought no less than two idolatrous wives among them—an additional proof that Esau neither desired the blessing nor dreaded the curse of God. These wives never gained the affection of his parents, and this disaffection was considered by God as keeping the chosen family susceptible to the dangers of heathen influence (Jamieson et al, 1871).

Again, we find polygamy being condemned because foreign marriages are concerned and not necessarily because of the number of women involved.

Another incidence of polygamy involves the family of Elkanah. He had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the other was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no child (1 Samuel 1:2). This family was so disunited that even in doing the things of God, Elkanah discriminated between his two wives. Whereas he would give portions of meat to his wife Peninnah and all her sons and daughters, despite loving Hannah, he would give her only one portion because God had closed her womb (RSV 1 Samuel 1:4-5). Hannah is clearly the favourite, yet she receives only one portion. Others have argued that Hannah rather received a double portion. The size of the portion that Hannah received has generated considerable discussion. The King James Version and Geneva Bibles, for instance, have a ‘worthy portion’ which is generally interpreted to mean double. The NIV and the International Inductive Study

Bible (1995) among others say ‘a double portion’ but there is no real authority for these readings except one ancient rabbinic tradition (Porter, 1979:348), though the majority of modern translations agree with the NIV. The NET also agrees with the NIV notes that the Hebrew word אַפַּיִם (two faces) means one portion of two faces, probably inferring a portion that is double the normal size. Obviously, the attitude towards barrenness that usually led to the practice of polygamy is demonstrated in this family. When Hannah could not have a baby and was seriously praying for one, the husband asked her in 1 Samuel 1:8, “Why are you crying, Hannah? Why aren’t you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me—isn’t that better than having ten sons?” In emphasizing his love for Hannah, Elkanah believes that she should be satisfied just for having him. He does not realize that the woman has other needs. Even when he knows her need, he plays it down by describing it as less important than his love for her. Elkanah trivializes the most important need of his barren wife. And from the way he talks, he would not pray for the issues of his wife. It is probable that because he is having children with another wife he trivializes the childlessness of another woman. His own need for children is being met, but her need is not. What polygamy seems to be doing in the family of Elkanah is that it sets the women against each other. It resolves the issue of childlessness, but nowhere is it condemned by God as in the case of Solomon and Esau, probably because they were not foreign women.

King David was already a practicing polygamist before he entered into a relationship with Bathsheba. There is no clear statement, either positive or negative, against King David having more than one wife except for the manner and process. However, when rebuking King David for having an affair with Bathsheba, God says, “I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord to do what is evil in his sight? You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the sons of Ammon” (RSV 2 Samuel 12:8-9).

While one may infer from this that God gave David the multiple wives of Saul to be his wives, it is also likely that God was rather giving these women to David to take care of them since no one would agree to marry them (e.g., the case of Nabal’s wife Abigail). It is also more likely intended to meet, among other things, the man’s desires

and perceived needs such as ego and display of opulence. From these verses a number of issues are worth noting:

- a. God had made available to King David a number of benefits from his master's house, including women.
- b. God was willing to do more for David, perhaps including women, if he had requested.
- c. God was not happy with David because he killed Uriah and took his wife Bathsheba for himself.

God's unhappiness with David does not seem to come primarily from his marriage to an additional wife, but because David did evil in his sight by killing Uriah simply to marry his wife. The New International Bible Commentary describes David as having fallen into a tragically compromising situation (Porter, 1979:360). This attitude was unacceptable to God and he would rebuke David for such an action. Since God had already provided "wives" for David, the suggestion is that the primary issue of marriage in these verses is not to do with multiple relationships but with murder and covetousness, which included adultery. David appears to have made another person's property his own and had to pay for the consequences.

It may be argued that King David seemed to have been enjoying polygamy until the addition of Bathsheba. Events subsequent to David's marriage with her point to what may be described as the consequences of multiple marriages and not restrictions to multiple marriages. Amnon's sordid conduct and Absalom's violence are reported immediately after David's sin, evoking two questions: to what extent did the father's lapse contribute to the son's wrongdoing, and how far was the episode due to David's indulgence and lack of discipline? According to Lilley, "at all events, the connection between moral failure and subsequent disaster is brought out" (Lilley, 1979:383). Absalom avenges his sister by killing Amnon, then flees (1 Kings 13:23-37). In this polygamous family, the mothers also try to undo one another and their children. Bathsheba does not understand why the son of her rival should become king instead of her son Solomon. So she schemes with Nathan to convince King David to pronounce Solomon as King instead of Adonijah (1 Kings 1:11f). For her, it was a matter of life and death, and her son not becoming the King meant death for the two of them. She presents her case to King David in these words: "And now, your majesty, all Israel is

looking to you to announce who is to succeed you on the throne. Otherwise, when you, sir, rest with your forefathers, my son Solomon and I shall be treated as criminals” (1 Kings 1:20-21). What this means is that multiple marriages lead to disaffection between brothers and sisters of different mothers and could degenerate into long-standing disputes such as the one discussed. In this situation many of the half-brothers are not loyal to the children of their father’s other wives. We see some who are willing to have sex with a half-sister or kill a son from another mother. Multiple marriages seem to expose the moral weaknesses of the father, thereby providing an unsuitable precedent for children born out of this kind of relationship.

The controversy regarding whether Hagar was the wife of Abraham, an acknowledgement of which makes Abraham a polygamist at the instigation of Sarah, continues to dominate scholarly discussion (Dwight, 1836; Kaiser, 1983:18). Hagar may have escaped but her interception by an angel invites further discussion as to whether she could be considered a wife of Abraham. The NIV commentary observes that “Hagar’s contempt for her mistress led inevitably to the equally wrongful, harsh treatment of the girl by Sarah, while Abram opted out of a decision” (Payne, 1979:126). This attitude is very normal in polygamous relationships in which one person is always given priority above the other. But Hagar’s status was influenced by the fact that she continued to be the maidservant of Sarah, a previous relationship that makes her more likely a servant rather than a second wife. However, the attempt by Sarah to influence her husband to eject Hagar points more to a family dispute fueled by jealousy and anger and not necessarily to a denial that Hagar was the wife of Abraham. This assumption relies on the scriptural instance where a maidservant becomes a wife, as in the case of Rachael’s maid. “When Rachael saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister.... Then she said, ‘Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family.’ So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife...” (Genesis 30:1-4). So if Bilhah is called a wife, Hagar can be considered a wife. Instone-Brewer (2000:76) agrees with this view when he includes the name of Abraham among some Israelites such as Judah, Gideon, Samson, David and Solomon who had multiple wives.

Undoubtedly, being a maid is synonymous with being a servant, and the owner has claim over what the maid may have, including her children. But the argument still remains whether the status of a servant cannot be changed after having sex with the

husband of the mistress according to the particular custom. For instance, in most parts of Africa where similar practices are carried out, the children of the maid may be considered theoretically as the children of the mistress but the status as wife to the man is unquestionable. This naturally leads in most cases to some bad blood between the two. And so, if we see hate between wives in polygamous marriages, Sarah's attitude can be seen to be consistent with patterns between other polygamous wives. For those who are convinced that Hagar should be considered as Abraham's wife, the hate between the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac points to one of the challenges confronting multiple marriages. Even though children of the same mother have the tendency to hate each other, the scramble to make "my mother's room" look better than the other mother's is a notable aspect of polygamy.¹ That both Christians and Muslims continue to lay claims over which of Abraham's sons was to be sacrificed as requested by God, attest to this understanding. This is an act claimed by Christians to have been carried out by Abraham on Isaac the son of Sarah and not Ishmael, the son of Hagar. Obviously, the legacy of multiple marriages cannot elude confusion, claims and counter claims of who is really the "true son" of the father or who is more important to the father.

Abimelech conspired against the rest of his half-brothers by playing the "mother room" card after the death of his father Gideon. With the support of his mother's tribesmen, Abimelech was willing to kill all his seventy half-brothers in order to become king: "They gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-berith, probably reflecting one piece of silver each on the head of each of his brothers" (Bruce, 1979:327), and with these he hired idle and reckless men, who followed him. "He came to his father's house in Ophrah and butchered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, on a single stone block, all except Jonathan the youngest, who survived because he had hidden himself. Then all the citizens of Shechem and all Beth-Millo came together and made Abimelech king beside the old propped-up terebinth at Shechem" (NEB Judges 9:4-6). Abimelech demonstrates that in polygamy, the children of the other mother(s) may be sacrificed for personal and selfish purposes and it does not matter in terms of moral consequences.

¹ Interacting with a Muslim friend on the day of the celebration of the Eid Mubarak (the slaughtering of a sheep on the 11th day during the month of Hajj), he told me the sacrifice was to signify the offer of a sheep by God in place of Ishmael whom Abraham his father was to sacrifice.

The Book of Exodus acknowledges the possibility of the son of a slave-master marrying another wife in addition to the slave wife, but states that three things must be considered: “If he takes another woman, he shall not deprive the first of meat, clothes and conjugal rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she shall go free without any payment” (Exodus 21:10-11). Meaning, a woman may have the right to move on with her life undisrupted by a man who does not provide security and bread. In general terms, Deuteronomy 21:15-17 suggests that marrying more than one wife is acceptable under certain conditions. The text notes that in polygamy, the wives are not likely to be given equal love, but the unloved wife must enjoy certain rights and privileges. This is how some versions of the Bible state it:

- a. The English Standard Version, The Christian Standard Bible, the New American Standard Bible and the International Standard Version all read: “If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved...”
- b. The New International Version states: “If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other...”
- c. The King James Bible says: “If a man has two wives, one beloved and another hated...”
- d. The New Living Translation: “Suppose a man has two wives, but he loves one and not the other...”

All of these translations suggest an event that is ongoing and that, if they both bear him sons, and the son of the unloved wife is the elder, then, when the day comes for him to divide his property among his sons, he must not treat the son of the loved one as his first-born in contempt of his true first-born, the son of the unloved wife. He must recognize the right of his first-born, the son of the unloved wife, and give him a double share of all that he possesses; for he was the first fruits of his manhood, and the right of the first-born is his. Cousins (1979:273) notes that in Hebrew culture, “a man was forbidden from behaving arbitrarily and the ancient culture of favouring the first-born (Genesis 27; 48:14) is here made obligatory. The absence of any reference to the situation envisaged in Numbers 27:1-11 is a reminder that Deuteronomy is preaching rather than legal code. These verses are a good example of how hate/love implies preference rather than emotional response (Matthew 6:24; Romans 9:13).” This divine counsel suggests that if polygamy should be practiced it must operate under divine

guidelines and boundaries just as monogamy needs to do. However, Jamieson *et al.* argues that this case has no bearing upon polygamy:

In the original and all other translations, the words are rendered “have had,” referring to 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—“her that was hated,” not “her that is hated”; evidently intimating that she (the first wife) was dead at the time referred to. Moses, therefore, does not here legislate upon the case of a man who has two wives at the same time, but on that of a man who has married twice in succession, the second wife after the decease of the first; and there was an obvious necessity for legislation in these circumstances; for the first wife, who was hated, was dead, and the second wife, the favorite, was alive; and with the feelings of a stepmother, she would urge her husband to make her own son the heir. This case has no bearing upon polygamy, for which there is no evidence that the Mosaic code legalized (Jamieson et al, 1871).

However, the fact that the first is deceased does not necessarily mean she was not favoured by her husband. What is likely to be the case here is that the surviving wife has a much better opportunity to influence the husband since she is still living. It is noted that some women are able to convince their husbands to favour their sons even while the man has other wives still living. An example is the case of Bathsheba, who was able to influence King David to name her son Solomon as successor to the throne though he was not the first son (1Kings 1:15f).

In concluding this discussion several lessons including the following can be learned from surveying the practice of polygamy in the Old Testament:

- a. That polygamy was practiced and accepted until at least the end of the Israelite monarchy.
- b. That polygamy was practiced by both religious men and kings.
- c. That polygamy was associated with opulence, power and authority.
- d. That in polygamy some exercised faith, prayed and found God’s favour, while others only exhibited their egos.
- e. That polygamy was not condemned by God but his views on polygamy seems to be implied by the problems encountered in polygamy.

- f. That polygamy had challenges that generally affected the peace and unity of families.

It is obvious from the preceding discussion that the practice of polygamy is mentioned in many books of the Old Testament. Some other examples include Genesis 30:1f; Exodus 21:10; Leviticus 18:18; Deuteronomy 17:17; Judges 8:30; 1 Samuel 1:4-7; 2 Samuel 3:1-5; 1 Kings 3:1; 1 Chronicles 7:4; 2 and Chronicles 13:21. The general impression is that polygamy was widely practiced among the Israelites, with evidence up until the end of Israel's kings, and was usually associated with wealth and authority. Despite the practice of polygamy, every recorded instance of polygamy is fraught with one or the other challenge. These challenges included instances of murder, jealousy, incest, power struggle, and deceit. But polygamy also revealed the ingenuity of women. Rachael, for instance, saw the need to allow her maidservant to bear children for her, and Bathsheba lobbied her husband, King David, to introduce her son Solomon as his successor. The weaknesses of some men were also revealed. Elkanah thought he was more than ten sons to his barren wife, and Jacob in anger asked Rachael whether he had become God, and whether he was the one who had kept her from having children.

The verses on levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), where a woman had the right to marry her late husband's brother if they lived together, have been viewed in various ways by different commentators. Questions arising include whether these verses necessarily involve polygamy. The brothers are living together. If they are in the same household it would be unusual if they are both married. Also, what was the need and purpose for this kind of marriage? According to Cousins (1979:275), the levirate law was designed to ensure that the name of the dead man is perpetuated and his land not alienated. He identifies the case of Ruth (4:5) as not altogether clear since there was no brother-in-law, and the man who should have acted as "redeemer" declined to do so. The practice obviously had a purpose and the NIV Study Bible (1985:270) suggests that "the continuity of each family and the decentralized control of land through family ownership were basic to the Mosaic economy".

The example in Ruth 4 demonstrates that the object of the law was held to be attained if the family of the dead man was perpetuated and did not become extinct. Therefore, the marriage specified was not necessarily between the brother and the brother's wife but might be between other representatives of the two persons in question (Ellicott, e-Sword version, 2014). Levirate marriage existed before the age of Moses

(Jamieson et al., 1871; Ellicott, 1897). We first hear of it in the household of Judah the son of Jacob (Genesis 38:8). The violation of the law then was punished with death, not with disgrace only. But what makes the law most notable is the teaching that Jesus gives following the question asked by the Sadducees and Pharisees (Luke 20:27-40). It is worthwhile to observe that the law itself demands that in some sense there should be a resurrection. And Boaz puts it in this way: "...to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance" (Ruth 4:5). Ellicott questions why the name of the dead should be kept up, if the dead has passed out of existence. He concludes "we may well believe that this law was partly intended (like baptism for the dead, or like giving children the names of their departed progenitors) for the expressed purpose of keeping alive the hope of resurrection in the minds of the chosen people" (Ellicott, 2014).

Benson (1857) and Gill (1763) both agree with Ellicott that "brethren dwell together" could mean "living in the same town, or, at least, country" (Benson, 1857). Benson continues:

If for instance the next brother had removed his habitation into remote parts, or was carried into captivity, then the wife of the dead had her liberty to marry the next kinsman that lived in the same place with her... The reason of the law was to keep up the distinction of tribes and families, "so that the Messiah might be discovered by the family from which he was appointed to proceed; and also of inheritances, which were divided among all the brethren, the firstborn having only a double portion" (Benson, 1857).

This was generally intended to ensure the name of the deceased would not be put out and his family would not be lost. "It was a provision intended to ensure that the number of their families might not be diminished" (Benson, 1857). Barnes (1870) notes:

The law on this subject is indeed not unique to the Jews but is found in all essential respects the same among various Oriental nations, ancient and modern, as is evidenced in Genesis 38:8. The rules in these verses, like those on divorce, do but incorporate existing immemorial usages, and introduce various wise and politic limitations and mitigations of them. The root of the obligation here imposed upon the brother of the deceased husband lies in the primeval idea of childlessness being a great calamity (Genesis 16:4), and extinction of name and family one of the greatest that could happen (Deuteronomy 9:14; Psalm 109:12-15). To prevent this, ordinary rules as to intermarriage are in the case in question set aside (Leviticus 18:16). The obligation may require a certain level of commitment (Ruth 4:6) and might be objectionable; and it is

accordingly considerably reduced and restricted by Moses. The duty is recognized as one of affection for the memory of the deceased; it is not one which could be enforced at law. That it continued down to the Christian era is apparent from the question on this point put to Jesus by the Sadducees (Barnes, 1870).

Matthew Poole (1685) explains “Brethren dwell together” in two ways:

Either, strictly, in the same house or family, which is not probable, because the married brother may be presumed to have left his father’s house, and set up a family of his own. Or, more largely, in the same town or city, or, at least, country. This is added for a relief of their consciences, that if the next brother had removed his habitation into remote parts, or were carried thither into captivity, which God foresaw would be their case, and then the wife of the dead had her liberty to marry the next kinsman that lived in the same place with her. One of them; either, meaning:

- a. The first and eldest of them, as it was practiced in Genesis 38:6, and expounded in Matthew 22:25. And the chief care was about the first-born, who were invested with singular privileges. Or,
- b. Any of them, for the words are general, and so the practice may seem to have been, in Ruth 3; and the reason of the law may seem to be in a great measure the same, which was to keep up the distinction, as of tribes and families (Poole, 1685).

It is observed that the Levirate marriage was considered irresistible if a man who was married died without an issue. In this case, his surviving brother was required to marry the widow so as to raise up a successor to the deceased, who should be his heir (Exell & Spence-Jones, 1890). This notion presupposes a man’s desire to continue to be remembered even beyond death. And this desire is anchored in the belief that one is able to secure a continued personal existence for himself and immortality for his name through the preservation of a son who takes his place. The requirement of dwelling together does not necessarily mean in the same house, but in the same community or place (cf. Genesis 13:6; Genesis 36:7). The requirement to have no child, literally, have no son, is rightly interpreted as meaning no child, for if the deceased left a daughter, the perpetuation of the family and the retention of the property might be secured through her (cf. Numbers 27:4). The brother who refused this duty must be publicly disgraced. The design of this institution was not originated by Moses, but came down from early times (Genesis 38:8), and is to be found amongst other nations than the Jews. “Its main purpose was to preserve a family from becoming extinct and to secure the property of a family from passing into the hands of a stranger” (Exell & Spence-Jones, 1890).

Thus, “the reason for the practice of the levirate system which is mostly the result of childlessness” (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75) is one of the reasons for which polygamy is also practiced elsewhere today. The difference between the practices of levirate marriage and polygamy is that whereas in the case of the levirate system, someone else (a brother/kinsman) has to produce children for the deceased, in the case of polygamy the victim seems determined to produce children to sustain the lineage even while he is still alive.

3.4 Exegesis on key texts on marriage

The following section discusses some relevant phrases from Scripture that require particular attention in response to the question of whether they discuss polygamy at all and whether they speak for or against polygamy, or for or against monogamy.

3.4.1 The man shall cleave to his wife (Genesis 2:24)

“The man shall cleave to his wife” is important in discussing marriage because it seems to indicate that marriage should be forever, and nothing but death shall be able to separate the couple. The Hebrew word קָרַב is translated “to cleave.” To cleave means to stick, or to glue together. In marriage, the husband and wife are glued together. This suggests permanence. It is like the covenant God made with the Israelites. Marriage, in this sense, is a covenant. The challenge that arises with the term “to cleave” derives from whether two or more people can or cannot be glued together in marriage. Genesis 2:24 seems to suggest that the main biblical ideal for marriage is permanency, which speaks against divorce rather than against polygamy. It is therefore, not in vain that other biblical texts describe marriage as between a man and one or more wives in the narratives. This underscores the understanding that often in scripture polygamous marriages occurred for a variety of different reasons. For example, it could occur when the first marriage was not blessed with children. Instances in Jewish scripture include the case of Abraham taking Hagar, Sarah’s maid (Genesis 16:3 NIV) and Jacob taking Bilhah, Rachael’s maid (Genesis 30:1-3). Or when custom compelled others to take on an additional wife such as Jacob marrying Leah. Or when God himself commanded his servant to take custody of additional women, such as King David and the wives of King Saul.

These and many other instances suggest that polygamy was being practiced among the Israelite people but there is no consensus on whether the practice was

borrowed from neighboring Mesopotamia. Bergant suggests that “Sarai’s proposal that Abraham impregnates her servant, Hagar (Genesis 16:2) was part of Mesopotamian customs where the children of the concubine were considered the legal offspring of the wife” (Bergant, 1988:56). With this understanding, Sarai stated, “Perhaps I shall have sons through her” (Genesis 16:2). Whether the practice of polygamy among the Jews was a borrowed practice or not, the underlying observation is that the Jews loved and practiced it over several generations and among its prominent leaders. And granted that polygamy was borrowed from Mesopotamia, and Mesopotamian culture considered such relationships as wives, it may be appropriate to assume that the same applied in the case of Israel. Therefore, the man’s cleaving to his wife does not on its own suggest only monogamy, though polygamy is not also implied. What appears to be the case is more likely a command for closeness and permanency in marriage relationships.

The Book of Hosea is also important in discussing marriage not only among the Jews but also regarding God’s universal plan for marriage. Marriage is considered so significant in this book that the first three chapters focus on Hosea’s marriage (Hosea 1:2 – 3:5). His wife was unfaithful to him, yet Hosea continued to cleave to her. This might suggest that no matter how unfaithful a wife is, the husband must continue to love her without offering excuses for either separation or for him to take an additional wife. The marriage scenario in Hosea also suggests the nature of God’s covenant with his people. In spite of the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel, God still loves them, a manifestation of God’s loving, patient, merciful, and just nature (Hosea 2:21-22). The texts point to an ideal standard of God for marriage that suggests attitude and permanency, and this most likely suggests monogamy but does not necessarily exclude polygamy.

3.4.2 The husband of one wife (1Timothy 3:2)

Three passages in the Pastoral Epistles (1Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 3:12 and Titus 1:6) state that church leaders should be the “husband of but one wife”; this has been read by some Christian groups as a prohibition of polygamy. Others argue that polygamy is allowed, but not for church leaders. Still others argue that the passage refers only to church leaders not being allowed to divorce their wives. Referring to the period during which Paul offers this advice, Lock argues that “it may simply refer to marital unfaithfulness since no Christian, whether an overseer or not, would have been allowed to practice polygamy” (Lock, 1990). Indeed, it is improbable that Paul had polygamy in

mind when he was making this statement about overseers being the husband of but one wife. “Perhaps he deemed it advisable to recommend to men responsible for setting an example of strict personal discipline that they refrain from remarriage on the death of a partner” (Nute, 1979:1478). Nute also agrees that the statement was concerned with “standards of character and conduct which should mark the overseer who is guardian, superintendent or leader” (Nute, 1979:1478). The target audience of Paul was the elders of the church and he would have most likely given instructions regarding the ordering of church life while visiting the churches. “And having left them he now writes to confirm his oral instruction and to provide Titus (and Timothy) with an authoritative word for the execution of these duties” (Nute, 1979:1493).

Both Nute and Keener agree that Paul is dealing with the standard of character in these verses. Keener states that lists of qualifications for offices appear in both Jewish and Gentile sources and lists of virtues appropriate to such offices are even more common. These lists were applied both to politicians or military officers and religious ones (Keener, 2014:606). The term translated “overseer” or “bishop” was elsewhere in use in the ancient world for leaders, and Paul uses it synonymously with “elders” (Titus 1:5, 7), a leadership title used in synagogues and with a long history in Israel. Certain officers in the Greek world in both cities and associations were also naturally called “overseers” (Keener, 2014: 606-607). The office of overseer was open to all, but some standards or qualifications needed to be observed, especially in view of the many divergent views circulating in Ephesus. “The qualification of being ‘above reproach’ was an ancient way of emphasizing that qualifications focus on a particular issue, and this framed the other qualifications (1 Timothy 3:2, 7). Political leaders were also expected to be above reproach, but a persecuted minority sect needed to protect itself against public slander even more than politicians did” (Keener, 2014:607). Paul was desperately seeking to find a way to prevent those who had contrary teachings from infiltrating what he considered to be expounding the right message of Christ. This might affect the growth and integrity of the infant community.

So Keener points out that Paul was not intending to regulate against polygamy because it was not practiced in the Roman world outside Palestine but admits that illegal bigamy and adultery were. He therefore, explains that “husband of one wife” means “a faithful husband, and probably this phrase presupposes marriage. If it expresses a preference for marriage, it might be helpful in standing against false teachers who

opposed marriage (1 Timothy 4:3), although this preference might not apply to all situations (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:8). ‘Husband of one wife’ refers to one’s current marital status and behavior (5:9)” (Keener, 2014:607). But marital status remains unclear since it is supposed to determine what number of wives may be considered acceptable. However, Keener disagrees with Nute’s suggestion that Paul may be advising people to refrain from remarrying on the death of a partner. Rather, he suggests that “validly divorced people who remarried were considered married to one spouse, the second one, not to two spouses” (Keener, 2014:607). Thus the following can be inferred from Paul’s statement above:

1. If Paul did not have polygamy in mind because it was not a normal practice, then his instruction to leaders was not concerning polygamy.
2. Paul’s discussion on the need to marry was not focused on the number of women but on appropriate behavior that would distinguish them from the rest of the society.
3. The term bishop or overseer was not the preserve of the church but was borrowed because of the expectations layered on such an office. These behaviours are generally based on attitude and this could include the attitude towards marriage, but does that necessarily mean monogamy and exclude polygamy?

The above argument notwithstanding, when considering Paul’s instruction for overseers and deacons to be ‘the husband of one wife’, one needs to consider whether any of his instructions to church leaders were solely for leaders or good for ordinary Christians. The answer to this question is generally taken to be no. All of the characteristics listed should apply to all Christians as ideals, and leaders should be showing them in an exemplary way so that ordinary Christians can follow their modelling. If this is compared to Old Testament instructions to priests and prophets there are some differences. When Aaron was ordained as the first high priest, he and his sons were given some instructions that went beyond the normal regulations for ordinary Israelites. They concerned sacrifices, marriage and funerals (Leviticus 8-10). However, the New Testament stresses ‘priesthood of all believers’ (even though the idea was present in Exodus 19) and does not mention a special class called priests (1 Peter 2:5).

In the Old Testament, the prophets were sometimes given special instructions to act in ways that were counter-cultural. For instance, Jeremiah was told not to marry (Jeremiah 16:2), Ezekiel was told not to mourn the death of his beloved wife publicly in

the normal cultural way (Ezekiel 24:15-27) and Hosea was requested to put up with a harlot (Hosea 1:2). In the New Testament, some people are also referred to as prophets (Ephesians 4:11-16), but when Paul appointed leaders to the churches he planted he did not call these leaders priests or prophets. These Old Testament instructions demonstrate that God can make extra, special demands on leaders because of context and God's own purpose for his people. That principle continues at an individual level, inviting leaders to a sometimes greater level of self-denial. But the New Testament lays down no different generalised requirements for church leaders, either as special privileges or special restrictions, only that they be more exemplary in their practice.

3.4.3 The two shall become one flesh (Matthew 19:5)

In answering a question about divorce, Jesus quoted Genesis 2:24 in Matthew 19:5: "...For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This expresses his vision of the relationship between husband and wife. "Many scholars have based their interpretation of the text on the Greek of the Gospels but Jesus' interpretation would have been based on the Hebrew" (Guy, 2004:95). The Hebrew *בָּסָר* (*basar*) and the Greek *σαρξ* (*sarx*), have the same literal meaning of the 'flesh' but different metaphorical overtones. Paul sometimes uses *sarx* to mean "the seat and vehicle of sinful desires" (Abbott-Smith, 1923) as well as the physical body, and uses the term to condemn prostitution (1 Corinthians 6:16f). For him, "it is the sexual act which unites a man and a woman" (Guy, 2004:95). The Hebrew idiom can use *basar* for "kindred, blood relationships as well as for the physical body" (Peabody, 1979). In Genesis 29:14, Laban says to his nephew Jacob: "Surely, you are my bone and my flesh". When a woman carries a baby the two are literally 'one flesh', and the link between the father's sperm and the baby easily lends itself to the idea that they are one flesh. "So if mother and father are both one flesh with the child it follows that the two must also be one flesh with each other. This is the point of the myth that Eve was made from Adam's rib" (Guy, 2004:95). Von Rad claims that the man and woman 'were originally one flesh' and that this results in the 'drive towards each other which does not rest until it again becomes one flesh in the child' (von Rad, 1972, quoted in Guy, 2004:95). It is thus the birth of the child which unites the man and the woman in one flesh. This mirrors the African view expressed by Magesa: "The marriage is not complete until a child has been born. After the birth of a child, preferably a male child, marriage should not in any circumstances be broken" (Magesa, 1998, quoted in

Guy, 2004:96). The text therefore more likely opposes divorce but not necessarily polygamy.

Most Christian theologians argue that in Matthew 19:3-8 and referring to Genesis 2:24, Jesus explicitly states that a man should have only one wife: “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall become one flesh?” To appreciate Jesus’ statement, it may be important first to understand the background to the question. What appears most likely in this text is that the interest of the questioners was marriage and divorce and not marriage and polygamy: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” (Ellison, 1979:1141) agrees that the question shows that the questioners belonged to one of the rival groups of Hillel or Shammai and hoped to be able to quote Jesus in their favour. In responding to the question, Jesus made it clear that he was not a new legislator but was holding up an ideal. The ideal is that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female. And for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be made one with his wife. This means that divorce has not been an option in God’s design for marriage but staying without marriage is the result of certain circumstances. Jesus explains that for some women and men their physical make-up is such that marriage is, at best, a social convenience for them. Others do not marry because they have been castrated or because they have been placed in circumstances such as slavery, where marriage is impossible. In other words, Jesus was saying that marriage may be optional but divorce is not acceptable.

This argument favours those who maintain that the text under review is not about polygamy. Thus, Ellison prefers to explain why some marriages are not sustainable rather than argue for polygamy in this text. For him, marriage is a divine institution that can only be sustained when viewed beyond the physical level. He explains that “because the majority of Christian marriages are entered into on a mainly physical level, a strict adherence to Jesus’s teaching on marriage may be very difficult” (Ellison, 1979:1141). On the contrary, David Instone-Brewer notes:

Jesus spent more time teaching you should have only one wife than teaching that there is only one God, or teaching the grounds for divorce because in Jesus’s society, polygamy was still legal and relatively common. When Jesus was asked about divorce, he wanted to talk about marriage instead: he says marriage should be lifelong, and you

should only marry one person. He states we don't notice the teaching against polygamy, but Jews at the time would see it. For them, polygamy was normal, so if Jesus said nothing they would assume he agreed (Instone-Brewer, s.a.).

While Ellison is underrating the fact that peoples' understanding on Jesus' teaching on marriage will continue to vary, Instone-Brewer is over-stressing the attention given to the issue of marriage by Jesus.

Paul seems to tie leadership in the church to the number of wives one is expected to marry, probably suggesting that this is the 'Christ-accepted form of marriage'. In a letter to his beloved Timothy, Paul emphasized that church officials should be respectable, above reproach, and the husband of a single wife (1 Timothy 3:2). What is prominent in this text is the Greek phrase *μἰᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*. This phrase is an unusual Greek construction capable of being translated in multiple ways, including but not limited to:

- a. One wife man (prohibiting plural marriage)
- b. A wife man (requiring elders to be married)
- c. First wife man (probably prohibiting divorcees from ordination).

Other interpretations render it as being faithful in relationships or restrained from chasing many women so as to be characterized as a one-woman man or having been married only once (even if morally and legally released from the marriage bond by the death of the spouse). Some argue that the first definition above implies acceptance of polygamy in the larger Christian community/culture, explaining Paul's explicit rejection of polygamy for elders. However, the qualification for elders almost exclusively mirrors the expectations for all Christians, including restrictions on drunkenness and instructions to manage one's household well. Oforchukwu, (2010:91) quotes Laney (1981) who sees that "one flesh" points to respect for the wife. In this sense the wife is expected to be appreciated and valued since God contrived marriage as the fundamental factor of all human society; thus "sexual intimacy, loving care and public exchange of vows constitute the essential elements of the marriage covenant". This is true because without respect and value for the wife, all of these attitudes above are meaningless. And since several explanations are offered in response to this same issue, one cannot but consider this argument to be valid.

However, according to Keener (2014:153), “taking for granted the unity of the law, Jewish interpreters commonly appealed to one clear text of scripture to counter or explain another’s use of a text that they felt was unclear. Some interpreters such as the scribes who wrote the Dead Scrolls appealed to the creation story to show God’s original plan for marriage. These interpreters used Genesis 1-2 to argue against polygamy and Jesus used it to argue against divorce”. It is also important to notice how some words have been substituted to convey an intended understanding. Reflecting Greek custom against polygamy, the Septuagint had substituted “two” for the original Hebrew “they” in Genesis 2:24. This follows that the original wording would have been “and they shall become one flesh” instead of “and the two shall become one flesh”. The original rendering of the words in Genesis presents a possible argument for polygamy which is simply not as specific as changing “they” to “two”. It is not certain why the change of pronoun “they” to the figure “two” was necessary, but this was probably done to place emphasis on the acceptable number of persons involved in what is claimed to be divinely acceptable in marriage. However, since “they” can be read as two or more, proponents of polygamy may prefer to maintain “they” and not “two” (Keener, 2014:153). Maintaining “they” instead of “two” to support polygamy resonates with Paul asking the Corinthians: “Do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, ‘the two will become one flesh.’” Supporters of polygamy will most likely claim this term could refer to a physical rather than spiritual union. Becoming one flesh with a harlot may be considered as going against the ideal of one flesh with one’s wife but an alternative understanding could include that being one flesh with a harlot apparently does not negate his being one flesh with more than one woman/wife, even though this may have health implications. However, Bruce suggests that since the time that God decided to punish Adam and Eve the main glory of the woman is that new life must come through her. “This is not only linked from now on with pain but also with a deep, over-powering desire for her partner, something that lies behind so many broken marriages” (Ellison, 1979:118). And in addition she is reminded that her husband would take advantage of her to rule over her (Genesis 3:16). Granted that this understanding is acceptable, the implication is that the one-time “one in flesh” has become two separate bodies with different capacities as a result of their disobedience to the command of God.

3.4.4 No man shall put asunder (Matthew 19:6)

Many have argued that God intended for the marriage relationship to be permanent and lasting until death (Gen. 2:23-24). This is why what God has put together nothing shall put asunder: not money, not health, no man or woman, not any circumstance except death. It is for this reason that in the early stage of the history of Israel, marriage was contracted for life, though no restrictions were placed on the number of women to marry. Instone-Brewer explains that outside Israel the anxiety with polygamy was visible in the marriage contracts in Elephantine, and though these were not typical Jewish contracts, nevertheless, they show the kind of influence which Greek and Roman customs were beginning to have on Judaism (Instone-Brewer, 2000:78-9). So as society developed, what used to be stable and permanent in Jewish marriage became relatively unstable, requiring alternative definitions to the permanency of the institution of marriage. For this reason, Moses allowed divorce on certain grounds. Some New Testament writers claim that divorce was permitted by Moses on account of human stubbornness. Saint Matthew the gospel writer, for instance, quotes Jesus Christ to have said, "It was because you were so unteachable that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning" (Matthew 19:7-8 NEB). This understanding notwithstanding, the claim by some couples that they are incompatible, or that the man and woman and their families did not know each other well enough to assess compatibility before marriage, cannot be underestimated. Thus, the term 'incompatibility' can often be used as an excuse for people not to work on their marriage relationship and to spend time listening to each other. Incompatibility may refer to constant misunderstanding, different backgrounds, no interests in common etc. But there are other factors that can make continuing in a marriage extremely difficult, such as criminal assault against the wife and/or against children so that it threatens their lives (this goes against basic provisions for life in the law); refusal to provide food or clothing or housing (this is a biblical requirement or law); adultery (this was also against the law for marriage). Apart from that, there can be more subtle but psychologically difficult violations, such as treating the spouse most disrespectfully, as if they were a piece of rubbish, or publicly ridiculing the spouse and controlling their ability to move and function physically and psychologically. Putting asunder therefore requires significant thought and consideration. Additionally, the person who commits any of the behaviours that are against the biblical law for marriage has, in fact, violated the

marriage. He may be against divorce, but may not realize he has caused a functional divorce.

Bergant observes that Sarah demanded that Abraham should put asunder Hagar and her son from the family fold. This appears to be a statement of divorce. He claims that “it will seem strange that God would require Abraham to commit evil if divorce is a sin but it would equally be difficult to admit that God would permit Abraham to accept Hagar in addition to Sarah if polygamy were sinful” (Bergant, 1992:60). If God requested Abraham to send Hagar away it may be because they were after all not a couple and therefore could be put asunder. Obviously, God does not permit sin. This is why Saint Paul reminds Christians in pagan-dominated Corinth that God does not permit sin: “So far you have faced no trial beyond what man can bear. God keeps faith and he would not allow you to be tested above your powers, but when the test comes he will at the same time provide a way out, by enabling you to sustain it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Sprinkle agrees that the quest to have an heir to a throne is a reason many have divorced or taken an additional wife regardless of whether that is sinful (Sprinkle, 1997:8). It may be argued that in the case of Abraham it is not certain that God permitted him to accept Hagar as a wife in addition to Sarah. And there is no indication that God said anything when Sarah suggested that Abraham take Hagar as a wife. Nor did Abraham ask God whether it was the right thing to do. The story rather suggests that Abraham and Sarah created a complicated mess by Sarah suggesting and Abraham agreeing to take Hagar to produce a child. And there is no sign that this was God’s ideal. But after they have done what appears to be wrong, God does not abandon them. The solution cannot be straightforward because they have not followed God’s straightforward directions in waiting for God to provide the promised heir. Hagar was not to be blamed, as she had no choice. So God provided for Hagar and her son, first in Abraham’s home, and then in giving her freedom to go away.

Understanding the concept of divorce in the Old Testament may be considered a panacea to understanding polygamy. Macleod (2002:13) argues that “the Old Testament has no legislation instituting divorce”. And in the New Testament, Jesus agrees that divorce was not part of God’s intention for marriage but Moses allowed it because some people’s hearts were so hard that they would not be changed and Moses wanted to protect the vulnerable spouse from further mistreatment. On the other hand, “polygamy was undoubtedly part of life in first-century Judaism, but it is uncertain how widespread

it was. Although it was thought that only the rich could afford more than one wife, it is now known that the middle classes also practiced polygamy” (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75). So both divorce and polygamy were practiced among the people of Israel. Women in early Hebrew culture were considered to be men’s property. The position of women was one of inferiority, which made it possible for the husband to decide the fate of his wife in the marriage under very obscure circumstances. A man could divorce his wife whom he supposed was indecent by simply writing a bill of divorce and putting it in her hand and sending her out of his house (Deuteronomy 24:1). It is probably with this background knowledge that Jesus would insist that “what God has put together, no man shall put asunder”. This at least puts a higher being above man and has the effect of checking his ego. Thus, according to Macleod (2002:13), “under divine inspiration Moses imposed restrictions on divorce that tended to prevent it from being treated lightly or rashly”. He did not institute or command divorce, therefore, but allowed it due to what he considered as human sin, and he restricted it to guard against frivolous decisions made by men. For Sprinkle, there appeared to be no need for divorce unless it was to allow a wife who had not committed adultery to remarry (Sprinkle, 1997:8). In that case, Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not deal with divorce in a general sense but considers divorce as a special case. Both divorce and polygamy are thus human fantasies but the command not to put asunder suggests polygamy may be responding to a divine command that results in creating another undesirable situation.

As Moses was the one great model and teacher on issues of marriage in the Old Testament, in the New Testament Jesus is the greater model and teacher. He provides the way to which every Christian must adhere. He comes to fulfill the Law and the prophecies of the Old Testament, including those of Moses. This is why Jesus does not hesitate to clarify any law that is misinterpreted and used harshly in contrast to his mission to provide freedom for the prisoner, recovery of sight for the blind, release for the oppressed and the declaration of the year of the Lord’s favour (Luke 4:18f). It is for this reason that understanding Jesus’ statement in Matthew 19:1-12 continues to draw attention to the marriage debate. The Gospel of Matthew informs readers that Jesus left Galilee for the Judean territory. Galilee is considered a place of revelation (Matthew 4:12-17), while Judea is a place of rejection and death. It was in the Judean region that the Pharisees tested Jesus on the issues of marriage. According to Matthew 19:3, the Pharisees asked to know whether “it is permitted for a man to dismiss his wife due to

every cause?” The reason for asking this question is not readily apparent. However, biblical scholars have theorized that the Pharisees wanted to expose Jesus before the people. Martin (2004:6) argues that in order to do this, “the Pharisees had to unveil inconsistencies and invalidate his influence before the people. They had to show the people, in public, that his doctrine was in opposition to the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, and they had to shame him, knowing that once a leader is disparaged, and people begin to laugh at him, he is stripped of his power”. The phrase “for any cause,” therefore, referred to the Jewish debate about the grounds for divorce. Their scriptural support was derived from Deuteronomy 24:1, where Moses allowed the Jewish men to divorce their wives because of indecency. Instone-Brewer claims that the “any cause” divorce was invented by some Jewish Pharisees who divided up the phrase “a cause of indecency” (Deuteronomy 24:1) into two grounds for divorce: ‘indecency’—πορνεία (*porneia*), which they interpreted as ‘adultery’, and ‘a cause’ (i.e., ‘any cause’). But Jesus argues that the phrase could not be split up and that it meant “nothing except *porneia*”. Although almost everyone was using this new type of divorce, Jesus told them it was invalid, so remarriage was adulterous because they were still married” (Instone-Brewer, 2002:21). Jesus’ reference to this part of scripture cannot mean anything more than that which Moses intended it to be: to disagree with the attitude of men towards their wives in matters of divorce. However, it is noted that some Jews did teach against polygamy, including authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in the Damascus Document (one of the foundation documents of the Qumran sect), which lists the sins of the devil, which they said Jews were following. They first argued against polygamy by linking Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 7:9 (Instone-Brewer, 2000:81). This means that polygamy was still practiced and Jesus could not have spoken of divorce without touching on polygamy.

During the time of Christ, there were two schools, namely those of Hillel and Shammai that had different interpretations on divorce. “Shammai restricted divorce to the case of adultery on the woman’s part, while Hillel allowed a woman to be divorced if she was a bad cook or not beautiful” (Karris, 1988:889). This is why Jesus’ answer on marriage and divorce was revealing and emphatic in Matthew 19:4-9. His response invokes the book of Genesis to emphasize the fact that marriage is a divine institution and should not be treated as lightly as that. It is indissoluble and no human agent could end such a union. To make this point clearer, Jesus points to the fact that the Genesis

text on creation reveals God's original plan for marriage: "God created them male and female. On account of this, a man shall leave father and mother and be attached to his wife and the two shall be in one flesh" (Genesis 5:2). "What therefore God did join together let not man divide" (Mark 10:9). With this answer, Jesus assumes the role of authoritative interpreter of the law, stating that marriage is for a purpose in God's plan. As such, Jesus forbids divorce and certainly does not accept divorce on such trivial grounds that pander to the man's lusts and passions. But whether he actually had an interest in the topic of polygamy regardless of whether it is here implied or not, continues to be a matter of debate. This is probably why using the said text to argue against polygamy has not been unanimously accepted. But Instone-Brewer claims that in this discourse, Jesus does not appear at first to be interested in answering the question about the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1 because he is more concerned to remind the Pharisees that marriage was meant to be monogamous and lifelong (Instone-Brewer, 2000:95).

Furthermore, others, taking cognizance of Jesus' remarks in Luke 16:18 have argued that Jesus is not concerned about polygamy but divorce: "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery, and the man who marries a woman divorced by her husband commits adultery." In this way, Jesus condemns divorce to include the inability to remarry. His answer to the question of the indissolubility of marriage is brief, simple, and straightforward. He makes it clear that the marriage contract is for life. Though silent, the implication could be that if you marry one or more wives, you must be prepared to keep all wives until death. "Thus, what looks obvious in marriage is the requirement that partners commit themselves to each other for better or for worse until they are parted by death" (Mba, 1980:17). Jesus' attitude toward marriage here is clearly about divorce and not polygamy. He does not approve of the dissolution of a marriage. "And even though the Mosaic Law permitted divorce for certain circumstances, and some Jewish teachers of the law maintained various stances, Jesus is consistent: if one divorces one's spouse without valid grounds (unfaithfulness or analogous sin; cf. 1 Corinthians 7:10-13), the marriage is not truly dissolved and consequently the marriage is adulterous" (Keener, 1993:97). In so doing, Jesus is preventing divorce on flimsy excuses and recalling marriage to its original state of perpetuity. Marriage must not be misunderstood on its original purpose of love, and no human power is allowed to dissolve the marriage bond. Jesus justifies his position

for two reasons. First, divorce has not been anticipated from the beginning of creation, and second, those whom God joins together, man must not separate. It is with this understanding that Grutsch argues that “Jesus rejected the practice of divorce by affirming God’s plan of indissoluble marriage” (Grutsch, 1979:360). Jesus does not miss the fact that he is addressing men alone and the men are talking only about men divorcing their wives. That would leave the women in a very vulnerable situation. Jesus is therefore subtly rebuking the men for only thinking about the men in a marriage, and not thinking about the women. Jesus in this text is playing the gender advocate and asking for greater protection for the wives.

3.4.5 He who made them from the beginning of creation made them male and female (Matthew 19:4)

In the beginning, God created both male and female, each of them to perform a specific purpose in the creation story. From the opening phrase “beginning of creation” it might be supposed that the force of the argument lay in the fact that this is how it was done “in the beginning”. But Instone-Brewer argues “the emphasis was more likely to be on ‘creation’ which was the act of God. In other words, if God did something one way, we should follow his example. Thus, God made two sexes of each bird and animal, male and female. The naming of the animals had impressed upon the man, that in all cases, there were two sexes, often markedly different, but that he was alone. True partnership in contrast to sexual instinct must be based on a conscious need and desire (Instone-Brewer, 2000:86). Therefore, in God’s special design and purpose, “man and woman are said to be created in the image of God. The resultant partnership, equality and voluntary subordination are in some measure a revelation of the Triune nature of God” (Ellison, 1979:116).

Creating man and woman in his own image suggests some significant aspects of the human race. “The human race is commanded to subdue, literally meaning ‘stamp on’, and ‘rule over’, literally meaning to ‘tread down’. This shows that God was presenting mankind, male and female, with major tasks over the rest of creation” (Bruce, 1975:116). These tasks included the capacity of mankind to add value to what has been created; thus the ability to use what is in existence to meet human needs was one of the reasons God created humans in his own image.

Some commentators have thought that the chief design of the Pharisees and Sadducees in putting the question under review to Jesus was to make him contradict

Moses (Benson, 1857). Matthew Henry (1685) argues that: “They were desirous of drawing something from Jesus which they might represent as contrary to the Law of Moses.” But Jesus seems to have confuted the Pharisees instead of contradicting himself when he used the very words of Moses: *He who made them at the beginning* – when the human race begun to exist; *made them male and female*—Greek, ἄρσεν και θήλυ (*arsen and thelu*) (Benson, 1857). Gill (1763), Barnes (1870) says that “instead of referring to the opinions of either party, Jesus called their attention to the original design of marriage, to the authority of Moses, an authority acknowledged by them both (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:21-22), and said, “for this cause” (Genesis 2:24), that is, God, at the beginning, made but one man and one woman: their posterity should learn that the original intention of marriage was that a man should have but one wife” (Barnes (1870). Gill (1763) writes:

God ... made the first parents of mankind, male and female; not male and females, but one male, and one female; first, one male, and then, out of him one female, who, upon her creation, was brought and married to him; so that in this original constitution, no provision was made for divorce, or polygamy. Adam could not marry more wives than one, nor could he put away Eve for any cause, and marry another.

Exell and Spence-Jones (1890) also note similarly:

Lower animals were created separately, male and female; “mankind was created in one person in Adam, and when there was found no help meet for Adam, no companion in body, soul, or spirit, fit for him, then God, instead of creating a wholly new thing, made Eve out of Adam” (Sadler). Two individuals of opposite sexes were thus formed for each other; one was the complement of the other, and the union was perfect and lasted, as long as life. There was in this original institution no room for polygamy, no room for divorce. It was a concrete example of the way in which God unites man and wife.

Gill argued that it is possible that the Pharisees were familiar with this account, or that they had not read it properly:

If they had not, they were guilty of great negligence and sloth; if they had, they either understood it or not; if they did not understand it, it was greatly to their reproach, who pretended to great knowledge of the Scriptures, and to be able to explain them to others; and if they did understand it, there was no need for this question, which therefore must be put with an evil design (Gill, 1763).

All of these proposals notwithstanding, it is important to note that among the several commands given to mankind was the task for the first couple to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). And as rightly pointed out by Gill (1763), Adam could not marry more than one, nor could he put away Eve ‘for any cause’ (then he would have nothing, just as Eve would have nothing). This was obviously so because there were no alternatives. However, out of one man and one woman, several men and women were to be produced. The result of this multiplication of both sexes naturally leads to men and women in multiples. Unlike the situation at creation where only one man and one woman provided no option to choose from, there is now the possibility of making a choice. It is this possibility of making a choice that makes proponents of polygamy imagine that the original couple could be monogamous but that does not necessarily follow that subsequent generations should remain the same, as stated in Genesis 6. But Instone-Brewer, referring to Deuteronomy 17:17, argues it was not a multiplication of wives that God commanded. He observes that “the text appears to apply only to kings while the Qumran exegetes intended to apply it to all Israel but do not state how this was done. Probably, they used the same argument as found a couple of generations later on the lips of Simeon b. Yohai who said, ‘all Israelites are children of kings’ (*mShab.14:14*). Although he was a mid-second century rabbi, it is likely that he was presenting a traditional interpretation” (Instone-Brewer, 2000:86). The Temple Scroll also cites Deuteronomy 17:17 in 11QT.56:18, applying it to the ideal King. “It is part of the long passage describing the ideal King so it is difficult to know whether it was supposed to apply to all Israel because some of the regulations for kings are higher than those for the normal Israelites, while others are those which apply to everyone” (Instone-Brewer, 2000:86). Granting that Instone-Brewer is right in observing that it is likely that the command against polygamy is for kings, then the proposal that polygamy in the New Testament is reserved for some and not everyone is relevant.

3.4.6 “Each man should have sexual relations with his own wife and each woman with her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)

In 1 Corinthians 7.1-5, Paul makes a statement in his marriage instruction; the needs of both the man and woman in a marriage must be considered. Both the man and the woman must consider each other and work together. There is no sense here of the primary consideration being for one gender. At the time that Paul was responding to the letter of the Corinthians, several views were held on marriage, and celibacy was a major

issue of concern. That Paul favoured celibacy is obvious in his discussions in his letter to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1, 7, 8, 9, 27b, 28b). His reasons for staying celibate included the prevailing circumstances (26, 29), undivided devotion to Christ (32, 34, 35) and freedom from physical necessity (37). Despite Paul's personal decision on marriage, he recognized the necessity of marriage, stipulating the mutual responsibilities of both the husband and wife and the relationships of these to their spiritual lives (5). According to Keener,

Different views on celibacy existed in the ancient world. Most ancient writers condemned it; many Jewish teachers even considered it sinful, because reproduction was essential and marriage was the proper deterrent from sexual offenses and distractions. Replenishing the earth was considered a biblical commandment for all Jews... A number of groups and philosophers and minor religious sects, however, as well as many Essenes among the Jews, advocated celibacy or the rejection of marriage. Some philosophers rejected marriage but thought that sexual release with prostitutes was accepted since it would not tie a person down (Keener, 1993:465-466). The ancient opinions therefore can be summarized into three:

1. That marriage and procreation are vital for all who are physically capable of it. This is the case because some people naturally are unable to marry or procreate.
2. That marriage is a distraction and should never be undertaken. This view does not seem to consider that God approved marriage at creation for a purpose far higher than what one may consider as a distraction for the sake of worshipping God.
3. That marriage is good for most people, but one must make exceptions for those too committed to other spiritual pursuits to take time for it.

To understand Paul's teachings on marriage in 1 Corinthians, two facts must thus be remembered:

- a. Ascetic practices were highly esteemed, demanding, among other things, a celibate life. This probably prompted the Apostle Paul to address the question: Is marriage to be permitted? Paul's response recognizes many advantages of celibacy but also maintains that marriage has several virtues (2, 9, 28, 36, 38a). This second thought of Paul probably reflected the need to counter the views of others in Corinth who advocated for more free sex.

- b. Conditions at that particular time suggested that marriage might be unwise (26, 29).

Paul is therefore not writing a treatise on marriage but is answering their question within the context of current attitudes and the circumstances of the day. A balanced picture of the Christian concept of marriage is therefore to be gained from a study of the New Testament teaching as a whole (cf. John 2:1-11; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Timothy 5:14; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7). Despite this understanding, Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 7:2 that "Each man shall have a sexual relationship with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband," has been presented generally to imply monogamy. However, a critical re-examination of this text reveals that such popular opinion is rather too simplistic to pass unnoticed. In the whole of the section (1 Corinthians 7-16), Paul is responding to issues raised by the church: "And now for the matters you wrote about" (1 Corinthians 7:1). In his opening sentence Paul claims it is good for a man not to marry. "This is probably quoted from a previous letter from the Corinthians; an ascetic party in the church may have taken this stand, by way of reaction to the laxity of the environment. Paul's repeated use of 'it is well' means it is commendable but not morally or intrinsically better" (Marsh, 1979:1360-1). "But since there is so much immorality" does not reflect a low view of marriage but the moral condition of the Corinthian church, and "each man shall have sexual relationship with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband" suggests a solution to this moral inadequacy rather than a discussion on the number of wives to marry. Because this passage is on marriage, Paul seems to offer advice on the kind of person to have sex with, who to marry and the status of women, among others. Paul's high view of women is demonstrated here as he treats both men and women fairly and calls for the same from all men. This attitude of Paul could then be said to encourage gender parity rather than either discussing polygamy or monogamy.

Paul also adds in his response to the letter from the Corinthians that, "It is good not to touch (NIV, TEV: not to marry) a woman". According to Keener,

Some members of the church may be following the idea common among many Greek thinkers that sex was fine as long as one did not get tied down with marriage, while others addressed here are already married and abstaining from relationships with their spouses. "Let each have" (7:2) reflects a Greek idiom for "Let them have sexual

relationship”. Jewish people saw married sexual intimacy as the best deterrent to sexual immorality, and Paul here agrees (Keener, 1993:466).

This thinking resonates with Proverbs 5:19-20, which says “...a lovely hind, a graceful doe. Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, be infatuated always with her love. Why should you be infatuated, my son, with a loose woman and embrace the bosom of an adventuress?” Jewish marriage contracts stipulated a number of duties for the husband and a number for the wife. One major duty required of the husband was intercourse. Paul views intercourse as a mutual obligation, the meaning of “marital duty” (7:3). Greek writers sometimes portrayed submitting to sexual relationships or passion as bringing oneself under someone else’s control (7:4). Jewish teachers who were trying to formulate laws in this period differed on how long a man could vow to abstain from intercourse with his wife; one school said two weeks, and the other school said one week. Although Paul would not make longer abstinence grounds for divorce, as they did (7:10-13), he clearly wishes to limit even abstinence by mutual consent, leaving the specifics to the couple (7:5-6). But Paul recognizes that not all are called to singleness and equipped for it (7:7) (Keener, 1993:447).

Granted that Paul’s discussion in this text did not concern itself with the number of wives a man had but rather the act of sexual inappropriateness (“Each man to have sex with his own wife and each woman have sex with her own husband”), then he may have been concerned with the following unacceptable behaviours:

- a. That men were having sex with the wives of others
- b. That women were having sex with men who were not their husbands

Sex in the view of Paul then was to be carried out between legally married couples to prevent what he describes as immorality. But whether Paul accepts that two or more women may legally be married to one man or one woman married to two or more men remains unresolved in the minds of ordinary readers. This line of thought may however be referred to the era around which Paul makes this statement. It is indicated that “in the time around Jesus’s birth, polygamy was understood to have included marrying several spouses consecutively,” as evidenced for example by Tertullian’s work *De Exhortatione Castitatis* (Chapter VII). Discussing who qualifies as a widow, Saint Paul resolved this problem by allowing younger widows to remarry (1 Corinthians 7:39, 1 Timothy 5:11-

16). For him, no widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over 60 years, but that younger women should remarry to hinder sin.

The prevailing circumstances and the reaction of Paul to resolve consecutive polygamy does not suggest that Paul would have supported the marriage of more than one wife at the same time. Marsh writes,

However, some commentators conclude that by requiring leaders of the church to be one woman men, Saint Paul was only excluding remarried widows from having influence in the church. But this would have been a more strict understanding of monogamy than Roman law codified, and would have been a new and unusual demand on men. The question that remains to be answered is what Paul would have said about polygamy had he been asked directly about it, knowing him to have been a realist and not a mere theorist (Marsh, 1979:1361).

But from the reader's viewpoint, Paul's teaching on mutual consideration between husband and wife is more difficult to apply in polygamy than in monogamy. This is because polygamy tends to give preference to the husband's needs and desires over those of the wife. Obviously, if people read these words from their own context of polygamy they will probably assume that Paul was writing to people about both monogamous and polygamous marriages. But we need to look at Paul's context where there was no question about polygamy because there is no evidence of polygamous practice anywhere in the New Testament. This should influence our understanding.

3.4.7 A man shall leave his father and mother (Genesis 2:24)

The phrase "a man shall leave his father and mother" is derived from the second account of the creation story. This phrase supposes that a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. In this case, the man is unable to join to more than one woman since more than one woman is not likely to live at the same location, and the two of them become one. This understanding suggests that the phrase is pointing to monogamy. The New International Version Study Bible agrees with this statement when it says that "the divine intention for husband and wife was monogamy. Together the man and woman are to form an inseparable union, of which 'one flesh' is both a sign and an expression" (Barker *et al.*, 1998:11-12). These views notwithstanding, a number of alternative interpretations have been given to this phrase. In one of the several examples of word play that are used in this second account, she is called "woman" אִשָּׁה (*ishshah*) because she came from "man" אִישׁ (*ish*). That is why, the narrator tells us, "a

man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh.”

Instone-Brewer suggests:

The phrase, “they shall be one flesh” would probably have been interpreted to mean “they should be one family”. This is because it is unlikely that there was any teaching against polygamy in the early history of Israel. In later Prophets, monogamy was taught as ideal but polygamy was never made illegal, and God was portrayed as married to both Israel and Judah without any shame attached to this (Instone-Brewer, 2000:76).

A suggestion is made by Coogan that, as in Plato’s *Symposium*, there was originally an androgynous being who was split into two parts, man and woman, and ever since their separation they have been trying to get back together. Coogan describes this as “the power of sexual attraction” (Coogan, 2006:13-14). It is probably because of this long quest for the other part that caused the man to react jubilantly when the woman was presented to him: “This one, this time, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). In the midst of all creation, the man was unable to relate directly, but now at last, he was content that God had created something he could relate with, something that had many features in common instead of the earlier creatures that were vastly distinct from him.

But whether there must always be a physical movement to join the wife by the man continues to be a matter of debate. Rather than the man physically leaving his father and mother to join the wife, the phrase may mean that marriage is a sign that the man has come of age and is required to disassociate from parents in order to give more time to the wife as they begin to establish a family of their own. This means that despite living under the same roof with the parents of the man, as is the case in many marriages, attention must now be directed from parents to wife. Therefore, putting emphasis on the man or woman physically moving to join the other family may miss the point. However, women tend to be better able to fit in with their husbands than men are to fit in with their wives. The intended readers of this verse are the men who need to be told to make a change. As suggested by Paul, this change is facilitated through self-control (Galatians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 7:9; 9:25; 2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:8; Matthew 23:25; Proverbs 25:28) which appeals to the moral conscience of both men and women and has the effect of reducing the lust for multiple and unhealthy relationships.

3.5 Conclusion

The Mosaic Law did not seem to have any issue with polygamy. Instone-Brewer observes that “polygamy was allowed in Mosaic law though it was nowhere spoken of with approval. Although many Old Testament characters and heroes had more than one wife, there is no evidence that polygamy was widespread in Israel except perhaps after times of war when the male population was diminished” (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75). Even then, Stienstra argues that when war unbalanced the ratio of men to women, polygamy was seen as a shameful response to it (Stienstra, 1993:79). This notwithstanding, key verses relating to marriage in both the Old and New Testaments do not seem able to prevent varied and alternative interpretations. If we do not read the verses in the context of the passage and its place in the Scripture (a view for which it is difficult to gain unanimity), almost every verse will appear to be stated in such a manner that a person’s biases play a very significant role in how the verse is viewed, reviewed or interpreted. This problem is not likely to be resolved anytime soon since the users of the Bible come from varied backgrounds with differing interests and intentions. Where one is geographically located, for instance, would obviously influence how marriage is seen and considered. A person’s cultural, social, educational and economic background, among other factors, all play a role in defining what is acceptable or unacceptable and would impact the manner in which such a person reads and interprets the Bible.

For readers who are influenced by the Muslim and African understanding of polygamy, the male capacity for sex and care for wife and children is considered key and makes no room for loving both wives with the same quality of love. This is why Guy observes that “in general, a man with two wives does not treat either any different than he would an only wife” (Guy, 2004:86). This attitude in polygamy does not seem to fit exactly into Paul’s understanding for mutual consideration and love for each other as indicated in 1 Corinthians 7 and 13. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on caring for wife and children in polygamy today seems to follow the Old Testament criteria for polygamy, where the husband is expected to provide for the physical needs of the other wives and children. This form of provision does not consider the emotional and other needs of the woman. The Old Testament law gave greater protection to the woman but these laws were only to protect women in non-ideal situations.

What is also ostensible is that the Old Testament, which contains numerous examples of polygamous families, shows that these families are generally not free from

rivalries (Instone-Brewer, 2000:75), though this did not seem to stop polygamy among the Israelites and their neighbours. This is likely to be the case today when people recognize the bad effects of polygamy but are still willing to practice it. The New Testament, on the other hand, does not seem to show deliberate interest in the issue of polygamy though some nuances of monogamy as the ideal form of marriage are inferred, especially about mutual respect and love. The New Testament church therefore, upholds monogamy as God's preferred form of marriage probably because of the general lack of instances of polygamy in the New Testament era and by their understanding of how Jesus intends marriage to be. Also, as Paul describes relationship in marriage, the needs of both the woman and the man must be considered. Therefore, in the opinion of the church, any form of marriage that prioritizes either the needs of the man or woman against the other is not acceptable. It is this mutual consideration for the needs of both the man and the woman that produces the desired sustainability that may keep husband and wife together "till death do them part" as commanded by Jesus himself. Consideration must also be given to the fact that the African Christian church today, like all other churches worldwide, is required to prioritize the teachings of Jesus and others in the New Testament over practices found in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the qualitative study, which is to understand the opinions on marriage among both Christians and non-Christians in the Anglican diocese of Tamale. Non-Christians are included because they form a great majority within the research location. This category of respondents is very useful for showing different attitudes and beliefs and will provide an excellent way to discover specific ways of thinking that need to be addressed by the church. However, the results among different Christian groups will also be identified and compared. The qualitative research explores the reasons for polygamy, especially among Anglican Christians, and how the Anglican Church's teaching on polygamy has faced and continues to face challenges because of the original culture of the people it seeks to convert and retain. This section gives a description of the study area, outlines the views of respondents according to questions asked and makes an analysis/discussion of these responses.

4.1.2 Geographical location of study

The study was carried out in the three regions forming the Anglican diocese of Tamale, namely: Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region.

The Northern Region occupies an area of approximately 70,383 square kilometres with a population of approximately 1,820,806. It is the largest region in Ghana in terms of land area. The major ethnic groups of the region are the Mole Dagbon (52.2%), the Gurma (21.8%) the Akan and the Guan (8.7%). Among the Mole Dagbon, the largest sub-groups are the Dagomba and the Mamprusi. More than half of the region (56.2%) is Muslim. The rest are largely adherents of traditional religion (21.3%), Christianity (19.3%) and other religious groups (3.3%).

The Upper East Region is located in the north-eastern corner of Ghana, between longitude 0° and 1° West and latitudes 10° 30' and 11° North. It is bordered to the north by Burkina Faso, the east by the Republic of Togo, the west by Sissala District in Upper West and the south by West Mamprusi District in Northern Region. The land is relatively flat with a few hills to the east and southeast. The total land area is about 8,842 square kilometres, which translates into 2.7 percent of the total land area of the country. The Region is noted for the patrilineal system of customary inheritance. The

main ethnic groups in the Region are the Mole-Dagbon, Grusi, Mande-Busanga and Gurma. Among the Mole-Dagbon, the Nabdam, Kusasi, Nankani/Gurense and Builsa are significant. The other significant sub-groups are the Kassena among the Grusi, the Busanga among the Mande-Busanga and the Bimoba among the Gurma. It has a total population of approximately 964,500.

Lastly, the Upper West Region covers a geographical area of approximately 18,478 square kilometres. The major ethnic groups are Dagaba, Sisaala and Wala. The total population of the region is 576,583. The three main religious groups are Islam (32.2%) Christianity (35.5%), and traditional religion (29.3%). Therefore, the Anglican diocese within which this study is done covers a geographical area of approximately 97,703 square kilometres with an estimated population of 3,461,889. The most popular religion is Islam.

4.2 Research Findings

All participants targeted for this research were reached and interviewed. The total number of participants was 200.

Research question 1: What is your gender?

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Male Respondents	118	59
Female Respondents	82	41
Total Number of respondents	200	100

The research findings show that the majority of respondents were male, forming 59% of responses and females are 41%.

Research question 2: What is your age group?

Age group	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
18-25 years	17	8.5
26-35 years	75	37.5
36-45 years	55	27.5
46-50 years	29	14.5

51 years and above	24	12
Total Number respondents	200	100

The age group distribution of respondents shows that the majority of respondents come from the ages between 26 and 35 years, which is 37.5% of responses and the lowest category of respondents is within the ages 18-25 years at 8.5% of responses. However, the two groups put together form 46% of the responses and are assumed to be the most active within the marriage bracket. This age is the stage at which males are generally content with one wife since their resources are just sufficient for two people. Issues of polygamy surface within the ages 36-50 forming 42% of responses. This is the stage at which people have experienced marriage and obtained resources that influence their need for an additional wife or otherwise. Their views are therefore very critical for this research. Those who are 50+ will generally be concerned about retirement but are able to share useful experiences on marriage.

Research question 3: What is the level of your education?

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and certificates below	25	12.5
Diploma Certificate or its equivalents	46	23
Higher National Diploma (HND) holders	31	15.5
Undergraduate Degree holders	36	18
Graduate Degree (Masters) holders	38	19
Philosophy Degree (PhD) holders	3	1.5
Other (illiterate)	21	10.5
Total Number of respondents	200	100

Education may be key in determining the attitude of people towards polygamy. It is generally believed that the higher your education the more likely you would prefer to be monogamous because of the assumption that you would be able to understand marriage well. However, the higher the education of a person, the more likely such a person's

resources would improve, and this improvement in resources has the tendency to influence a person's marriage decisions.

In this research the highest number of responses was derived from those with a Diploma Certificate or its equivalent (23% of total respondents). This group of respondents plus those with Higher National Diploma (HND) form 38.5% and are considered to be the category most active in marriage. First and second degree and PhD holders put together are also 38.5% of responses and form the category of respondents considered to be academically well placed and resourced and may contemplate practicing polygamy.

Research question 4: What is your religious affiliation?

Religious affiliation	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents (%)
Christians	170	85
Muslims	30	15
African Traditional Religion	0	0
Other	0	0
Total Number of respondents	200	100

The research was carried out in a generally multi-religious environment, so the views of non-Christians, especially Muslims, were also sought. Christians represent 85% of responses. Muslims form 15% of the responses. There is no respondent aligned to either the African Traditional religion or another religion. This is probably because most practitioners of African Traditional Religion prefer to identify with Muslims.

Research question 5: What position do you hold in your religion?

Position	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Pastors and Priests	23	11.5
Muslim Clerics/Imams	7	3.5
Church Elders	47	23.5
Ordinary Christians/Muslims	123	61.5
Total Number of respondents	200	100

The positions people occupy in the place of worship play an important role in decision-making. The higher the position, the greater the probability that such people would participate at very important forums where decisions are made to govern the place of worship. Ordinary members influence how decisions of the place of worship are received and adopted. It is this category of people that the laws generally affect because they are claimed to be ignorant and are under supervision to ensure they conform to the regulations of a particular religion. In this research this category of people are in the majority, totalling 61% of responses. Pastors and priests form 11.5% of responses. The priests are drawn from the Anglican (12) and Roman Catholic backgrounds (3), while the pastors are drawn from Charismatic/ Pentecostal (3) and Protestant churches (3). There are 2 respondents who described themselves as pastors in the Charismatic/Pentecostal church column but will subsequently be treated as just members. Seven Muslim clerics sometimes referred to as Imams, form 3.5% of responses. Those participants holding positions in their place of worship, known as elders, are 23.5% of responses.

Research question 6: Does your tribal culture allow polygamy?

Culture allows polygamy	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	179	89.5
No	21	10.5
Total Number of respondents	200	100

This question was asked to ascertain how many participants come from cultures that allow the practice of polygamy. 89.5% of respondents acknowledged that their cultures allow polygamy. However, the remaining 10.5% of respondents say that their cultures do not allow polygamy.

Research question 7a: Do you come from a polygamous home?

From polygamous home	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	145	72.5
No	55	27.5
Total Number of respondents	200	100

The majority of respondents say they come from polygamous homes, meaning that their parents practiced polygamy. Of the total respondents, 72.5% are from polygamous homes while 27.5% are from non-polygamous homes.

Research question 7b: If you are from a polygamous home, why do you think your father married a second or subsequent wife?

This probing question was asked of those from polygamous homes to ascertain in the first place whether they knew why their parents married a subsequent wife and whether they agreed with the reason(s) that led to that action. A few did not know why their parents married a subsequent wife but the majority assigned the following reasons for their parents marrying a subsequent wife:

i. To establish family links. For these respondents, their parents married because they wanted to strengthen family ties and establish links with other clans and families to ensure broader collaboration and relationships, and assurance of help in time of need. They believe that this system unites African families, making them close to each other, and that has ensured continuous safety and support for one another.

ii. The quest for many wives and children. This group of respondents hold the view that the quest for many wives and children played a role in the decision of their fathers to marry a subsequent wife. The act of marrying many wives and giving birth to many children, they say, brings respect to the family and is also a sign of affluence and social connectivity. Some said that in such circumstances the parent is convinced that with the birth of many girls who are expected to marry, in the event of his death, there would be many sons-in-law to perform his funeral. This anticipation is envisaged to lead to a grand funeral performance to mark the respect and affluence of the family. Other reasons include that the man is able to derive sexual satisfaction in terms of duration and variety from marrying more than one wife.

iii. Sexual satisfaction (alternative sex, variety). A man who desires long hours of sex would subject a woman to sexual pressure if he has just one wife, but where there are many wives, the pressure is distributed. It is this desire for sexual satisfaction that causes some men to marry an additional wife.

iv. Economic ability or muscle. When some African men improve financially, the first thing they imagine is how to marry another wife. It is this attitude that some respondents attributed to the reason for which their parent married another wife.

v. Royalty. Some African Christians are from royal families and royalty comes with certain expectations from both members of the royal family and those outside of it. For instance, the belief that a royal cannot have only one wife, the prestige associated with having more than one wife, the need to stay connected to other royal families and clans for social support are all reasons why those who come from royal families desire to have more than one wife. This desire is so strong that even royal converts to Christianity are still influenced by this.

vi. To support the first wife with house chores. There is an adage within the research area that a man with only one wife is not different from a bachelor. To be married means to have more than one wife. This belief is premised on the understanding that when the one wife travels there should be another at home to take care of the family and even when both are home to offer both physical and moral support to each other. It is this reasoning that has been attributed to why many African men marry a subsequent wife. Some first wives have in most cases advocated for their husband to take on another wife to support them with house chores and the general care of the family. Additionally, women who are without rivals in a marriage are viewed by society either as bad luck women or wicked women who want to keep the man solely to themselves. In cases of this nature, when the man dies, the woman is the first suspect for his death. These are reasons that have led some men to marry another wife.

vii. As a gift from another family or friend. To foster family ties, there are situations when a family offers a girl as a gift to another family. This is done for various reasons. It could be that the one offering the girl is from a low-class family who wants to elevate his family by marrying out someone from their clan to someone from a socially elevated clan such as a royal family, a wealthy family or a family known to give birth to people of admirable talents. Also, if two royal families seek to stay connected and in good relationship with each other, the one family would give out a girl in marriage as a sign of friendship. These social expectations are some reasons that have influenced why some fathers of respondents have married additional wives, since such gifts cannot be rejected. The rejection of such a gift means a refusal to accept a hand of friendship.

viii. Religious fulfilment. Some religions such as Islam and African Traditional Religion believe that marrying more than one wife is a religious requirement. It is this desire to adhere to religious requirements that has lured many African men into marrying additional wives.

ix. Old age of first wife. Most African cultures believe that it is only the woman who gets old but the man continues to be active (especially in sex) until death beckons them. For this reason, when a woman shows signs of old age, even if the man has no intentions to have an additional wife, he is encouraged by society to have one. In most cases it is even the first wife who would recommend to the husband to take on another wife, claiming that she is now old and unable to perform all her marital responsibilities to the full.

x. As a guarantee against a man's old age. Some African men believe that at old age their wives of a youthful marriage appear much older and weaker than they do. At this age their children are also grown and may have relocated. While the girls are all married and living with their husbands, the boys are either married and living on their own or have found jobs in other parts of the country. At that stage, the man claims to still be agile and lonely. In order to prove his agility and prevent loneliness, the man marries a much younger woman whom he believes would have sufficient time to cater for him. This is why some African men have married a subsequent wife, even at an old age.

xi. Because the first wife is giving birth to only girls. Giving birth to only girls is not a good omen in many African families. It is assumed that a woman who gives birth to only girls is an agent of the devil planted in the family to extinguish it. For instance, questions were asked about what would happen if all the girls grow up and get married. How would the lineage be sustained without boys to replace the fathers? For some families this is the reason why marrying more than one wife becomes necessary, and this is the case for most of these respondents.

Research question 8: Was his reason for marrying acceptable to you?

Reason Acceptable	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	130	89.7
No	15	10.3
Total number of respondents	145	100

This question is a follow-up question to question 7. If your parent married a subsequent wife, are you able to tell whether his reason for marrying is acceptable to you or not? Most respondents from a polygamous family background and answering in this column believe that the reasons for which their parents married were acceptable to them. In

other words, they agree that the marriage of another wife by their father was justified. 89.7% of respondents are those of the view that their fathers were justified for marrying an additional wife and that they agree with him. However, 10.3% of respondents disagree with the reasons that led their parents into marrying another wife.

Research question 9a: In your culture can a woman have sex during pregnancy?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	146	73
No	54	27
Total number of respondents	200	100

It is assumed by the researcher that sex is likely to be a reason why men would want to marry an additional wife. So the question was whether sex during pregnancy is acceptable in the culture of respondents. 73% of respondents acknowledge that sex is acceptable in their cultures during pregnancy. However, 27% of respondents claim that sex is not acceptable during pregnancy in their cultures. Their reasons are stated below in 9b.

Research question 9b: In your view why do you think your culture allows a woman to have sex or not to have sex during pregnancy?

Those who maintain that their cultures allow sex during pregnancy gave the following reasons;

- i. To control sexual urge because some men and women are unable to stay long without sex. In order not to interrupt the sexual life and needs of a couple, they are encouraged to continue with sex even during pregnancy.
- ii. Because it is not a taboo. Some respondents simply know that sex in pregnancy is not a taboo in their cultures but are not able to tell why it is not a taboo. The fact remains, however, that sex is understood to be permitted during pregnancy and this has been part of some cultures.
- iii. Belief that sex during this period creates intimacy and bonding between the unborn child and its parents. Some cultures believe that sex during pregnancy creates intimacy and bonding between parents and the unborn child. Apart from this, sex during pregnancy is also believed to be an ideal time for reconciling couples who may not be

on good terms and creates a desirable couple relationship, as communication during this period is considered to be emotional and genuine. This is the most suitable time for planning to receive the child and commitments are made to ensure that the woman gets a safe delivery.

iv. To aid the development of the foetus. For some respondents, sex during pregnancy lubricates the woman's sexual organ and birth channel and prepares the woman for quick and easy delivery. Sex during this period, they say, also supports the development of the foetus. Though this is not backed by any scientific study, respondents say that this has been their cultural understanding of why sex is necessary during pregnancy. Sex during pregnancy is described in some cultures as "nyoya duusigu" ("raising of nose" in the researcher's dialect), and women who try to avoid sex during pregnancy are chastised by the husband's family.

v. To prevent unfaithfulness of the husband. That sex during pregnancy prevents unfaithfulness because the man is unable to use the lack of sex at home as an excuse to have an extramarital affair. Therefore, in order to check men from indulging in sex outside the marriage, sex is highly recommended in some cultures even when the woman is pregnant.

vi. That giving sex to the husband is part of a woman's marital responsibility, and this responsibility cannot be undermined during pregnancy. The general understanding is that every woman owes the husband a responsibility to provide sex. This is one of the principal duties of a woman because it is through sex that the family is built and established. For this reason, sex must not be limited to time and condition. This means that at any time that the man needs sex from a woman he must have it, even if the woman is sick or pregnant. The only time a man is prohibited from having sex with his wife is when she is menstruating.

These reasons notwithstanding, there are those who claim that in their culture sex is not allowed during pregnancy, giving reasons as follows:

i. Belief that sex can cause miscarriage.

ii. That sex is a taboo during pregnancy but are not able to tell why it is a taboo. For such people taboos are not questioned; they are just believed because disobedience leads to punishment by the gods.

iii. That sex would hurt the unborn child. This belief centers on the understanding that sperm are dangerous for the unborn child and could cause damage to the body of the unborn child or even kill it. Additionally, if a man's penis was long, there is a possibility it might hurt the unborn child.

iv. That sex is a form of punishment for the woman during pregnancy. Those who hold this view claim that the only way a pregnant woman can have sex is from the back since the man cannot lie on her tummy, and only animals do sex through the back.

Research question 10a: Does your culture allow a woman to have sex while nursing a child?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	131	65.5
No	69	34.5
Total number of respondents	200	100

Sex while nursing a baby was one of the questions asked to determine how much sex plays a role in polygamy. In most African cultures the nursing of a child is considered to last for a minimum of three years. For this reason, it was assumed by the researcher that abstaining from sex during this period may play a role in the desire of men to have more than one wife. 65.5% of respondents agree that sex is allowed in their cultures during the nursing of a child. However, 34.5% of respondents said that in their cultures sex is not allowed while nursing a child. The reasons why in some cultures sex is allowed and prohibited in others are stated below in research question 10b.

Research question 10b: Why in your view do you think your culture allows a woman to either have sex or not have sex while nursing a baby?

This probing question provided further insight to why some cultures either allow or forbid sex during the nursing of a child. Respondents who said that their cultures allow sex while nursing a child offered one or more of the following reasons:

i. The woman who is nursing a child still has feelings for sex just as her husband. Sex during this period would therefore control the sexual urge of both the woman and her husband.

ii. It is not a taboo to have sex while nursing a child. For this category of respondents they have grown to hear that sex is not a taboo during the nursing of a child. They are, however, unable to tell why it is not a taboo.

iii. Belief that breast-feeding mothers cannot conceive. This appears to be one of the surprising responses considering that nursing a child takes up to almost three years in some cultures. To consider that a woman is unable to conceive during the whole of this period obviously defies scientific logic. This notwithstanding, some cultures believe that a woman breastfeeding a child cannot become pregnant. When questioned whether there has never been a case in their culture when a woman has become pregnant while still nursing a baby, the response was in the affirmative.

iv. Because sex is an essential part of marriage and cannot be postponed because of the nursing of a child. These respondents claim that one of the essential responsibilities of a wife in marriage is to provide sex for her husband any time he desires it (except during her menstrual period when the man himself avoids the wife because of the belief that a woman in her menses is unholy). Therefore, the only time during which the man is not allowed to have sex with his wife is 40 days after childbirth, which is assumed to be the woman's menstrual and recovery period.

v. Belief that sex has no negative effect on the growth and development of the child. Some cultures believe that sex during the nursing of a child has no effect on the development of the child. For this reason, they maintain that sex during this period is acceptable as long as the couple desire to have it.

vi. That there are some women who are unable to stay long without sex. For such woman, sex cannot be postponed during child nursing as she is likely to go through a lot of psychological challenges.

On the other hand, those who hold the view that their cultures do not allow sex during the nursing of a child gave reasons as follows:

i. Sex is avoided to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Despite claims by some cultures that a nursing mother cannot become pregnant, others argue that sex is avoided during this period to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

ii. Sex during the nursing of a child would make the child sick. That sex during the nursing of a child has the effect of causing some notable sicknesses in the child. Some

of the sicknesses were named to include stunting, becoming permanently weak and feeble and mental retardation.

iii. Sex during child nursing dilutes the breast milk and may kill the child. Some have claimed that sex during pregnancy might kill the child since the breast milk of the woman is diluted to an extent that the child has the tendency to be malnourished and sick beyond revival. For this reason, sex during this period is strictly unacceptable. People in this category of respondents claim that in their cultures sex during the nursing of a child is compared with murder since it would mean that the man wants to kill the baby.

iv. Sex during child nursing is culturally unholy. Some cultures assume that once a woman delivers she has become unholy until after a certain period of time. During this period she is not allowed to cook for her husband and sex is prohibited until the child has begun to walk.

v. Women who deliver need some time (at least three years) to recover and should not be bothered with sex. For this reason, the woman is expected to leave the husband's home and stay with her parents during this period to ensure that the husband does not have sex with her.

vi. Avoiding sex during the nursing of children helps in planning childbirths. Some have claimed that avoiding sex during child nursing is a family planning method. In order to ensure that children are spaced sufficiently and allowed to grow healthy, sex is not allowed during the nursing of a child.

Research question 11a: In your view, does God prohibit polygamy?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	85	42.5	83	97.6	2	2.4
No	115	57.5	87	75.7	28	24.3
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

This question was intended to obtain people's views on their understanding of the will of God in polygamy. 42.5% of respondents say God prohibits polygamy. 97.6% of those who argue God prohibits polygamy are Christians and 2.4% are Muslims. Also, 57.5%

of respondents say God does not prohibit polygamy. 75.7% in this category are Christians and 24.3% (which is 97.6% of Muslim respondents) are Muslims.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 11			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	11	91.7	1	8.3
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	6	66.7	3	33.3
3	Anglicans	50	14	28	36	72
4	Catholics	20	11	55	9	45
5	Protestants	20	9	45	11	55
6	Pentecostals	20	18	90	2	10

The majority of Anglican clergy (91.7%) believe that God prohibits polygamy but the majority (72%) of ordinary Anglicans believe the contrary. The majority (55%) of Protestants also believe God is not against polygamy. Thus, the majority of all other groups except ordinary Anglicans and Protestants believe God is against polygamy.

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents M/F	Responses to Q11							
		Yes				No			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	43	42.2	43	63.2	59	57.8	25	36.8
Muslim	16/14	2	12.5	0	0	14	87.5	14	100
Total	118/82	45	38.1	43	52.4	73	61.9	39	47.6

The majority of Christian women (63.2%) believe that God is against polygamy while 42.2% of Christian men believe the same. On the contrary, 57.8% of men hold the view that God is not against polygamy. 12.5% of Muslim male respondents believe that God is against polygamy while all Muslim female respondents hold the contrary view.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Response to Q11			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	7	41.2	10	58.8
26-35 years	75	14	18.7	61	81.3
36-45 years	55	20	36.4	35	63.6
46-50 years	29	11	37.9	18	62.1
51+	24	6	25	18	75
Total	200	85	42.5	115	57.5

The majority of respondents in all the age groups believe that God does not prohibit polygamy. The most outstanding group with this opinion (81.3%) are those within the age group 26-35 years.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q11			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	7	28	18	72
Diploma or its equivalent	46	19	41.3	27	58.7
Higher National Diploma	31	16	51.6	15	48.4
Undergraduate Degree	36	14	38.9	22	61.1
Graduate degree	38	21	55.3	17	44.7
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	6	28.6	15	71.4
Total	200	85	42.5	115	57.5

Those with PhD (66.7%), graduate degree holders (55.3%), and Higher National Diploma holders (51.6%) are those in the majority who believe that God is against polygamy. However, the majority at all other levels of education are of the view that God does not prohibit polygamy.

Research question 11b: In your view why do you think God prohibits or does not prohibit polygamy?

Those who hold the view that God prohibits polygamy submitted reasons for their opinion as follows:

- i. That God prohibits polygamy as long as Christianity permits marriage to only one wife.
- ii. That because during creation God found it prudent to create only one woman for the man, it presupposes that God permits only the marriage of one woman.
- iii. Because of challenges associated with polygamy. Some have claimed that polygamy is inundated with a lot of social, political, economic and emotional challenges that God would not want to be associated with such a practice.
- iv. Because a man cannot love two or more women equally. This set of respondents argue that it is practically impossible for a man to love more than one wife with equity, and that God is a God of equity who would not endorse a practice where there is no equal treatment.
- v. Because God created everything in pairs to demonstrate his desire for humanity in marriage. For this group of opinions, that God demonstrated his will in marriage is demonstrated by the pairings he made when he was going to save Noah and his family from the flood. He took a pair of every living creature and this means that God would prefer monogamy than polygamy.

For those respondents (87 Christians and 28 Muslims) who hold that God does not prohibit polygamy, this is what they had to say:

- i. That there are examples of polygamy in the Bible. Since many patriarchs are identified in the Bible to have practiced polygamy, this group of respondents hold the view that if polygamy was not favoured by God he would not allow them to marry more than one.
- ii. That the only statement directly made on polygamy in the Bible is in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3.2) and is made only against church leaders.
- iii. That no verse in the Bible condemns polygamy.
- iv. That God never punished polygamists in the Bible. They were rather his friends and favourites.
- v. That God's command to mankind to multiply and fill the earth presupposes that God was in a hurry to have the earth filled and the only way that men could do this was to marry multiple wives.

vi. That because it is not clearly stated anywhere in the Bible on whether polygamy is acceptable or not, many commentators have provided varied interpretations of the texts on polygamy. Therefore, it is inappropriate to conclude that polygamy is wrong and monogamy is right.

vii. That polygamy is the culture of many people and God is not against culture, therefore, he cannot be against polygamy.

viii. That God made men polygamous by making the desire for more than one woman in them. This is why a man cannot be with only one woman, and those who are compelled to do so by their religious authorities break the rule by going behind the backs of their wives. A respondent said, “This is why a man would be sitting with his beautiful wife and yet admire another woman who is just passing by”.

Research question 12a: In your view is the Bible against polygamy?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	108	54	106	98.1	2	1.9
No	92	46	64	69.6	28	30.4
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

This question was asked of all participants, and Muslims were told that the Bible refers to the Christian Bible and not to the Quran. However, it must be acknowledged that Muslim respondents are very unlikely to know the Bible as well as Christians do, so it is the views of Christians which will be considered the most significant. 54% of respondents agree that the Bible is against polygamy and a significant number of these respondents (98.1%) are Christians. However, 46% of respondents said the Bible is not against polygamy, and 69.6% of those in this category are Christians.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 12			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	11	91.7	1	8.3
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	6	66.7	3	33.3
3	Anglicans	50	33	66	17	34
4	Catholics	20	19	95	1	5
5	Protestants	20	13	65	7	35
6	Pentecostals	20	11	55	9	45

The majority in all denominations hold the view that the Bible is against polygamy. The most outstanding categories are Catholics (95%) followed by Anglican clergy (91.7%).

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents	Responses to Q12							
		Yes				No			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	62	60.8	44	64.7	40	39.2	24	35.3
Muslim	16/14	2	12.5	0	0	14	87.5	14	100
Total	118/82	64	54.2	44	53.7	54	45.8	38	46.3

The majority of Christian female respondents (approximately 65%) believe the Bible is against polygamy and 60.8% of their male counterparts believe the same. Unlike their Christian counterparts, all female Muslim respondents believe that the Bible is not against polygamy. But 12.5% of Muslim male respondents believe the Bible is against polygamy.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q12			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	10	58.8	7	41.2
26-35 years	75	50	66.7	25	33.3
36-45 years	55	30	54.5	25	45.5
46-50 years	29	10	34.5	19	65.5
51+	24	9	37.5	15	62.5
Total	200	108	54	92	46

The majority of respondents within the age group 18-45 years, forming 45% of responses, say the Bible is against polygamy. But the majority of responses between the ages 46 to above 50 years, forming 17% of responses, argue the Bible is not against polygamy.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q12			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	15	60	10	40
Diploma or its equivalent	46	32	69.6	14	30.4
Higher National Diploma	31	19	61.3	12	38.7
Undergraduate Degree	36	13	36.1	23	63.9
Graduate degree	38	22	57.9	16	42.1
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	5	23.8	16	76.2
Total	200	108	54	92	46

Apart from undergraduate holders and those at other levels of education, the majority at all the levels of education believe the Bible is against polygamy. 76.2% of respondents at other educational levels and 63.9% of undergraduate degree holders believe the Bible is not against polygamy.

Research question 12b: Why do you think the Bible is against or not against polygamy?

Reasons given by respondents to support the claim that the Bible is against polygamy are as follows:

i. Using references from Mark 10:7-9, 1 Corinthians 7:1ff, Genesis 17:21, and John 8:28, some respondents claim that both Jesus and Saint Paul said marriage from the beginning was monogamous. And if marriage from the beginning has been described as monogamous, it means that the Bible accepts no form of marriage except monogamy.

ii. Love cannot be shared between more than one man and one woman. For this category of respondents there is no way the love of a man in marriage can be shown to more than one wife. They observed that, in the first place, if the man loved the first wife sufficiently, he would not marry a second wife. Therefore, marrying a second wife presupposes that there is dissatisfaction and the Bible frowns on such an attitude that is likely to lead to hate and disunity.

iii. Because it is economically difficult to cater for more than one woman. Apart from the challenge associated with loving more than one wife, others claimed that it is expensive to cater for more than one wife because that naturally means more children. Because of this, the Bible has preferred that men should marry only one wife so that they are able to take very good care of both the wife and children.

iv. God forbids polygamy, and that is why he created only one woman for the man. For some, God simply forbids polygamy and to prove his dislike for it, he created only one woman from the beginning for the man. Therefore, to marry more than one wife means disobeying God's will in marriage and this is biblically unacceptable.

v. All polygamists were punished in the Bible, according to some respondents. For such people, the children of David are a testimony of how God punishes polygamy when he turns the children and their mothers against each other. They suppose that even though God did not openly rebuke polygamy, his attitude towards polygamous families attested to his dislike for it.

vi. The Bible says only one wife. For some, the Bible is clear that a man should marry only one wife. Though such claimants were unable to point to any particular evidence from the Bible, they still believe that every discussion in the Bible on marriage points to having only one wife as a source of proper and happy marriage.

This notwithstanding, others have advanced reasons why they believe the Bible accepts polygamy to include the following:

i. That the Bible is not against polygamy but verses on marriage have been misinterpreted to suit personal and doctrinal purposes.

ii. To avoid lust. For this group of respondents, the Bible allows polygamy because that is a means of resolving lust among married men. They suppose that marrying another woman broadens the sex base of the man and has the potential to curtail any sexual exploits outside the marriage.

iii. Others have concluded that the Bible only says “multiply and fill the earth” but does not indicate how this would be achieved. And since mankind was given dominion over everything including the right to take initiatives, it is not out of a man’s way to marry multiple wives in order to make the command of God to fill the earth come true. Marrying more than one wife is therefore acceptable in their view.

iv. Others observe that God has blessed polygamous families in the Bible (Genesis 4:19, 29, Genesis 4:18-29, 1 Kings 11:3). If polygamy were not acceptable to God he would not have such a wonderful relationship with men who were polygamous.

v. No verse in the Bible prohibits polygamy. No verse in the entire Bible is very clear on the claim that God prohibits polygamy. The group of respondents who hold this view observe that all the verses from the Bible that are used against polygamy are debatable and are influenced by the biases of those who interpret them. Those who are against polygamy can find elements within those verses to support their claims whereas those who are also for polygamy can also do the same. “It is, therefore”, they say, “unfair to conclude on verses that are not clear, especially when dealing with an important issue such as polygamy”.

vi. Only bishops are forbidden from marrying more than one wife. For this group of respondents, the only portion of the Bible that is clear on polygamy is that which Saint Paul discusses on the qualities of a bishop and deacon respectively in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:12. They claim that 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 are very specific on which type of Christian must “be the husband of one wife”, and that is the bishop and the deacon. The general intent of the verses is to prohibit church leaders from marrying more than one wife. For those with this view, if God were against polygamy then Paul would have clearly stated that all Christian men must marry only one wife instead of singling out

church leaders. It is, therefore, out of place to conclude that every Christian should marry only one wife.

Research question 13a: Do you agree with those who teach that polygamy is sin?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	66	33	66	100	0	0
No	134	67	104	77.6	30	22.4
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

Sin in the Anglican Church context is understood to mean transgression of the law of God and rebellion against God. This question is therefore aimed at soliciting whether the polygamist is transgressing the law of God on marriage. All of those who agree that polygamy is sin are Christians and 77.6% of those who disagree are also Christians. 67% of all responses are united that polygamy should not be viewed as sin while 33% hold the contrary view. However, all Muslims responding to this question are of the view that polygamy should not be taught as sin.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 13			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	10	83.3	2	16.7
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	5	55.6	4	44.4
3	Anglicans	50	10	20	40	80
4	Catholics	20	15	75	5	25
5	Protestants	20	10	50	10	50
6	Pentecostals	20	9	45	11	55

The majority in all Christian denominations except ordinary Anglicans (80%) and Pentecostals (45%) agree polygamy is sin. Protestants are also equally divided on this issue (50/50).

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents M/F	Responses to Q13							
		Yes				No			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	43	42.2	23	33.8	59	57.8	45	66.2
Muslim	16/14	0	0	0	0	16	100	14	100
Total	118/82	43	36.4	23	28	75	63.6	59	72

The majority in both sexes do not agree with those who teach that polygamy is sin. While some Christian men hold one view, some women hold the contrary. However, all Muslim female and male respondents hold the view that polygamy is not sin.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q13			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	5	29.4	12	70.6
26-35 years	75	20	26.7	55	73.3
36-45 years	55	23	41.8	32	58.2
46-50 years	29	11	37.9	18	62.1
51+	24	13	54.2	11	45.8
Total	200	72	36	128	64

Except the age group 51+ where the majority (54.2%) agree with those who teach that polygamy is sin, the majority in all other age groups believe polygamy is not sin.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q13			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	9	36	16	64
Diploma or its equivalent	46	25	54.3	21	45.7
Higher National Diploma	31	12	38.7	19	61.3
Undergraduate Degree	36	14	38.9	22	61.1
Graduate degree	38	8	21	30	79
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	2	9.5	19	90.5
Total	200	72	36	128	64

Apart from the majority of PhD holders (67%) and diploma or its equivalent holders (54.3%), the rest do not agree with the view that polygamy is taught as sin. The majority (90.5%) of those with the least education (other, including illiterates), believe polygamy is not sin.

Research question 13b: In your view why do you agree or not agree with those who teach that polygamy is sin?

Those who hold that polygamy is sin present the following reasons:

- i. That polygamy is sin because the Bible prohibits it. 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 and 1 Corinthians 7:2 were verses quoted to substantiate this claim.
- ii. That because a man cannot love more than one wife equally, marrying more than one would mean treating one unfairly against the other and that is sin.
- iii. To avoid conflicts associated with polygamy. Others have maintained that polygamy is synonymous with conflict and quarrels. Therefore, in order to avoid conflict and quarrels that lead to sin, it is better to marry only one wife.
- iv. Because the Church teaches against polygamy. For others, polygamy is sin as long as the Church teaches and preaches against it. Their understanding is that if polygamy were not sin the Church would not teach or preach against it.
- v. Polygamy leads to deceit. This group of respondents believe that polygamy leads to deceit. That a man with two or more wives is not able to keep them without telling lies to sustain the relationship. For instance, they would not imagine what conversation goes on when the husband is with the one wife and what goes on when he is with the other. For them, the husband would have to tell lies to convince the two or more wives to continue to live with him as their husband.
- vi. Polygamy leads to discrimination. This group of respondents are of the view that polygamy leads to discrimination of the man between the wives and the children. That the children of the woman who is most loved by the husband are more favoured than the children of the woman who is less loved. This discrimination also affects how the children of the separate wives relate. Children of the same mother would discriminate against children of the other wife. In all of these, the ultimate result is the lack of peace and harmony. And where there is no peace, Satan reigns.

Those who are of the view that polygamy is not sin had this to say:

i. That salvation, which is the main purpose for being a Christian, is not tied to polygamy, since it is not the number of women you marry that determines your righteousness. They claim that what matters most in Christian worship is love, and marrying more than one wife is a clear demonstration of the love that all Christians are called to share. Marrying one wife while other women move around without husbands for them, is a sign of greed and selfishness on the part of the man.

ii. Polygamy is a natural phenomenon in human history. Others have argued that polygamy is historically the main form of marriage among human beings. Though God created only one woman for the man, the man through his own initiative and divine instinct recognized the importance of plural marriages since time immemorial. This they claim is what has sustained society for decades and centuries.

iii. Some claim that God blesses those who are having more than one wife because they are helping in fulfilling his commandment to multiply and fill the earth. That men who agree to marry have a special blessing but those who marry more than one wife have additional blessings from God.

iv. That if polygamy were sin, God would have provided a clear instruction or command in the Bible on it. That when God wanted to be clear on the do's and don'ts of the Jewish community during the time of Moses he gave them ten clear commandments, and if polygamy were one of the things detested by God he would have made it clear in the Commandments. But since the Ten Commandments are not clear on polygamy, one may conclude that the issue of polygamy was not of special concern to God. That polygamy only requires fair treatment to wives and children but is not against God's will.

v. Polygamy is neither fornication nor adultery. Others have argued that those who associate polygamy with adultery or fornication have either confused the two or have very little understanding of polygamy. For such respondents, polygamy is a legal act in the society and having sex with any member within the polygamous cycle is not considered a crime in the culture where it is accepted. And since Christianity is practiced within cultures, the practice of polygamy must be judged against the context of the culture of the people within which it is practiced. That those who condemn

polygamy are only practicing a doctrine which is a man-made rule against culture, but God has condemned neither culture nor polygamy.

vi. Rather than considering polygamy as adultery or fornication, others have claimed it rather prevents both and discourages infidelity. For those who hold this view, a polygamous husband who has alternative sex options is more sexually disciplined than a monogamous husband.

vii. Some respondents observed that even though God created women to be more numerous than men, he still desires that all women must be married. For this reason, they argue that “common sense tells that men are indirectly requested by God to marry more than one”. This category of respondents is convinced that men who refuse to marry the excess women in their community are violating God’s will in the lives of women.

viii. Polygamy leads to competition among wives and children and this leads to high productivity. Though some have observed that polygamy leads to unhealthy competition among wives and children in a polygamous home, this category of respondents has a different view. For them polygamy makes all the children and wives in a polygamous setting want to excel to prove to the others that they have capacity to contribute more to the development of the entire family. They therefore try to do their best outside the home to lift them above the others in order that when the entire family is gathered for family programmes and activities, they would be seen to be better than the rest. In such situations, both the wives and children in the polygamous family believe that their relevance is determined by how much they are able to contribute to the family growth. This automatically leads to competition among wives and children and leads to high productivity.

ix. Polygamy prevents or minimizes homosexuality. Some respondents hold the view that in communities where polygamy is prohibited there is a high predisposition for homosexual activities to increase. They claim that some women are compelled to marry other women because the men are either in short supply or have refused to marry them. Therefore, to satisfy their sexual need, which is natural, they resort to engaging with one another to achieve this aim.

Research question 14. Why do you think the Church teaches against polygamy?

This was a general question asked to assess the understanding of participants on the stance of the Church against polygamy. These are cumulative responses from all 170 Christians and 30 Muslims. Responses that were the same are not repeated:

- i. To make Church leaders accountable to the Church. Some have claimed that the Church teaches against polygamy because that is a way by which the Church would be able to make her leaders pay attention to activities of the Church rather than get involved in marriage affairs. Thus, in the view of others, an undivided attention to the service of the Church as alluded to by Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 is intended by the Church's teaching against polygamy.
- ii. That the Church's teaching on polygamy is influenced by Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians. In Saint Paul's response to the letter from the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 7, he deals with a variety of subjects, the first of which is marriage. Paul says "Now for the matters you wrote about: it is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband..." (1 Corinthians 7:16 NIV). For this category of respondents, the Church's stance on polygamy is influenced by this statement on marriage from Paul.
- iii. Because polygamy breeds enmity. Others have claimed that polygamy breeds enmity in the family. This is because the two or more wives in the family continue to engage in unhealthy competition for both the attention of the man and personal development. And because the Church wants her members to commit more to Church activities and God's worship than engage in family disputes, and because the Church teaches love, unity and peace and polygamy does not espouse these principles, the Church finds it prudent to restrict her members from practicing polygamy.
- iv. That the Church teaches against polygamy because it is expensive. The Church therefore wants her members to refrain from marrying more than one wife in order to be able to take care of the one wife and her children. The Church wants families to be able to manage their resources and families well, and therefore teaches against polygamy and favours monogamy.
- v. Because a man cannot love two or more women equally.
- vi. Polygamy leads to child delinquency and theft. These respondents are convinced that because polygamy is expensive, polygamous parents are unable to take proper care of

their children, leading to delinquency and theft. To avoid this type of situation, the Church prohibits its members from engaging in polygamous relationships.

vii. God requires each man to love only one woman. In Matthew 19:3, the Pharisees asked Jesus whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds. In response, Jesus said, “Haven’t you read ... that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female ... For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh” (Matthew 19:4-5). Referring to these verses, some respondents claim that God requires a man to love only one woman. For this category of respondents, the Church’s teaching against polygamy is scriptural.

viii. Because the Church is desperately protecting its doctrine. Others do not believe that the stance of the Church against polygamy is scriptural. However, they claim that the stance of the Church against polygamy is a doctrine that has insufficient biblical support.

ix. It is Western culture that has been adopted by the Church and used universally across all cultures. For some respondents, the Church’s stance against polygamy is a borrowed element of culture from the West. They claim that early missionaries were not familiar with polygamy and therefore criticized and condemned it, putting in its place the familiar practice of monogamy that was widely practiced in the West. That early missionaries successfully misled early African Christian converts to believe that polygamy was unacceptable, and the Church has capitalized on this compromise.

x. The Church wants to control the family size of its members, especially African converts. For others, the Church realized that the African family size was growing larger. In order to control this growth, the Church introduced and emphasized the marriage of one wife as a population control measure.

xi. The disadvantages of polygamy are more than its advantages. Some respondents believe that polygamy has more disadvantages than monogamy. And since the church has both a spiritual and physical responsibility over the lives of her members, she would prefer that members adopt better options in life, hence the rule against marrying more than one wife.

xii. Because of the use of isolated and unclear verses that suggest monogamy in the Bible. Others have accused the Church of discriminately using scriptural verses that are

unclear to justify her stance on polygamy. For this group of people, the initial interpreters of the verses against polygamy had a hidden agenda because those verses are unclear.

Research question 15a: Should the Church punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	57	28.5	57	100	0	0
No	143	71.5	113	79	30	21
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

If polygamy is sin, then there should be sanctions against those who practice it, and if it is not sin, then the Church should not punish those who practice it. This question assesses the views of participants on whether the church should punish polygamists. 28.5% of respondents who all happened to be Christians agree the church should punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. However, 71.5% of respondents do not agree that the church should punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. It is also important to note that all Muslim respondents argue that the Church should not punish those who violate the Church's teaching on polygamy.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 15			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	4	33.3	8	66.7
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	5	55.6	4	44.4
3	Anglicans	50	9	18	41	82
4	Catholics	20	7	35	13	65
5	Protestants	20	9	45	11	55
6	Pentecostals	20	12	60	8	40

The majority of Pentecostals (60%) and non-Anglican clergy (55.6%) are the group of Christians in the majority who have the opinion that the Church should punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. The majority in all other denominations hold the view that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. The

views of the majority of both Anglican Clergy (66.7%) and their members (82%) are pronounced on this view.

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents M/F	Responses to Q15							
		Yes				No			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	26	25.5	31	45.6	76	74.5	37	54.4
Muslim	16/14	0	0	0	0	16	100	14	100
Total	118/82	26	22	31	37.8	92	78	51	62.2

The majority view among both sexes in both Christianity and Islam is that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. 74.5% of Christian males and 54.4% of females hold this view, while Muslim male and female respondents are unanimous on the view that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q15			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	3	17.6	14	82.4
26-35 years	75	17	22.7	58	77.3
36-45 years	55	18	32.7	37	67.3
46-50 years	29	9	31	20	69
51+	24	10	41.7	14	58.3
Total	200	57	28.5	143	71.5

In all age groups the majority view is that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. The most pronounced age group is 18-25 years and 26-35 years where 82.4% and 77.3% respectively believe that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q15			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	7	28	18	72
Diploma or its equivalent	46	20	43.5	26	56.5
Higher National Diploma	31	9	29	22	71
Undergraduate Degree	36	9	25	27	75
Graduate degree	38	8	21	30	79
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	2	9.5	19	90.5
Total	200	57	28.5	143	71.5

All levels of education except PhD holders (66.7%) are of the view that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. The group with the most strongly held view are those with other forms of education including illiterates (approximately 91%).

Research question 15b: Why should the church punish or not punish her members who violate its teaching on polygamy?

The following reasons are given by those who claim that the church should punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy.

- i. That once a rule is given and broken, the culprit must necessarily be punished. The Church should therefore punish all who violate its doctrines including her teaching on polygamy. They conclude that people must be compelled to obey the Bible. “If you follow a religion, you must be willing to accept its rules and regulations,” they say.
- ii. That punishment would deter others from doing the same. For these respondents, punishing those who violate the rule on marriage would serve to deter many others who may be contemplating doing the same. To punish them means a strong warning and demonstration of the Church’s determination to preserve its rules and canons.
- iii. That polygamy is against God’s commandment on marriage because the Bible says so, and anyone who violates God’s command must be punished. Despite claims that polygamy is cultural, the Bible must be considered first above any cultural practice.
- iv. Some have offered conditional reasons under which the Church should punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy. For these respondents, even though they agree

that the Church should punish those who are in error of its teaching, the Church must also show unambiguous evidence from the Bible that prescribes how polygamists should be punished. Otherwise, the Church might also end up prescribing wrong and unjust punishments.

The majority of respondents who hold the view that those who violate the Church's teaching on polygamy should not be punished presented the following reasons:

- i. The Bible is clear on the issue that we should not judge one another. Therefore, to punish polygamists in the Church means violating God's command not to judge others.
- ii. Punishment would make many members leave the Church, either for other churches (since other churches accept polygamists as long as they are polygamists before conversion to Christianity. Such victims would go to other churches as if that was their first time in church and would be accepted) or join different religions that are not against polygamy, such as Islam and African Traditional Religion.
- iii. There is no prescription for punishment in the Bible for those who practice polygamy, so the Church would not be right in punishing those who violate her teaching on polygamy without showing punishment procedures from the Bible.
- iv. Polygamy is not against God's will because such people are legally married and accepted by the society in which they live, and since religion is part of culture, Christianity must respect things of culture.
- v. That God can save those with more than one wife. This category of respondents is of the view that God is able to save those who have more than one wife. Since the ultimate desire of every Christian believer is to inherit the eternal kingdom, marriage in itself is not a factor for being saved. In the opinion of such respondents, this is why Jesus reminds Christian believers that there is no marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:29-30).
- vi. That some women are able to pretend to be the ideal woman until they are married. But after marriage they become the direct opposite of what they were before their husbands desired to marry them. This makes the couple incompatible. But because in most African cultures divorce is detested and polygamy encouraged, the man is likely to marry another wife. In that case, the man is marrying an additional wife to prevent another issue (divorce). For this reason, such people should not be punished. A respondent said, "If I did not marry a second wife, I may have been dead by now because my first wife was more than hell in my life."

vii. Others have proposed that there are better ways such as counselling, teaching and motivation that are more effective in discouraging people from marrying more than one wife, but the Church has failed to employ them effectively. Therefore, many have married additional wives because the Church has failed to do enough to stop them in the first place and has no moral justification to punish such people.

viii. Some maintain that emphasizing the advantages and disadvantages of both polygamy and monogamy would have a better effect on Christian attitudes towards polygamy than the use of verses from the Bible that in their view are unclear, to condemn polygamy.

ix. That since one of the main teachings of the Church is derived from Jesus' call to all members to practice forgiveness (an important emphasis in the only prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, the Lord's Prayer), forgiveness must be the first attitude of the church when members violate its teaching on polygamy.

x. People should be allowed to live out what they believe. For some, marriage and churchgoing should be separated and members should be allowed to live out their faith. It is through the freedom to exercise one's faith that the Church would determine to what extent its teachings are accepted, understood or contested. They argue that when the Church's teaching on an issue is violated over a sustained period of time, the Church must pause to examine whether it is itself not in the wrong. Punishment is therefore not the best option for understanding why people would want to practice polygamy despite the Church's stance against it.

Research question 16a: Is the practice of polygamy still relevant in Africa today (for that matter, the diocese of Tamale)?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	157	78.5	127	80.9	30	19.1
No	43	21.5	43	100	0	0
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

This question was intended to know people's views on whether polygamy is relevant in the context of their cultures today. 78.5% of respondents observed that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today. However, 21.5% of respondents are of the opinion that

polygamy is no longer relevant in Africa today. Of those who believe polygamy is relevant today, 80.9% of them are Christians. All Muslim respondents believe polygamy is relevant in Africa today. The reasons for the various views are noted below in research question 16b.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 16			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	7	58.3	5	41.7
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	8	88.9	1	11.1
3	Anglicans	50	41	82	9	18
4	Catholics	20	12	60	8	40
5	Protestants	20	12	60	8	40
6	Pentecostals	20	14	70	6	30

The majority in all denominations believe that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today. Non-Anglican clergy and Anglican members are those with the majority who hold this view.

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents M/F	Responses to Q16							
		YES				NO			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	86	84.3	41	60.3	16	15.7	27	39.7
Muslim	16/14	16	100	14	100	0	0	0	0
Total	118/82	102	86.4	55	67.1	16	13.6	27	32.9

84.3% of male respondents are of the view that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today and 60.3% of women believe the same. The majority of both male and female Muslim respondents express the opinion that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today, although a higher percentage of men hold this view.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q16			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	11	64.7	6	35.3
26-35 years	75	63	84	12	16
36-45 years	55	48	87.3	7	12.7
46-50 years	29	20	69	9	31
51+	24	15	62.5	9	37.5
Total	200	157	78.5	43	21.5

The majority in all age groups believe that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today. The age groups 25-35 (63%) and 36-45 (48%) are the groups with the majority view that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q16			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	17	68	8	32
Diploma or its equivalent	46	37	80.4	9	19.6
Higher National Diploma	31	23	74.2	8	25.8
Undergraduate Degree	36	29	80.6	7	19.4
Graduate degree	38	29	76.3	9	23.7
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	20	95.2	1	4.8
Total	200	157	78.5	43	21.5

The majority at all levels of education agree that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today. Diploma or its equivalent holders (80.4%) and undergraduate degree holders (80%) have the strongest opinion on the view that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today.

Research question 16b: Why in your view do you think that polygamy is either still relevant or not relevant in Africa today? Those who believe that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today had this to say:

- i. That polygamy unites clans in Africa. They argue that the African culture is anchored by tribes and clans, and anything that keeps the clan united is upheld without

compromise. According to them, marrying from different clans is a great source of building relationships and this relationship is a guarantee of security even today in the African understanding.

ii. That most African activities and functions still require and encourage polygamy. Those who think this way believe that the African way of life, thus their culture, is built around polygamy to the extent that polygamy is almost synonymous with their daily thinking and actions. They stated that funerals, weddings and naming ceremonies are some social scenes at which people are judged by how they are connected to the different groups of people around them. The commonest means of building these social relationships is determined by the number of wives married from different tribes and clans.

iii. That some African men cannot be satisfied sexually by only one woman. Some respondents have indicated that many African men are unable to relate with only one woman. They claim that sex with one woman is boring for many African men. Polygamy, therefore, helps in controlling sexual misconduct.

iv. That in many African societies, women continue to be more numerous than men, thereby making women more available for marriage than their male counterparts. This imbalance they believe continues to fuel the urge in most African men to marry more than one wife.

v. That the desire for more children for both prestige and labour support reasons is still as relevant in Africa as it has been in the past. Polygamy is a social requirement for positions in many African societies. The number of wives and children one has presupposes one's ability to control and manage people. It determines not only one's ability to motivate and encourage in order to achieve desirable results but also tells how patient one can be in crowd management or in a leadership position. Additionally, the majority of Africans are still illiterate, rural farmers with little financial resources. This category of people depends mainly on subsistence farming that requires human labour, and since the majority of Africans are still illiterate, subsistent farmers, polygamy will continue to prevail.

vi. One other reason that sustains polygamy is the aspect of unforeseen circumstances in the African marriage. For instance, if after marriage a situation arises that requires the African man to marry another woman, it is generally very difficult to object. Such

situations include the death of a senior brother who leaves behind a young lady whose dowry had just recently been paid or when a woman is betrothed to a father who feels he is aged and would not want to marry again. In such circumstances, one of his sons or junior brothers may be requested to marry her irrespective of whether he is already married or not. This has been a long-time practice in Africa and continues to be practiced today.

vii. Many African families are still dominated by non-Christians, thereby influencing the attitude of the minority Christian members in the family. This is especially the case where the elders in the family are non-Christians and all family decisions are taken by them on behalf of the entire family.

Respondents who believe that polygamy is not relevant in Africa today presented their reasons as follows;

- i. That polygamy used to be relatively economically cheap but is expensive today.
- ii. That polygamy breeds family quarrels and causes disunity among family members.
- iii. That farming, which was a main driver in the quest for polygamy, is no longer widespread. The majority of farmlands have been used for housing and industrial purposes, farming has generally been considered unexciting because of unstable rain patterns, and educational factors have relocated the majority of rural folks to urban areas. This means that many Africans are now abandoning farming for white collar jobs and are adopting western family lives. Therefore, marrying many women as a means to acquiring labour for farming purposes has become irrelevant.

Research question 17a: Should African Christians be allowed to practice polygamy?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	70	35	46	65.7	24	34.3
No	130	65	124	95.4	6	4.6
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

This question assessed the views of participants on whether African Christians should be allowed to practice polygamy. Despite the overwhelming view by both Christians and Muslims that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today, the results of this question

suggest that African Christians have a different opinion when it comes to allowing the practice of polygamy in the Church. 65% of respondents are of the view that Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy while 35% have no issue with African Christians participating in the practice of polygamy. Of those who maintain Christians should be disassociated from polygamy, 95.4% are Christians and 4.6% are Muslims. Again, of those who have no issue with Christians participating in polygamy 65.7% are Christians and 34.3% are Muslims. The reasons for both views are stated in question 17b below.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 17			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	3	25	9	75
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	2	22.2	7	77.8
3	Anglicans	50	11	22	39	78
4	Catholics	20	2	10	18	90
5	Protestants	20	7	35	13	65
6	Pentecostals	20	6	30	14	70

The majority in all denominations are of the view that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy. However, Catholics (90%) are overwhelming on this view.

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents M/F	Responses to Q17							
		Yes				No			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	30	29.4	15	22	72	70.6	53	78
Muslim	16/14	13	81.3	11	78.6	3	18.7	3	21.4
Total	118/82	43	36.4	26	31.7	75	63.6	56	68.3

The majority of both Christian male and female respondents are of the view that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy. 78% and 70.6% of Christian female and male respondents respectively are of this view. The majority of Muslim men

(81.3%) and women (78.6%) have no problem with Christians practicing polygamy. Three female and three male Muslim respondents, however, disagree that Christians should be allowed to practice polygamy.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q17			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	8	47.1	9	52.9
26-35 years	75	25	33.3	50	66.7
36-45 years	55	22	40	33	60
46-50 years	29	8	27.6	21	72.4
51+	24	7	29.2	17	70.8
Total	200	70	35	130	65

The majority in all age groups are of the opinion that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy. The majority on this view is among age groups 46-50 (72.4%) and 50+ (70.8%).

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q17			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	6	24	19	76
Diploma or its equivalent	46	15	32.6	31	67.4
Higher National Diploma	31	15	48.4	16	51.6
Undergraduate Degree	36	14	38.9	22	61.1
Graduate degree	38	11	29	27	71
PhD	3	0	0	3	100
Other (including illiterate)	21	9	42.9	12	57.1
Total	200	70	35	130	65

The majority view at all levels of education is that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy. All holders of PhD are of this view while 76% of WASSCE holders and below follow second with the strongest view.

Research question 17b: Why should African Christians be allowed or not allowed to practice polygamy?

Those who hold the view that African Christians should be allowed to practice polygamy had this to say:

i. That in many parts of Africa, marrying more than one wife brings respect to the man and the family, accords them some societal privileges and makes them eligible to compete for positions within the society in which they live.

ii. That because there are pronounced instances of the practice of polygamy in the Bible, the idea of allowing African Christians to marry should be seen as a way of living by scriptural practices.

iii. That because the church has not sufficient evidence from the Bible against polygamy, allowing African Christians to practice polygamy does not violate anything obvious from the Bible.

iv. That Church members, especially women, should be allowed to marry men of their choice, whether such men are already married or not. That the principle of one man to one wife has caused many women to marry those they otherwise would not have married, and men have made bad choices in their marriages that have ruined their lives.

v. That monogamy is a strange and awkward practice in most African cultures. Therefore, allowing African Christians to practice polygamy would boost the confidence of many Africans in the Christian religion and this would facilitate evangelism and increase the number of Africans who would be willing to accept Christ. They also argue that this would encourage members to stay in the church since the marriage of more than one wife would no longer be a reason to leave or change to another religion.

vi. Christians should be allowed to marry more than one because some women use monogamy to punish their husbands. In their view, some women pretend to be nice until they get married, knowing that once married, their husbands would neither be able to marry again or divorce them. They then exhibit unacceptable behaviour and frustrate their husbands.

vii. That African Christians should be allowed to marry more than one because, no matter how many wives an African man has, they would still go behind their wives. In their view, allowing the African man to marry would minimize deceit and unfaithfulness.

Those who hold the view that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy expressed their views as follows:

i. That allowing African Christians to marry more than one wife would create confusion in the Church because the doctrine on marriage has been observed worldwide among the Christian community for quite a long time.

ii. That polygamy should be discouraged among African Christians because the challenges associated with polygamy would be transferred from home into the Church, and that may cause divisions in the Church.

iii. That the disadvantages of polygamy grossly outweigh its advantages and should not be allowed into the Church.

iv. That because love in marriage can never be shared with more than one wife, a Christian who is called to practice righteousness should not be allowed to practice polygamy.

v. That because polygamy is costly to maintain and, considering the fact that resources in Africa continue to be limited, it is advisable for African Christians to remain faithful to marrying only one wife as prescribed by the Church.

vi. That having multiple sex partners is sin because it violates God's will in marriage. Allowing polygamy also means exposing women to be used and dumped by exploitative men who would want to have sex with every woman that comes their way.

vii. Monogamy facilitates proper family care and should be encouraged against polygamy. A monogamous family is more coordinated, better planned and better resourced than a polygamous family.

viii. No matter how many wives they have, they would still cheat on their first wife. It is therefore better to restrict them to one rather than claim that allowing them to marry more than one wife would make them more faithful or committed to the wife at home.

Research question 18a: In your opinion, is monogamy better than polygamy?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	136	68	127	93.4	9	6.6
No	64	32	43	67.2	21	32.8
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

The majority of respondents believe that monogamy is better than polygamy. 68% of respondents are convinced that it is better to practice monogamy than polygamy, while 32% hold the view that monogamy is not better than polygamy. Among those who argue that monogamy is better than polygamy, 93.4% are Christians and 6.6% are Muslims. Also, of those who argue that monogamy is not better than polygamy 67.2% are Christians and 32.8% are Muslims. Reasons for both positions are stated below in research question 18b.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q 18			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	10	83.3	2	16.7
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	7	77.8	2	22.2
3	Anglicans	50	32	64	18	36
4	Catholics	20	17	85	3	15
5	Protestants	20	18	90	2	10
6	Pentecostals	20	19	95	1	5

The majority in all denominations are of the view that monogamy is better than polygamy. However, there is still a minority view that monogamy is not better than polygamy in all the denominations.

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents M/F	Responses to Q18							
		Yes				No			
		M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	66	64.7	61	89.7	36	35.3	7	10.3
Muslim	16/14	3	18.7	6	42.9	13	81.3	8	57.1
Total	118/82	69	58.5	67	81.7	49	41.5	15	18.3

The majority view among both Christian male and female respondents is that monogamy is better than polygamy. 89.7% of female respondents hold this view while their male counterparts are 64.7% of responses. However, 81.3% of male Muslim respondents argue monogamy is not better than polygamy and 57.1% of their female counterparts believe the same.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q18			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	12	70.6	5	29.4
26-35 years	75	53	70.7	22	29.3
36-45 years	55	37	67.3	18	32.7
46-50 years	29	16	55.2	13	44.8
51+	24	18	75	6	25
Total	200	136	68	64	32

The majority in all age groups believe that monogamy is better than polygamy. The age groups 50+ (75%), 26-35 (70.7%) and 18-25 (70.6%) are those in the majority who hold this view.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q18			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	17	68	8	32
Diploma or its equivalent	46	36	78.3	10	21.7
Higher National Diploma	31	19	61.3	12	38.7
Undergraduate Degree	36	24	66.7	12	33.3
Graduate degree	38	27	71	11	29
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	11	52.4	10	47.6
Total	200	136	68	64	32

The majority at all levels of education are of the view that monogamy is better than polygamy. The majority groups that hold this view are Diploma or its equivalent holders and Graduate degree holders.

Research question 18b: Why do you think monogamy is better or not better than polygamy?

Those who hold the view that monogamy is better than polygamy back their opinion with the following reasons;

- i. In monogamous families, the couple and children are better catered for than in polygamous families.
- ii. Fewer quarrels and unhealthy competition exist between wives and children in monogamous families. The whole family is viewed as a single unit, unlike polygamous families, where the family is divided into different “mother rooms” competing for the attention of the father. The monogamous family is said to be more united.
- iii. Monogamy facilitates effective family planning, including the number of children to have and the ages between them. Because the family is viewed as one unit, there is no suspicion when decisions are made in the family. Therefore, the couple is able to plan well and resources are put to better and more efficient use.
- iv. Monogamy makes inheritance easy. It is noted that because a monogamous family is united and members have lived a life of transparency, the death of the father leaves no challenges when it comes to inheritance. It is claimed, however, that with polygamy

inheritance has caused a lot of conflicts in families. When a father dies, the different sons from different mothers are unable to amicably agree on how to share the property. It is noted that deaths have occurred in some families because of disagreements over how to distribute the property of their late father.

v. That monogamy is an act of obedience to the will of God. Because couples in a monogamous setting have agreed to follow God's will in marriage it is claimed that God blesses such families and bestows his favour on them. Therefore, it is better to practice monogamy if you want to obey God's will in marriage.

vi. Monogamy reduces the risk of sexually related diseases. It is claimed that with polygamy the entire family is exposed to sexually related diseases as they engage in unprotected sex among themselves. This is not the case in monogamy as only one husband and one wife have sex. In the case of monogamy, if there is a sexually related disease, the couple is able to detect and treat it.

This notwithstanding, those who hold the view that monogamy is not better than polygamy argue as follows:

i. Even monogamous husbands have mistresses. That since polygamy involves multiple sexual partners, a man who has one wife but engages in extramarital sex is equally polygamous. And since most monogamous husbands engage in sex outside their marriages, monogamy cannot be said to be better than polygamy. The only way that monogamy will be said to be better than polygamy is when monogamous husbands stop having sex outside their marriages. It is only when monogamous men stick solely to their wives that monogamy will be said to be wholeheartedly accepted and practiced.

ii. That both polygamy and monogamy are good or bad depending on how they are each used or handled. Respondents observe that there is more peace in some polygamous families than there is in some monogamous families, and vice versa. It is therefore not the number of wives one has that determines the peace and functionality of the family but how such a family is managed and handled.

iii. That unfairness to more than one wife is better than being fair to only one wife. This category of respondents believe that this is because marrying only one wife in itself is being unfair to the rest of women who have no husbands. For this group of respondents, monogamy is a sign of greed and selfishness since one woman monopolizes a man for life.

iv. Monogamy stifles opportunity for wider consultation because two heads are always better than one.

v. The one wife may break your heart and lead to your death. Having more than one wife cushions the husband against disappointments. “It is wise not to put all your eggs in one basket”, they say.

vi. There is guarantee for old age support. These respondents claim that in a man’s old age he needs a much younger woman than his first wife. This is because the first wife is likely to grow less interested in sex at the stage when the man is still interested in sex. When this happens, the woman is likely to pay little or no attention to the husband but rather concentrate on taking care of her grandchildren. A second wife at this stage would prolong the man’s life and put him out of boredom.

vii. Polygamy reduces the incidence of homosexuality. This group of respondents claim that where polygamy is practiced there is a low incidence of homosexuality because almost all the women are able to find husbands to meet their sexual needs. However, in predominantly monogamous societies the majority of women are likely to live without husbands and such people have the propensity to engage in homosexual activities.

viii. Monogamy limits the number of children to be born. In the case where the birth of many children is required, monogamy is not effective enough to accomplish such an objective. It is therefore the case that polygamy is able to produce many children to meet the need of those who desire to have many children.

ix. Monogamy limits the number of relationships and linkages that ensure the safety of a family. This category of respondents hold the view that polygamy widens the social network of the man and creates a safety net for him and his entire family and clan. Therefore, a polygamous family well-resourced and managed is powerful and influential.

Research question 19a: In your view, can the Church stop the practice of polygamy among African Christians?

Response	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Religious affiliation			
			Christian	%	Muslim	%
Yes	86	43	83	96.5	3	3.5
No	114	57	87	76.3	27	23.7
Total number of respondents	200	100	170	85	30	15

This question investigates to what extent people believe in the ability of the Church to stop its members from the practice of polygamy. 43% of respondents are of the view that the Church is able to end polygamy while 57% of responses hold the view that the Church is unable to stop polygamy. Among those who argue that polygamy can be stopped by the church, 96.5% are Christians and 3.5% are Muslims. Also, among those who maintain the Church cannot stop polygamy, 85% are Christians and 15% are Muslims.

Christian response by denomination

S/N	Denomination	Number of respondents	Responses to Q19			
			Yes	% of Yes	No	% of No
1	Anglican Clergy	12	8	66.7	4	33.3
2	Non-Anglican Clergy	9	5	55.6	4	44.4
3	Anglicans	50	28	56	22	44
4	Catholics	20	7	35	13	65
5	Protestants	20	9	45	11	55
6	Pentecostals	20	8	40	12	60

The majority of Anglican clergy (66.7%), non-Anglican clergy (55.6%) and Anglicans (56%) believe the Church can stop polygamy. However, the majority of Catholics (65%), Pentecostals (60%) and Protestants (55%) are of the view the Church cannot stop polygamy.

Response by sex

Category of respondents	Number of respondents	Responses to Q19							
		Yes				No			
	M/F	M	% of Yes	F	% of Yes	M	% of No	F	% of No
Christian	102/68	54	53	29	42.6	48	47	39	57.4
Muslim	16/14	0	0	3	21.4	16	100	11	78.6
Total	118/82	54	45.8	32	39	64	54.2	50	61

Christian female and male respondents are on the opposite sides on this question. While the majority of female respondents (57.4%) believe the Church cannot stop polygamy, the majority of males (53%) believe it is able. 21.4% of Muslim female respondents believe the Church can stop polygamy but all male Muslim respondents (100%) are of the view that the Church cannot end polygamy.

Response by Age Group

Age group	Number of respondents	Responses to Q19			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
18-25 years	17	10	58.8	7	41.2
26-35 years	75	16	21.3	59	78.7
36-45 years	55	22	40	33	60
46-50 years	29	11	38	18	62
51+	24	7	29.2	17	70.8
Total	200	66	33	134	67

The majority of those in the age group 18-25 years believe the Church can stop polygamy but all other age groups share a contrary view.

Response by Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Responses to Q19			
		YES	% of Yes	NO	% of No
WASSCE and below	25	9	36	16	64
Diploma or its equivalent	46	15	32.6	31	67.4
Higher National Diploma	31	11	35.5	20	64.5
Undergraduate Degree	36	21	58.3	15	41.7
Graduate degree	38	20	52.6	18	47.4
PhD	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other (including illiterate)	21	8	38.1	13	61.9
Total	200	86	43	114	57

PhD holders (66.7%), graduate degree holders (52.6%), and undergraduates (58.3%) are the levels at which the majority believe the Church is able to stop polygamy. However, the majority in all other levels believe the Church cannot stop polygamy.

Research question 19b: Suggest how the Church will stop polygamy if you think it can.

This category of respondents believes that the Church is able to stop polygamy. They make the following suggestions:

i. The Church should emphasize teaching its members on the pros and cons of polygamy. For these people, concentrating on the use of scriptural texts to prohibit members from practicing polygamy has not achieved the needed effect and would continue to have no effect in the fight against polygamy. The Church should rather educate her members on the benefits of monogamy against polygamy and allow members to make their choices. They are convinced that the evils of polygamy are so numerous that if they are well tailored for the understanding of members, no one would like to practice polygamy.

ii. Through intensive teaching on polygamy. This group of respondents considers that the Church is not doing enough in teaching her members on marriage. They claim that though the Church has the prohibition of polygamy in her canons, most Church leaders do not have the requisite skill and knowledge by which to guide her members. Therefore, the attitude towards polygamy by members is only condemned when members get involved in its practice. The Church would therefore be able to stop the

practice of polygamy if the teaching on marriage is considered a significant Church issue and treated with a sense of commitment. The Church should also come clear on verses from the Bible that are used against polygamy.

iii. The Church should encourage wives to respect their husbands and not deny them sex. This group of respondents hold the view that many African Christian women once married become disrespectful and unromantic to their husbands. And the majority of women use sex as weapons against their husbands and allow their husbands sex only when they desire it. This attitude has led many married men to seek sexual favours outside the marriage.

iv. For some, in order to stop polygamy, the Church must punish offenders. The punishments suggested include: naming and shaming offenders, making them sit at the back of the Church on a seat specifically meant for offenders, disallow offenders from holding any office or performing any function in the Church, and sacking those who are viewed to have intentionally violated the Church's teaching on polygamy. These measures would serve as deterrents for those who are likely to want to practice polygamy, and once these actions are taken seriously over a sustained period of time, people would not be motivated to practice polygamy.

v. Intensify pre- and post-marital counselling. Others believe that counselling before marriage has not been considered seriously by the Church. This has made a number of couples get into marriage without knowing exactly how to conduct themselves well and has led to unsatisfactory marriage relationships. Also, many couples when they are faced with the reality of marriage without appropriate counselling have the tendency to violate their marriage vows. Effective pre- and post-marriage counselling would keep couples more united and protect their marriages.

vi. Encourage marriage registration. Many marriages in Africa are not registered and the majority of those registered are done as a formality since no serious legal interpretations are given to those who violate their marriage vows. For the Church to succeed in stopping polygamy the registration of marriages should be considered critical and the Church should support women in suing their husbands who violate the marriage vows. This would make men very careful when they contemplate taking another wife.

Why do you think the Church cannot stop the practice of polygamy?

This set of respondents is those who believe that the Church cannot stop the practice of polygamy. The reasons assigned for this view are as follows:

- i. That polygamy is older than the Church. These are those who believe that because the institution of polygamy is older than the Church, the Church cannot stop its practice. They hold the view that the reasons that have held it together over the years, though not as obvious as before, continue to influence a great majority of Africans.
- ii. Different circumstances lead to the practice of polygamy. And as long as these circumstances exist, polygamy cannot be stopped. For this category of respondents, polygamy is not practiced in a vacuum. Since its practice is tied to some factors, unless those factors are removed, its practice cannot be ended. Since the Church cannot remove the root causes of polygamy, it would be difficult for her to stop polygamy.
- iii. Because faith varies. The faith of some people in the teaching of polygamy varies and that has affected their understanding and acceptance of the Church's teaching against polygamy. They further argue that faith grows at different levels and intervals, meaning there would never be a time when everyone's faith against polygamy would be achieved. For this reason, it would be difficult to claim that the Church is able to stop the practice of polygamy.
- iv. Because of human rights. This category believes that the human rights of people would be abused if they are compelled to accept a teaching against their will. It is therefore beyond the Church's right to stop the practice of polygamy in a culture where it is widely upheld. Stopping polygamy should therefore be an individual decision and not a Church ruling.
- v. Because men are irresistibly polygamous. Others have thought that men are by nature polygamous because they are never satisfied with one woman. They claim this habit is evidenced by the observation that many Christian married men are still having sexual relationships with women outside of their marriages. Because of this natural habit, it would be impossible for the Church to stop men from desiring to have more than one woman in a relationship.
- vi. The Church would lose many members. This category believes that the Church would lose virtually all her members in the attempt to stop polygamy. This is because the majority of African Christians still value and cherish polygamy while other

competing faiths such as Islam and African Traditional Religion are receptive to polygamy and willing to welcome them.

vii. Many African Christians are from royal families that encourage polygamy. Most African converts come from these families and the majority of them would continue to pride themselves on the practice of polygamy even after becoming Christians.

viii. Polygamy is one of the aspects of African culture that cannot easily be done away with. This category of respondents considers that polygamy is part of the way of life of most Africans and would be difficult or impossible to terminate. For such who hold this view, if polygamy could be ended in Africa, it would have ended when the church was most powerful and indisputable. For them, today, members of the Church understand the Bible to the extent that not every doctrine of the Church is able to pass without commentary from ordinary church members.

ix. Christianity is in competition with other religions that all accept polygamy. The two main dominant religions within the research area, Islam and African Traditional Religion, both encourage polygamy. Respondents are of the view that if the Church tries to stop polygamy without considering its widespread nature, it would lose the majority of members.

x. The Church has no clear, sufficient and unambiguous reference in the Bible against polygamy. Because of the lack of clear and convincing statements in the Bible against polygamy, this category of respondents believes the Church cannot stop the practice of polygamy.

Research question 20: Do you have any general comments or suggestions on polygamy for the researcher?

This question was meant to be optional and intended to solicit more views from participants who may still have something to say. Some general comments and suggestions (uncensored) by participants included the following:

i. The Church should allow polygamy to co-exist with monogamy in the Church and allow individuals to decide whether to be monogamous or polygamous.

ii. As long as women continue to outnumber men polygamy would continue. The Church should therefore concentrate on educating members on the pros and cons of polygamy rather than try to be intolerant of those who practice it.

- iii. Well-to-do Church members should be encouraged by the Church to marry more than one wife in order to share their wealth.
- iv. The Church should re-examine its attitude towards African culture and make the necessary considerations on its stance against polygamy.
- v. Polygamy should be discouraged because its practice has economic, social and spiritual repercussions.
- vi. Polygamy facilitates the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and should be discouraged.
- vii. Members who are polygamous but have some skill and capacity to support the growth of the Church should not be denied leadership roles in the Church.
- viii. If polygamy is discouraged in the Church, Muslims would populate the world and cause mayhem.
- ix. Only bishops, priests, pastors, deacons and those who aspire to become any of these should be disallowed from marrying more than one wife, but ordinary members should be allowed.
- x. The Church should allow polygamy in order to minimize illegal sex and extramarital affairs.
- xi. If the Church must grow it must be willing to accept both monogamists and polygamists in the Church. It is better to love your Church members who are polygamists than pretend to love polygamists outside the Church.
- xii. Polygamy leads to rivalry among children and wives in a polygamous setting but considering polygamy as sin will not stop people from practicing it.
- xiii. Polygamy if practiced well would be able to absorb excess women and empower families.
- xiv. Polygamy is not just an attitude, it is also an emotional issue that should not be treated without serious consideration.
- xv. The current economic situation in Africa does not favour the practice of polygamy.
- xvi. Polygamy should not be allowed to lose its value and essence in Africa because monogamy is a foreign culture.

xvii. Since Jesus came to save all including sinners, polygamists can be assured of a place in the Kingdom of God.

xviii. Saint Paul's opinion on marriage should not be considered as a command by God.

xix. Because polygamy has both economic and social repercussions, the Church should shift from using unclear verses from the Bible to teach against polygamy to exposing the socio-economic challenges of polygamy. This is a better way of discouraging the practice of polygamy than making references to the Bible.

4.3 Analysis/discussion of results

Age distribution is necessary for determining the attitude of the population towards polygamy today and in the future. The age groups participating in this research cover all the relevant sections of the population that influence the marriage system. For those in the research area who have no formal education, the most ideal time for marriage (both male and female) is usually the ages between 18 and 25. For those with formal education, usually those aged between 18 and 25 are in school and those who marry during this period are said to have married early. However, the age group 26 to 35 is said to be the most active or ideal age at which the majority of people marry, whether formally educated or not. In this research, those aged between 18 and 35 form the majority respondents (46%). It is therefore envisaged that the responses derived from this research would represent how polygamy is viewed by the most active group of the population that engages in marriage. Also, those aged between 36 and 50 are considered to be the age group that has experienced marriage and are willing to either take additional wives or not. This group forms 42% of responses. The age group above 50 years may not necessarily want to marry but are able to influence how marriage is carried on because of the experiences they share and the constituencies they control. This group of respondents form 12% of responses.

Age group distribution also influences or determines the level of education as well. The majority of people between the ages 18-35 are those who are likely to have obtained diplomas, higher national diplomas and degrees and are willing to start family life. This understanding re-emphasises the fact that this response size is good for determining the future of polygamy. They may be happy with one wife now but their understanding and attitude towards polygamy will determine their attitude towards it in the future. Also, in the research area polygamy is usually viewed as a practice common

among the less educated. In this research, those who have no formal education at all or are considered to be lowly educated (described here as “Other form of education or illiterate”) put together form only 10.5% of responses. Noting, however, that the majority of respondents are educated, the results still show that the majority of respondents hold the view that polygamy is still relevant in Africa. However, it is important to note that the belief that the Church can stop polygamy is held among the majority of those who are highly educated such as PhD, graduate and undergraduate holders. All levels of education also agree that monogamy is better than polygamy. This indicates that education in some way largely influences the way many people view polygamy in this research area and for that matter in the African context. Since the level of one’s education directly influences what resources are available, it is assumed that the attitude of first and second degree and PhD holders would determine how the practice of polygamy is sustained. However, it must be noted that people with lower education are likely to slip into polygamy before noticing at much higher levels that they made the wrong decisions.

Age and education notwithstanding, it is important to note that 59% of respondents are male and 41% are females. The gender difference in these proportions plays a significant role in this research. It is assumed that a majority male response is likely to influence the research results as they may tilt in favour of a male attitude about polygamy. Men are usually willing to defend and sustain attitudes in order to continue to be in charge. Because there were more male respondents than females, it is likely that a focus on the perceived needs and desires of the man will tend to show a neglect of the perceived needs of the woman in a marriage. However, that is part of the culture where women are mostly poorly represented and who find it difficult to think that they are allowed to have needs and desires in a very male-focused environment. Some recommendations will be made to the Church as to what works better within the culture for women. This kind of change will not happen immediately, but it can happen gradually. It is also likely that because male respondents were more numerous than female respondents this might influence the proportion of responses in the different categories. The research shows that the majority of men do not believe God is against polygamy, do not believe polygamy is sin and therefore the Church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy, and that polygamy is still relevant in Africa. The majority of men, however, believe that the Bible is against polygamy, that

monogamy is better than polygamy, that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy and that the Church can stop polygamy. Because polygamy has been controlled and manipulated over a long time by men, what men say today would influence what the case is likely to be for the next couple of decades. The advantages to take from this research are the positive things men acknowledge about polygamy.

85% of respondents are Christians and this is good for the research because they are the main target group. This category is made up of pastors and priests, church elders and ordinary members. There is also a 15% Muslim representation because the research area is dominated by Muslims and their views are critical in determining how they view the Church's stance against polygamy. This category is made up of Muslim clerics and ordinary Muslims whose responses are very useful for showing different attitudes and beliefs in the research area and provide an excellent way to discover specific ways of thinking that need to be addressed by the church. The research shows that the majority of Muslims are still convinced that polygamy is relevant in Africa, and all their men and women believe this. It is however important to note that some Muslim males and females do not encourage African Christians to practice polygamy. Maybe, as some of them noted, because monogamy is better than polygamy.

Respondents whose cultures allow or accept polygamy are 89.5% and those whose cultures do not accept polygamy are 10.5%. This implies that the majority of cultures within the research area have a history of polygamy. In addition to coming from cultures which allow polygamy, 72.5% of respondents are from polygamous homes, meaning they have a direct experience of polygamy. This experience would have either a negative or positive effect on the attitudes of people towards polygamy even as Christians. For the majority of those who come from polygamous homes to agree that the reasons for which their fathers married additional wives were acceptable is an indication that the majority of Christians still believe that some reasons for practicing polygamy should be accepted. This compromise is based on the understanding that compelling circumstances may be factors influencing polygamy in some African cultures. It is probably this thinking that influences the majority of Christians to believe that polygamy is still relevant in Africa. But since among other things the majority has noted that monogamy is better than polygamy, the church should be able to take advantage of this confession.

Sex is one of the issues that the research anticipated may be a cause for the desire to have more than one wife. The usual times in the marriage when sex may be restricted are during pregnancy, child nursing or menstruation of the woman. However, menstruation has a short duration while pregnancy and child nursing are prolonged. The research therefore tried to find out the attitudes towards sex during pregnancy and child nursing to establish the link between the need for sex and the marriage of an additional wife. 73% of respondents said that sex is allowed in their cultures during pregnancy and only 27% said sex is not allowed in their cultures during pregnancy. Also, 65.5% respondents agree that sex is allowed in their cultures during the nursing of a child and 34% say that sex during the nursing of a child is prohibited in their culture. Two issues are clear here:

- a. That the majority of cultures accept sex during pregnancy and the nursing of a child;
- b. That pregnancy and the nursing of a child do not prevent sex in marriage, and thus the need for extra sex during these periods is not likely to be the main reason why a man would marry a second wife.

On the will of God concerning polygamy, 57.5% of respondents maintain that God is not against polygamy and 42.5% argue that God is against polygamy. Despite the majority view that God is not against polygamy, 54% of respondents hold the view that the Bible is against polygamy. This may be the case because the majority of respondents are Christians and may have been influenced over time to believe that the Bible forbids polygamy, and this is what they are told consistently. Also, there is the likelihood that some Church members at one point defend their tribal culture and in another moment try to defend their Church's stance. This thinking by some respondents is further demonstrated by the reason given for considering polygamy a sin or not a sin. While 33% of respondents say that polygamy is sin, the majority of respondents (67 %) say it is not sin. Clearly, this either means that people do not understand the Bible well or are convinced that what is claimed in the Bible should not be wholly accepted. Or that even though the Bible forbids polygamy our culture does not and so it should not be considered as sin. All Muslim respondents are of this view. This assumption is further strengthened by respondents' views on why the Church teaches against polygamy. The majority view of respondents is that because polygamy is not prohibited by God, which is what our culture teaches, the Church's teaching on polygamy is not acceptable.

Consequently, 71.5% of respondents believe that the Church would not be justified for punishing those who violate the teaching of the Church on polygamy.

The majority views suggest that the practice of polygamy is likely to persist for a much longer time. This observation stems from the above explanations and from views expressed by the majority of respondents that polygamy is still relevant in Africa today. 78.5% of respondents hold this view, while only 21.5% of respondents do not see the relevance of polygamy in Africa today. However, despite the majority view that polygamy is relevant in the African context today, 65% of participants oppose allowing African Christians to practice polygamy while 35% of respondents see no reason why they should be barred from practicing it. This appears to be an opening for the Church to explore. The view that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy is influenced by the understanding that monogamy is better than polygamy. 68% of respondents agree that monogamy has several advantages that polygamy has not and would therefore prefer it to polygamy, but 32% of respondents imagine that polygamy is good depending on how it is managed. For this category of thinkers on polygamy, both monogamy and polygamy are evil or good depending on how each one of them is handled, and that polygamy well-managed can be both resourceful and powerful. Notwithstanding the overwhelming assertion that monogamy is better than polygamy and that the Church's teaching on polygamy is biblical, the majority (57%) still believes that the Church cannot stop the practice of polygamy any time soon because it is rooted in the culture of the people and plays a vital role in the daily life of the people. Clearly, these observations point to polygamy as a practice that requires effective effort if it must be ended. Even some of those who have a strong stance against polygamy still sometimes consider their culture above their Christian teachings and values. This is why the majority would say the Bible is against polygamy but insist that polygamists should not be punished.

One notices also that participants are generally not consistent or predictable in their responses. For instance, one would expect that since the majority of respondents believe the Bible is against polygamy, this belief would be reflected in the number of those who would call polygamy sin, and therefore would recommend that those who violate the Church's teaching on polygamy should be punished. Again, one would expect that since the majority of respondents believe that monogamy is better than polygamy, the same majority view would be expressed concerning the Church's ability

to end polygamy. But this is not the case. Furthermore, if polygamy is still relevant in Africa today, why would it not be recommended that African Christians be allowed to practice it? One may therefore conclude that the majority of participants in one instance remember that they are Christians with Christian values to protect, and in another instance remember that they are Africans with a culture to defend. This assumption does not take away how much Muslim responses may have affected the general response but notice is also taken that Christians are in the greater majority. Also, in Africa, a thief is “our thief” and not a thief. The thief should therefore not be punished, not because he has not stolen but because he is part of us and belongs to us. Conversely, in the view of most Africans, the Bible may be said to forbid polygamy but the African culture does not view it as such: That is just what the Pastor said. So polygamists must not be punished because they are part of the African culture.

It may also be relevant to single out and show how some Christian groupings have responded to some key questions.

1. Approximately, 92% of Anglican clergy (2 bishops and 10 priests) believe that God prohibits polygamy but only 28% of ordinary Anglicans believe the same. Non-Anglican clergy (66.7%), Catholics (55%) and an overwhelming number of Pentecostals (90%) also believe that God prohibits polygamy but the majority of Protestants (55%) hold a contrary view.
2. Approximately 92% of Anglican clergy believe the Bible prohibits polygamy but 66% of their members believe the same. The majority of non-Anglican clergy (66.7%), Catholics (95%), Protestants (65%) and Pentecostals (55%) agree that the Bible is against polygamy.
3. Regarding whether those who teach that polygamy is sin are right or not, 83.3% of Anglican clergy believe polygamy is sin but only 20% of their members hold the same view. The majority of Anglican members (80%) do not agree that polygamy is sin. Catholics (75%) are generally of the view that polygamy is sin, but Protestants (50%) and Pentecostals (55%) are very close on their view that polygamy is not sin. 55.6% of non-Anglican clergy, however, believe polygamy is sin.
4. Despite agreeing that both God and the Bible are against polygamy, and that polygamy is sin, the majority of Anglican clergy (66.7%) and ordinary

Anglicans (82%) hold the view that those who violate the church's teaching on polygamy should not be punished. 44.4% of non-Anglican clergy, 65% of Catholics and 55% of Protestants all agree polygamists should not be punished by the Church. However, the majority of Pentecostals argue that because both God and the Bible are against polygamy, members who violate the church's teaching on polygamy should be punished.

5. On the relevance of polygamy in Africa today, all clergy and ordinary members are unanimous that it is relevant. However, all of them are also unanimous in maintaining that African Christians should be disassociated from the practice of polygamy. This is because the majority believe that monogamy is better than polygamy. But while the majority of Anglican clergy (66.7%), non-Anglican clergy (55.7%) and Anglicans (56%) believe the church can stop polygamy, the majority of Catholics (65%), Protestants (55%) and Pentecostals (60%) hold the contrary view.

Some critical observations also occur for people at different levels of education. The highest number of respondents is holders of a Diploma or its equivalent (46) and the lowest participating category is PhD holders (3).

1. The majority of holders of Higher National Diploma, Graduate degree and PhD degree holders believe that God prohibits the practice of polygamy. However, the majority of those who hold a WASSCE certificate, both God and the Bible are against polygamy, Diploma, undergraduate and others (including illiterates) are of the view that God does not prohibit the practice of polygamy.

2. The majority of WASSCE, Diploma, HND, Graduate degree and PhD holders believe that the Bible is against polygamy. However, the majority of undergraduates and those at others levels of education including illiterates believe the Bible is not against polygamy.

3. The majority of Diploma and PhD holders agree with those who teach that polygamy is sin but the majority view in all other levels of education is that polygamy is not sin. These include WASSCE, HND, undergraduate, graduate degree holders and the other levels of education.

4. The majority of WASSCE, Diploma, HND, undergraduate degree, graduate degree holders and the other levels of education are of the view that

those who violate the Church's teaching on polygamy should not be punished. The majority of PhD holders, however, argue that those who violate the church's teaching on polygamy should be punished.

5. The majority in all categories of education believe that the practice of polygamy is still relevant in Africa today.

6. The majority in all categories of education hold that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy.

7. The majority responses in all categories of education believe monogamy is better than polygamy.

8. The majority in all the other categories of education, except PhD, undergraduate degree and graduate degree holders believe the Church cannot stop polygamy.

From all of these responses, one may conclude that the level of education of respondents does not seem to change the belief that polygamy is relevant in Africa even today. However, there is an undivided conviction at all levels of education that monogamy should be encouraged because it is better than polygamy. On whether the church can end polygamy, only those at the highest level of education such as PhD, graduate and undergraduate holders believe the Church is able to end polygamy, probably because they are convinced that a change in the way the church teaches on polygamy has the effect of influencing members to accept the teaching against polygamy and adhere more to practicing monogamy.

Some very obvious issues worthy of comment emerge in responses according to age categorization as well. The most outstanding age group of respondents is 26-35 years. This claim is premised first on the observation that this is the largest group of respondents (37.5%) and secondly because this age group is usually the most ideal age at which the majority of people are willing to begin to settle down in marriage. Therefore, the following responses coming from this group are worth noting:

1. 81.3% of those in this category believe that God does not prohibit the practice of polygamy.
2. 66.7% of respondents in this category believe that the Bible is against the practice of polygamy.

3. 73.3% of this category do not believe that polygamy is sin.
4. 77.3% of those in this category hold the view that the church should not punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy.
5. 84% of this age group are of the opinion that polygamy is still relevant in Africa.
6. 66.7% of those within this age group hold the view that African Christians should not be allowed to practice polygamy.
7. 70.7% of those in this age group believe monogamy is better than polygamy.
8. 78.7% of those in this age group are of the opinion that the Church cannot stop polygamy.

These observations may be summarized as follows: The majority in this age group believes that God does not prohibit polygamy but the Bible does. And since God does not prohibit polygamy, its practice should not be considered as sin despite the view that the Bible is against its practice. Hence, the Church has no justification to punish those who violate the teaching on polygamy which is generally derived from what the Bible says. Polygamy is still relevant in Africa but African Christians should not be allowed to practice it because monogamy is better. However, with the current approach and teaching of the Church on polygamy, it is not possible to end polygamy. Clearly, this last statement is an appeal to the Church to reconsider her teaching on marriage.

Obviously, there is an opportunity to raise strategic questions about possible reasons for some difference in response. For example, the Bible is the same, but is the teaching different? Are there differences in how polygamists are treated if they want to come into the church? If so, what are those differences? Are members not able to understand what they are taught well? Why, for instance, will Anglican clergy and their members differ greatly in opinion on some very critical issues such as God and the Bible on polygamy and polygamy as sin? Why will someone say both God and the Bible are against polygamy and yet say polygamy is not sin but those who violate the church's teaching on polygamy should be punished? Maybe because my church teaches that both God and the Bible are against polygamy but my culture teaches it is not sin, therefore I don't consider it as sin. But the church may choose to punish its members who violate its teaching. Answers to all of these will be relevant in the African

polygamy puzzle. In my opinion, these are broad themes to guide both current and future teaching on the will of God on marriage in Africa and elsewhere.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the views of Christians with some limited reference to those of non-Christians on the Church's teaching on polygamy. The findings show that polygamy will likely continue to be an issue for discussion in African Christianity for the next few decades. And as long as the Church uses the same methods of teaching against polygamy, it would continue to face the same challenges in getting its members to understand and accept monogamy. There is generally a clear understanding that the Bible does not accept polygamy but a link is yet to be established between God and the Bible. In other words, there are still doubts regarding whether what the Bible says comes from God. This link must be established to offer sufficient justification on the will of God on polygamy. Economic and socio-cultural factors among others also affect the rate at which polygamy is practiced. The better the economic situation of an African man, the more likely he is willing to marry a second or subsequent wife. This assertion has precedence in other parts of Africa and a common pattern is that marriage is confined to economically well-off men in the highest tiers of society, leaving economically deprived men unwed (Weiner, 1999; McDermott, 2018, in Koos and Neupert-Wentz, 2019:2). And because people on a daily basis are beginning to discover new ways of improving their livelihoods, it is feared that an improvement in economic capacity would sustain the interest in polygamy among many Africans irrespective of their level of education or Christian status. Also, a person's relation to royalty makes him or her susceptible to the practice of polygamy irrespective of whether they are Christians or not.

Therefore, there is the need for a renewed understanding by the Church of the factors outside and inside the Church that continue to influence attitudes on marriage and a need to adopt the most appropriate approaches to overcome them. For instance, it is critical to recognize how the majority of African men behave when they have money, and of the emotions attached to the institution of African royalty and the institution of the African marriage system. As observed by Koos and Neupert-Wentz (2019:1), "polygamy asserts not a right to love several others but a right to marry them all." For polygamy to be reconsidered, a real re-orientation is required. Fortunately, what is

generally accepted among many Africans, both Christian and non-Christian, is that polygamy is a threat to the development of both the individual and family. This is why the majority of respondents believe that monogamy is better than polygamy.

In my fifth and final chapter, I will make a re-evaluation of the teaching of the Church on monogamy and polygamy in the light of the previous chapters. I will also suggest strategies towards enabling a better understanding of the biblical teaching and local practice of polygamous marriages in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale.

CHAPTER FIVE: ASSESSMENT AND RE-EVALUATION OF ANGLICAN TEACHING ON POLYGAMY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on providing suggestions and conclusions aimed at contributing to a better understanding of marriage in Africa, using the Anglican Diocese of Tamale as a case study. To do this, I intend to look back at relevant discussions in previous chapters, paying particular attention to aspects that relate to the survey and exegetical discussions in terms of what the Scriptures indicate is best, while giving pastoral consideration to the needs of the people. I shall examine how polygamy has been viewed by the Anglican Church over the years and briefly assess the biblical, theological, canonical, pastoral and cultural implications this teaching is likely to have on both the Church and society, as well as making suggestions for a way forward for the future.

5.2 The Anglican Church, polygamy and the status of women

Polygamy is one of the most discussed issues in the life of the Anglican Church in Africa. This claim is supported by the number of conferences held and resolutions passed on polygamy. Consequently, these conferences and resolutions have shaped the attitude of the Church towards the practice of polygamy. Some highlights on what the Church has thought about polygamy include a resolution in a conference held in 1958. Resolution 120 states:

- (a) The Conference bears witness to the truth that monogamy is the divine will, testified by the teaching of Christ himself, and therefore true for every race of men.
- (d) The Conference, recognizing that the problem of polygamy is bound up with the limitations of opportunities for women in society, urges that the Church should make every effort to advance the status of women in every possible way, especially in the sphere of education.

In the opinion of this conference, monogamy is the will of God, for Jesus Christ himself emphasized this understanding through his teaching that monogamy was the most acceptable form of marriage and monogamy is the recommended form of marriage for every race. The resolution assumes further among other things that polygamy is

influenced by the limitation of opportunities for women in society. Therefore, in order to create opportunities for women, the church “must make every effort to advance the status of women in every possible way, especially in the sphere of education.” The form of education mentioned here obviously refers to the western form of education, and this is one of the most suitable strategies suggested by the conference to contribute towards solving the issue of polygamy in the Church, including the church in Africa.

It is to a large extent appropriate to assume that the strategy to educate women as a way to reduce the practice and effects of polygamy has achieved the anticipated effect in the research area. Educated women now better understand the challenges of polygamy, the right to determine the size of the family and how the family must be run because they contribute towards family upkeep. It must be noted, however, that educating the woman has not happened without noticeable challenges. This is because many African cultures have for a very long time confined the role of the woman to the kitchen. Women are primarily expected to get married and take care of both their husbands and children, while the man continues to be the breadwinner. Therefore, boys are preferred by parents to be in school over girls, and where both are in school, in the event that the parent faces challenges in meeting the payment of school fees (a situation that has occurred very often), the girl is usually withdrawn to enable the boy to continue with his education. Girls are also usually withdrawn from school and given to men in marriage when they grow to the stage considered to be of marriageable age. This is why in lower classes the population of girls in school is high but as they progress to higher levels their number diminishes.

Another barrier to education of girls is that they are usually not given a second chance to better their academic performance. Once their results come out poor, they are advised to consider marriage and to adopt a vocation such as tailoring or hairdressing. The few girls who dare to continue through education, either through their own resilience and determination or the commitment of their parents, are considered to be tough and powerful women who find it difficult to get husbands even among males who are equally educated. This type of woman is usually unwilling to accept the position of second wife, and if she is the first, is not willing to allow the husband to take an additional wife. This no doubt has changed the debate on polygamy among many Africans. The strategy of the Conference of 1958 to educate the woman as a means of creating opportunities for her to contribute to the resolution of the problem of polygamy

has no doubt worked in most parts of Africa and must be encouraged to be sustained. It is likely that the majority of educated women will be without husbands. This is because educated women are generally unwilling to share a man with another. However, this is a clear indication that the education of women will be a long-term contribution to the solution of polygamy in Africa.

It is therefore significant to note that several steps have been taken in Ghana since 1958 to strengthen women's education while narrowing the gender gap in schools. While some approaches are traditional and in correlation with poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals, others are led by individual women who have resolved to make a difference in their own communities while serving as mentors for other upcoming females. Adeline Nyabu is one example of a female model who determined to boost the self-esteem, confidence, aspirations, determination and self-worth of young girls. The Campaign for Female Education programme in partnership with MasterCard provides scholarships to pay for examination registration fees, uniform costs, educational materials and financial packages for girls in rural communities to encourage female education. And a traditional approach to improve women's education and narrow the educational gender gap throughout the country is being implemented by the Girls Education Unit (GEU) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) under the Ministry of Education (Lamm, 2018).

5.3 The legal status of polygamy in Ghana and its implications for Christians.

It may be appropriate to make a brief statement on the legal status of polygamy in Ghana and its implications for polygamy. Polygamy is illegal in Ghana according to civil law (Marriage Act 1884-1985). But arguably, the different types of marriages and religious tolerance in Ghana have resulted in the easing of sanctions on this law. There are three main types of marriage recognized by law. They are Marriage under Ordinance or Ordinance Marriage (the law governing Christian marriage), Islamic/Mohammedan Marriage and Traditional/Customary Marriage. The thewvg.com website (2018) explains these types:

It is important to note that holding a marriage ceremony is not enough to be recognized by law. However, once the appropriate procedures are followed, all three will be and are recognized and protected by law. Marriage under Ordinance is recognized by law as being monogamous and does not permit any other marriage unions (registered or

otherwise) with other parties. Ordinance marriage usually begins before the ceremony is held. This is mainly due to the steps taken to ensure that monogamy is protected. Any individual, who proceeds with any other form of marriage to another partner, without properly dissolving the previous one, has committed bigamy, a misdemeanour or crime punishable by law.

Islamic/Mohammedan Marriage is performed according to the religious requirements of Islam which allows one to marry up to four wives. In this type of marriage, the only form of polygamy permitted is polygyny (a man marrying more than one woman, but not more than four at a time). For this marriage to be recognized by law, it must also be registered with the appropriate authorities, as is required in Ordinance Marriages (thewvg.com, 2018).

Traditional or Customary marriage is based on tradition and existed long before Marriage under Ordinance and Islam. This form of marriage does not place limits to the number of wives to marry and must involve both families of the bride and groom. Certain rites performed are unique to the cultures represented by the couple's families. Customary marriage on its own is not recognized by law, unless registered under the Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Law, 1985 (PNDCL 112). There are therefore, many illegal Islamic and Customary marriages in Ghana because a good number of them are not registered (Dwell Ghana, 2020).

It is expected that Christian converts will be dedicated to the Ordinance law on marriage for at least two reasons: i. Because they have become part of the Christian community which professes monogamy as the ideal form of marriage instituted by God and expressed in Scripture and ii. Because Scripture teaches that Christians must submit to civil authority. In Romans 13.1, Paul requests that every person (Christian) be subject to the governing authorities, stressing that there is no authority except from God, and those who are in authority have been instituted by God. Paul notes that he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgement (Romans 13:2). It is therefore obvious that Christians are obliged to obey the law governing marriage in Ghana which is to practice monogamy. Keener (2014:450) observes that "loyalty to the state was a standard literary topic among ancient writers and it appears in lists and discussions alongside proper treatment of parents, elders and friends" which are all standards expected of Christians in scripture.

5.4 The Anglican Church and Polygamists

The Anglican Communion has made several decisions to determine the fate of polygamists in the Church (Ritchie, 2001). The first major engagement was during the Lambeth Conference of 1988 where the following resolution was passed:

It is the opinion of this Conference that persons living in polygamy be not admitted to baptism, but they may be accepted as candidates and kept under Christian instruction until such time as they shall be in a position to accept the law of Christ. That the wives of polygamists may, in the opinion of this Conference, be admitted in some cases to baptism, but that it must be left to the local authorities of the Church to decide under what circumstances they may be baptized. (Resolution 5).

Resolution 26 of this conference also states:

This Conference upholds monogamy as God's plan, and as the ideal relationship of love between husband and wife; nevertheless recommends that a polygamist who responds to the Gospel and wishes to join the Anglican Church may be baptized and confirmed with his believing wives and children on the following conditions:

1. That the polygamist shall promise not to marry again as long as any of his wives at the time of his conversion are alive;
2. That the receiving of such a polygamist has the consent of the local Anglican community;
3. That such a polygamist shall not be compelled to put away any of his wives, on account of the social deprivation they would suffer.

Again, in a Lambeth Conference held in 2008, Resolution 114 noted:

In the case of polygamy, there is a universal standard – it is understood to be a sin, therefore polygamists are not admitted to positions of leadership including Holy Orders, nor after acceptance of the Gospel can a convert take another wife, nor, in some areas, are they admitted to Holy Communion.

As part of the Anglican Communion, the Anglican Diocese of Tamale is directly influenced by the Constitution of the Anglican Province of West African, which derives authority from the world-wide Anglican Communion. Canon 9 of this Constitution (1990) states:

(a) Unless under certain circumstances and with the direct permission of the Bishop given in writing, no man living as a polygamist shall be admitted to Holy Baptism. A baptized person who becomes a polygamist shall not be admitted to confirmation or Holy Communion.

(b) The wives of a polygamist may, subject to the provisions of Canon VII, section 10 (c), be admitted to Holy Baptism and shall not be precluded from confirmation and Holy Communion solely on account of such marital circumstances.

Canon 7, section 10 (c) states:

Confirmed members of the church who are living together as man and wife under native customary law or another generally accepted law and without other partners but who are not eligible to be married by the rites of the church during the lifetime of a former partner may, nevertheless, at the discretion of the Bishop, be re-admitted to Holy Communion; such re-admission shall not be permissible until this union shall have proved stable and in any case not within a period of six months from the date of the marriage.

The decisions of the Conferences and canons stated above on polygamy could be summarized as follows:

1. That the polygamist can be admitted in some cases to baptism but should not marry additional wives as long as one of the wives remains alive.
2. That the polygamist should not put away any of his wives after conversion on account of the social deprivation they (the women) would suffer.
3. That polygamists are not to be admitted to positions of leadership, including Holy Orders.
4. That polygamists be denied Holy Communion.
5. That Bishops are final decision-makers on the issue of polygamy at the local level.
6. That polygamy is sin.

Notice has been taken of initial reactions in some parts of Africa to the Church's stance against polygamy. These reactions signify that culture plays an important role in determining how the Church's rules on marriage might be resisted. For instance, a bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Natal in South Africa, the Right Reverend John Colenso, was the first to write down the Zulu language championing the Zulu way of

life to include plural marriage. The Nigerian Celestial Church of Christ allowed clergy to keep multiple wives (Brown, 1998) and the Lutheran Church of Liberia began allowing plural marriages in the 1970s (Ritchie, 2001).

It is quite obvious that the Church's stance on polygamy has been greatly shaped by the belief that polygamy is not the will of God and that this idea has been communicated through the Bible. In a book-length consideration of the issue of polygamy, William Blum argues that monogamy was always God's ideal. He points out that in every Old Testament example where polygamous families were described in any detail family strife involving plural wives is always described. This view is shared by the majority of respondents who believe that polygamy breeds family problems. But the majority of respondents do not agree with Blum when he says that the concept of becoming one flesh makes polygamy a violation of God's plan for marriage (Blum, 1989). Rather, this category of respondents believes that polygamy should be treated like any other social vice. Blum's contemporary, William Luck, like other respondents, also argues that polygamy is not prohibited by the Bible (a view shared by some respondents) and that "it would not have been required of a married man who seduced (Exodus 22) or raped (Deuteronomy 22) a virgin, whether they were married or not, where her father did not veto a marriage" (Luck, 1987). The different opinions on polygamy both in the past and now demonstrate why polygamy is likely to be a matter of debate over a much longer period of time. Thus, the need for the Church to pay more attention to the teaching on polygamy continues to be relevant today as it probably was in times past. A conscious effort must be made to understand the dynamics of every local church and its members in order to design the most feasible and suitable strategies to achieve the collective goals of the Church.

It is observed that in most parts of Africa marriage is a community issue and everyone participates actively in making every marriage work effectively and efficiently. This is why it is very important to entrust the care and decision-making on marriage to the authority of a church leader who has both the requisite knowledge of the culture of the people and the Scripture. Another aspect of polygamy worth noting is that it is closely associated with wealth and those who practice it are usually the most affluent in the community. When one polygamist withdraws or is withdrawn from the church, many other members of the congregation, considered either as family members or related in some other way, usually withdraw with him. This means that when the

church intends to discipline one person, several others are indirectly affected and the church loses many of its members in the process. To have this background knowledge will cushion the effect of dealing with polygamists in the church.

The teaching of the Church on the issue of polygamy, therefore, can be said to depend on a number of motivations and with several implications both for the Church and for its members. I will examine some of these biblical, theological, canonical, pastoral and cultural implications. All of these implications will show how they play out both separately and collectively to produce the results that the Anglican Diocese of Tamale is currently experiencing and how to manage their negative effects. These will all form the foundations for making suggestions that will be useful for the Church.

5.5 Implications of the Anglican Church teaching on polygamy

5.5.1 Biblical implications

The Anglican Church's major source of information for edification, teaching and instruction is the Bible. The Dogmatic Constitution teaches people to hear the word of God with reverence and proclaim it with faith (1965.b.1). Similarly, as the Catholic Church explains, the church is "a community that listens to and proclaims the word of God" (Benedict XVI, 2005). This means that Christ is both active and present in the Scriptures, and so the Church venerates the Scriptures as it venerates the body of Christ (cf. *Dei Verbum*, N.21). Ignorance of the Scriptures is therefore ignorance of Christ, as said by Saint Jerome (*Dei Verbum*, n.25). Consequently, the manner in which the Bible is understood and applied is key to how useful this major source of Christian life, the Bible, is applied. It is therefore anticipated that careful and accurate interpretation of the Bible is done to guarantee the confidence and trust of those who believe in it. A non-unanimous understanding and interpretation of the Bible will deny the body of Christ a common voice on many issues including that of polygamy. But usually, divergent interpretations occur when individuals pick on portions of the Bible to justify a particular stance. For instance, some have argued that Jesus' marriage teaching was based upon the Genesis verse: "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body" (Genesis 2:24). Such proponents maintain that the text in its Hebrew form has certainly no anti-polygamic references except when referring to the aspect of the two becoming one body, which Jesus may

have used possibly understanding it to exclude polygamy. And on the teaching of Paul, Hastings maintains:

Paul's teaching on marriage ... presupposes monogamous union (particularly 1 Corinthians 7:4), but there is no explicit treatment of the question; no discussion of what a man with two wives should do if he wants to become a Christian. The only possible explicit indication is the qualities for a bishop and elder that he be faithful to one wife—1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6 (Hastings, 1973:7).

Just as many respondents in this research are influenced by their cultures in reading the texts of the Bible, Hastings argues that “monogamy is a western culture planted in Africa” (Hastings, 1973:5). The view that the Church's stance against polygamy is not biblical resonates with some respondents within the research location and is a cause for concern and a matter worthy of consideration by the Church. It is for this reason that the Church must encourage only those who have sufficient knowledge in its interpretation to provide the lead in interpreting relevant portions of the Bible that are likely to be interpreted in multiple ways that may be confusing for the ordinary members.

Some have argued that the Bible should not be read with human wisdom but by relying on the Holy Spirit, and that that is able to provide a better understanding of the Bible on the will of God for his people. This view promotes majority participation but also seems to give room for unsubstantiated views on the Bible. Graydon F. Snyder, for instance, believes that to be led by the Holy Spirit means more congregational participation (Snyder, 1992:188). This understanding limits the Church to a form of “democracy” where the majority views have the tendency to compel the Church to make an issue acceptable no matter how logically incorrect such interpretation may be. Another danger with depending on the Holy Spirit is that many interpretations of the Bible would find their way into the Church, thereby reducing the Bible to a book of emotions and popular acclamations. This is not to undermine the significance of the Holy Spirit in the Church, because Jesus himself alluded to the significance of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). However, the interpretation of the Bible must be considered both an academic and spiritual responsibility of the Church, because both wisdom and understanding are gifts from God (Proverbs 2:1-9). This is why the Anglican Church encourages its members to apply reason, follow tradition and adhere to Scripture.

5.5.2 Theological implications

The Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church are close in terms of theology and doctrine regarding marriage and many other areas. I would draw the Catholic Church into most parts of this conversation for this same reason, recognizing that I will not need to use too many Roman Catholic documents that may reduce my clarity of focus on the Anglican Church. Theologically, it is important to bring into focus Vatican II, which marked the first time that the Catholic Church examined its status and opened itself to a changing world. The comments of Pope John XXIII during this conference demonstrated the willingness to accept that the Bible must be understood in the context of today while taking note of what the past held. Those who shared his view on changing trends maintained that, “Though the church should never depart from the sacred treasure of truth inherited from the Fathers, at the same time, she must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world” (John XXIII, 1962). Thus, Vatican II opened a new and promising theology to the world. It signifies that history is not only in the past but also being made in the present and future. Theology is therefore called to appreciate and celebrate current happenings and re-examine what it has always held in order to advance the welfare of the people in the Church. Truth as stated by the Pope suggests doing things better today than they were done yesterday without compromising the standards set by Scripture.

5.5.3 Canonical implications

In his January 14, 2019 article titled “The Role of the Canon Law in the Catholic Tradition and the Question of the Church and State”, the Rev. Alexander Laschuk describes Canon Law as the rules and ordinances governing the Christian community. He admits it is not uniquely a Christian tradition but derives its source from Greek, Arabic and Hebrew, and is simply a standard of measure. Clearly, the theological foundations of Canon Law are critical in discussing the implications of canons in the church today. But there has been a moment of hesitation by the Church regarding the role of law in the past. We hear the scribes and Pharisees described as hypocrites because they neglected the weightier matters of the Law (Matthew 23:23). Jesus is explicit that he did not come to abolish the Law and prophets but to fulfil the Law (Matthew 5:17-18). And Saint Paul, offering a reflection on the Law in the life of a Christian says the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good (Romans 7:12). But he says Christ is the end of the Law and that everyone who has faith

in him may be justified (Romans 10:4) while those who rely on the Law are under a curse (Galatians 3:12). Despite these hesitations, the early church recognized that any society requires rules to ensure the proper conduct of its members. It is from this basic understanding that we get that system of laws in the Church which today we call Canon Law (Laschuk, 2019). Thus, the fundamental source for all of the Church's law is that which is contained in Scripture, especially the New Testament, which provides numerous clear instructions for various aspects of Christian life (Laschuk, 2019).

Therefore, the role of the Canon Law cannot be overlooked in dealing with marriage in the Diocese of Tamale, because its use has implications for how polygamy is viewed and treated. There is no doubt that Canon Law is absolutely necessary for the Church since the Church in its own way is established in the form of a social and visible unit. As a social unit rules and norms are necessary so that its hierarchical and organic structure may be visible and functional (Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae disciplinae leges*, 1983). In considering these laws the Church takes into consideration the welfare and discipline of its followers. It is anticipated that the Church from time to time reviews its laws to respond to aspects of life that enhance the growth and development of the Church without necessarily compromising the standards of the Bible. This means that even though reforms are necessary they are not done haphazardly but respect biblical precedents that demonstrate God's will in the formulation and alteration of divine laws. This is because laws are made to ensure that God's people live in dignity and harmony with one another and in tune with God. It is this capacity of the Church to consider relevant changes or emphasise biblical facts that makes it possible for gospel and culture to engage progressively.

One of the main ways by which decisions are taken or reviewed by the Church is at Church conferences and synods. At these meetings, issues are discussed to ascertain their merit before the needed legislation is carried to make them workable documents. It is this system that keeps the Church united and enables it to meet the needs of its people irrespective of where they may be located because of worldwide representation. The Lambeth Conference is one of the big conferences which happens only once every ten years and at which every bishop within the Anglican Communion is present. This means that every ten years the church has an opportunity to review any of its canons to meet the growing and current needs of its members. The challenge, however, remains that important issues may not have the chance to be discussed at one

sitting because of the great numbers in attendance. It is also feared that many bishops will not be able to present their peculiar situations at such places where decisions are made. But since such complaints have never openly emerged in the history of the conference, one may assume that everything is satisfactory and every part of the communion is sufficiently well represented and heard.

It is necessary for everyone to be represented and heard at such conferences because that is how the global Church can be present at one place at the same time. And if the Church must grow, these are moments to emphasise what works effectively in each individual case, noting that what works in one geographical location may not necessarily work in another. In the time of Jesus, for instance, some of his accusations included that he healed during the Sabbath, which was commanded to be a day of rest (Mark 3:1-6; Luke 13:10-17) and ate when he was supposed to be fasting (Mark 2:18). However, Jesus used the opportunity to educate the leaders on the use of the law. For instance, in Luke 13:15 Jesus related his healing on the Sabbath to the laws about treatment of animals on the Sabbath. If a donkey should be rescued from a pit on the Sabbath, so could a human be delivered and healed. The rules about fasting were not in the Old Testament at all but were devised by the Pharisees. The only commandment that Jesus broke (but it was not one of the Ten Commandments) was to touch a leper. Therefore, he was not abolishing the Law, he was only fulfilling it (Matthew 5:17-20). In similar vein, reform should not be seen as abolishing laws but as seeking to meet the needs of the people while still applying the purposes for which the law was intended.

The above discussion indicates that there is always opportunity in the life of a people to re-examine their laws to meet the needs of the time. This is how the law becomes a living document that speaks directly to the needs of the people. For the Church to consider a re-evaluation of its teaching on polygamy does not necessarily mean changing God's will on marriage, but as Jesus demonstrated, adding more meaning and clarity to what has previously been understood about polygamy. As observed by Kunhiyop, African ethics at the onset of Christianity was problematic because traditionally there were no written records and no one place where the Church's principles were clearly spelled out (Kunhiyop, 2008:37). Today, the church must strive to have a better understanding of the African people, and laws made today on polygamy should reflect more appropriately the reality of the African cultural system of marriage. Pragmatic solutions to the issue of polygamy in the Church need to be suggested

without necessarily deviating from the original source of the law, which is the Bible. An open-minded discussion around polygamy has the effect of removing longstanding prejudices both from the Church and the local community.

Lugazia argues that “In order to avoid African culture, church discipline was introduced”. He claims that the practice of polygamy is one of the African cultural practices that seem to have been grossly misunderstood by early missionaries. Lugazia alleges further that “As Christians continue to grow and the understanding of many has been broadened, one can say that there is no need of practicing church discipline as it was practiced because what the church is doing in all church discipline practices is not consistent with the realities of the lives of its members” (Lugazia, 2004:163). Again, Inyamah quotes the grandson of a polygamist with seventeen wives to have said, “It is my opinion that legislation against polygamy has done more harm than good. The Church’s position is neither warranted by Scripture nor sanctioned by apostolic example nor justified by common sense” (Inyamah, 1972:142). Indeed, a re-examination of laws on polygamy on the basis of Scripture, apostolic examples and common sense cannot be overlooked. But a re-examination is likely to show that the Church’s discipline of polygamists has contributed in reducing polygamy-related disputes in Africa and that this legislation against polygamy may be grounded in Scripture, contrary to the opinion of the grandson. However, African Christians will continue to insist that disciplining polygamists is not necessary, and this attitude requires attention.

5.5.4 Church and African Culture

I agree with those who claim that polygamy will take a much longer time to end and that culture continues to be a major obstacle to African Christianity. Though many scholars view polygamy as a practice on a level with murder, the African has a different view and is willing to shield the fellow African against the Church in the practice of polygamy. There is also no scriptural reference to suggest that polygamy can be compared to murder. Apart from this, many Africans still believe polygamy is relevant in Africa. This is why anonymous polygamy is possible in the African Church. I also agree with those who say that monogamy is better than polygamy, and that this is the gap expected to be explored by the Church. If Africans believe that monogamy is better than polygamy, which is the view of the Church, then the views of both the Church and Africans are at the same level on this score. A consideration of other aspects of the

African culture relating to marriage should provide further clues as to why African Christians will fall for polygamy despite knowing it is not the best marriage practice.

Culture no doubt gives a people identity and definition; it makes manifest their way of life. Once the culture of a people is taken away, the society ceases to be. This is why every group of people strives to either maintain or formulate one to ensure their sustainability. The disciples of Jesus immediately after his death made a conscious effort to put in place laws and rules to make the Christian fellowship function as a single unit. To achieve this, the New Testament Church instituted practices including baptism and laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit as part of the processes of allowing converts to become part of the church family. While baptism is a means of introducing a member to the Church, confirmation in the Anglican Church provides opportunity for a member to partake at the Lord's Supper, also known as Holy Communion or the Eucharist. Confirmation also enables members to qualify to participate in leadership positions in the Church. These practices which are also tied to some privileges in the Church are requirements for every new convert who wants to belong to the Church family. The distinction must therefore be made between accepting the way of life of the Church as against the African way of life. It must not be imagined that one is cancelling one or the other; the reality is, one must make a choice and commit to such a choice. Thus, the Bible says you are either warm or cold but should not be lukewarm (Revelation 3:15-16).

The Church culture no doubt has formed a second way of life for African converts and has indeed (like many other Church communities) held the Church together over many years as members set themselves apart from the rest of the African society. It is, however, surprising how the issue of monogamy remains the most challenging obstacle to adherence to the Church culture by some Christian converts. Probably, this is because of the continuous assertion that having two or more wives in the African worldview is a sign of affluence, dignity and honour while the Church views such people as irresponsible and morally distorted. This difference in opinion between the Church and the African convert has affected compliance with the Church's teaching on marriage and thus affected the Anglican Church's responsibility to make, teach and keep disciples. This aspect of culture and worldview of some African converts must be noted and given particular attention.

A critical issue of concern has always been whether the Church will be willing to change its stance on marriage, or rather whether it is able to change its stance regarding the practice of polygamy in Africa. History has shown that the Church in the past has shown willingness to adjust to some circumstances while being careful not to violate the will of God. No doubt, the authority of the Church to make and amend, loose or bind derives from the statement made by Jesus when he declared to Peter, “And so I say to you ... and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18). These words suggest that Jesus was putting canonical powers into the hands of Peter, who was projected to lead the Church after the departure of Jesus. To have given him the privilege to cause change both on earth and in heaven presupposes giving Peter power to operate effectively under the values and principles of God. Harrington says that the power given to Peter involved laying down rules and giving exemptions, imposing or lifting excommunications, forgiving or not forgiving sins and even performing exorcisms (Harrington, 1991:71). Clearly, Jesus was not giving authority to change what he said or anything written in the Bible subsequently or the interpretation given in the New Testament. What this means is that Jesus was aware that times and seasons would change and adaptation to these changes would be necessary to enhance the lives of the people under the care and guidance of these apostles.

In line with this reasoning, it is appropriate to suggest that some changes are possible if they border on questions which have nothing to do with the Bible, such as building materials, shapes and colours of a church building, the location of musical instruments, etc. Some matters the Church deals with have nothing to do with the Bible but they do follow Church tradition, e.g., the clothing worn by the priests or leaders, the position of furniture, the order within a church service, etc. These matters can and often should be changed or adjusted in different regions because of climate or particular needs. Even then, the reasons need to be duly considered by Church leaders in case a new idea is unwise in that context or neglects an important reason for the tradition. Traditions are helpful but they are not fixed in the same way that the Bible is fixed, so they can be re-examined periodically by going back to principles in the Bible. In other matters the issue does relate to the Bible as well as to local cultural context. This must not be handled in the same way as in the first two categories. It is my opinion that polygamy fits into this category and that it has not been established that the Church has been operating in an unbiblical way regarding its request for members not to practice

polygamy. The Church should deal with matters in this category by re-examining the Bible more carefully and thinking through its application to the local culture and context.

5.5.5 Pastoral implications

Pastoral considerations are aimed at renewing the face of the Church to accommodate the needs of the people of God in a changing world. Pope John XXIII emphasized this opinion on pastoral considerations at Vatican II, stating that the church had become irrelevant to the concerns of the modern world. This statement may appear too general but the point is made that the Church needs to take a second look not only at what it must reform but how soon these reforms must occur. The research found that there is a large discrepancy between the views of the clergy and the views of the ordinary people on the subject of polygamy. This demonstrates a need which, if not attended to, may result in or sustain conflict between the Church and its members. At least in the case of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale there is a pastoral problem where a re-examination of its teaching on marriage is necessary. Thus, of critical importance is a re-examination of how marriage is taught in the Anglican Diocese of Tamale.

From the research, one observes that culture and Gospel continue to be in conflict. But culture must be willing to forfeit aspects that are clearly against the will of God in both a logical and theological sense. Obviously, every culture includes some behaviour patterns which are good and some which are bad. And until a people accept that what they do is bad, it is not possible to change their pattern of behaviour. The Church needs to understand and explain the bad aspects of polygamy in order to facilitate the desired change in behaviour. To achieve this aim, the Church must be willing to listen to the people talk because they have both appropriate and inappropriate reasons why they have refused to let go some aspects of the culture as evidenced in the findings of this research. It is only through dialogue that attitudes can be understood or new ones formed. When Paul was faced with a pastoral challenge on marriage (in 1 Corinthians 7), he simply answered their specific question in the light of their own culture and circumstances. Paul answered each of their questions by considering their peculiar situation in the context of the love of Christ.

This principle of love runs through the Old Testament laws as well: love of God and love of neighbour. But within this principle, sin is not ignored and love does not

mean that it is acceptable to do something wrong or against what God has commanded. However, love must continue to be demonstrated until the understanding is established. It is for this reason that Paul advises that new converts be allowed to continue the life which the Lord has assigned to them, and in which God has called them (1 Corinthians 7:17-24). The Anglican Church at least in some areas does take this position. For instance, a converted polygamist is not required to end his relationship with any of the wives. Unfortunately, this liberal stand does not seem helpful to the Church because such people continue to remind others that, after all, polygamy is practiced in the Church. Another aspect of admitting newcomers to the Church is when people violate the teaching on marriage from their church and move with their polygamous families to join another church. What this means is that one can always marry a second wife and leave one's first church for another. This way of accepting polygamists to the church must be re-examined if its negative effects are to be curtailed.

The pastoral concerns faced by members of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale at this moment stem mainly from a cultural heritage that has been practiced and handed down for many generations. But there is no gain in saying that several examples exist in other parts of the world where tribes or villages or communities become genuine Christians believing and immediately making major changes in dominant cultural and social patterns. Of course, the nature of the Gospel is to bring transformation, which is change. However, this change is often misunderstood as becoming different from the culture in which such adherents grew up. This quick change from the past is desirable and makes the work of the evangelist easier. The Acts of the Apostles shows examples of quick changes (Acts 14:1; Acts 18:7-8; Acts 19:1-7). Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case in the area under review. In the Acts of the Apostles and in Paul's letters we see evidence that some new Christians were still, in some respects, behaving in the same manner as in their previous culture. Paul did not ask the Church to accommodate to their previous culture. Instead, he wrote that these people were behaving immaturely or badly. He called it sin, proceeding to teach them what was sin and what Christian behaviour should look like (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 5:18). He expected changes, even if new Christians needed a little time to adjust to each new change.

Indeed, the Gospel always requires that people reassess and change their cultural and religious practices. From a human viewpoint it may suffice to argue that expecting

every group of people to fully agree to change their culture and religious practices in order to be part of the Gospel will be expecting too much. However, what causes the change comes from within and this inner power is generated by the Holy Spirit, whose power to transform is very prominent in the Bible. A holistic view of culture, then, provides relevant keys for unlocking the totality of any culture in order to allow the process of change. Misconceptions, misinterpretations and suspicions between Gospel and Culture have not served either of the two well. Appropriate inculturation in the Church, therefore, is necessary to build the needed trust and confidence and provide a fertile ground for the Church to engage critical aspects of the culture on marriage that genuinely require change. Polygamists should be viewed primarily as members requiring extra pastoral care in order to make them realize why the Church teaches against its practice. Maybe by this they will freely participate in discouraging others from its practice rather than serving as motivation for others to emulate.

One major pastoral issue in the Church is whether polygamists should be allowed to partake of the Holy Communion. For Martin Luther, the sacraments do not become sacraments because of the holiness of a person who is receiving it, but because of the word of God. In his view, Christ gave it both to the worthy and unworthy (Lugazia, 2004:173). “To deny someone sacraments which are the gift of God to the Christian community, which have been summoned by God through his word, is one of the biggest scandals the churches has created. It is a crime to talk about the Christian as the body of Christ and at the same time refuse the members of this body these visible signs” (Tillard, 1991:368). Luther thought that the unworthiness of polygamists did not deny them access to Christ, and Tillard argues that Holy Communion is a visible sign of the body of Christ of which every Christian is a part. This thinking does not seem to lose sight of Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 that urges caution in taking Holy Communion. It is not simply a right to be demanded, since according to Paul some people became weak and sick and even died because they did not properly respect the Lord. So Tillard’s comment on its own does not reflect what Paul is saying because it needs to be balanced by human responsibility. For those who argue that Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus yet was not denied participation at the Last Supper, it might suffice to say that Judas took the last supper before it became Holy Communion because Jesus had not died yet. The Holy Communion was to be taken in remembrance of him who died—Jesus.

There is power in reaching out to people through means they can easily associate with. For instance, in the Acts of the Apostles, the mob in the temple court that had been stirred up against Paul became very quiet when they heard him speak to them in their own language (Acts 22.2). This means that when people hear God's word spoken to them in their own language, they are willing to listen. For polygamy to be stopped or reconsidered, one would expect that those who teach it must be able to communicate in the people's own language. This is how the local people would be able to understand and express themselves well and their questions adequately responded to. Thus, to lead this process requires effective communication, which involves telling others what we mean, think or feel, and understanding what others mean, what they think or feel. Limited by the ability to communicate in the local language, many teachers on the issue of marriage have failed to effectively communicate what it is that they want to teach on polygamy and have reduced their message to condemning the culture of the people. As Guy puts it, "our starting point must be what currently goes, and we must look to what Jesus Christ has to offer that society. Only after that do we look at the traditional doctrine of the church and try to reconcile the two. Only in that way do we have any chances of avoiding the biases to which all theologians are prone" (Guy, 2004:104).

5.6 Summary of strategies and suggestions for the church

The Tamale Diocese is fairly close to the Sahara, and as a region with approximately four and a half million people (comprising five administrative regions) of which the majority are Muslim, the way of operating as a Church will not always be easy. It is important to point out that the outcome of the responses to the questionnaire, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, indicates that at stake is the issue of tribal culture versus the Church's stance. Preliminary questions, therefore, need to be examined to form the framework for providing suggestions and making conclusions.

First is the question of whether the biblical claim is subject to culture, and whether what the culture in Tamale Diocese teaches is on the same level as what the Bible teaches. Quite obviously, these are at two different levels, and as far as it has to do with the Church, the biblical claim must take precedence over cultural claims. The consequence of this is to establish the demarcation between Christianity and culture and to emphasize that becoming a Christian requires letting go of cultural practices that are

at variance with Christian principles and practices. This is because the Bible, not culture, has the last word in Christianity.

Secondly, the outcome of one of the questions is that the majority thinks that monogamy is better than polygamy. If this is the case, how justified will it be to conclude that the Church cannot stop polygamy because it is rooted in the Bible? This question demonstrates the frustration that polygamists acknowledge they go through. They have continued to practice polygamy not because it is the better option but because that is the cultural practice they are used to. Acknowledging that there is a better option which the Church expounds is an opportunity for the Church. However, the majority of respondents believe the Church cannot stop polygamy because in their opinion polygamy is still relevant in Africa despite its challenges. For instance, perhaps the Church has not yet provided satisfactory answers to how an African man will marry and live with a woman without a child or why some women may give birth only to girls. These are issues the Church must incorporate into its teaching on marriage.

Thirdly, the question of how the Bible can be against polygamy and yet people don't consider it as sin. What then is sin in the Bible and what is the interpretation of sin by those who think that polygamy is not sin? This is a clear manifestation of double standing between culture and Christianity. The Bible is against polygamy because that is what the Church teaches but God and culture, in the view of respondents, do not say the same thing. Therefore, does it not matter what the Bible says? As long as our understanding is that God does not say it is sin, the encumbrance rests on the Church to prove that polygamy is sin. This is one of the critical challenges that the research has revealed—that people do not accept some of the things the Church says are contained in the Bible. This gap must be filled through effective teaching to win the trust and confidence of members. This must be undertaken while paying attention to the fact that education about polygamy is very important and urgently needed; however, the one who teaches is perhaps more important because the outcome depends on what the hearers have heard.

In view of the preliminary discussions made above, including exegesis in terms of what the Scriptures indicate is the best, plus the body of evidence both exegetical and practical, a statement of preference for monogamy, and my personal observations having worked as a priest of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale for over twenty years, I make the following suggestions:

1. There is a popular notion among some African Christians that the Church has not, for a long time, treated the African marriage system with the dignity and respect it deserves. In order to disabuse this notion, it will be appropriate for the Church not to single out and treat polygamy as if it were a separate violation in the Church. In other words, all other violations in the Church, not just polygamy, should be given equal attention. In this way, the teaching on polygamy will not be considered by Africans as an attack by the Church on their marriage practice. If members are willing to forfeit the African Traditional Religion itself for Christianity because they find it a better religion, it is anticipated that African Christians will be willing to adhere to the teaching on polygamy if well handled by the Church.

2. Untrue beliefs, such as there being more females than males, need to be corrected with facts. Instead of there being a surplus of women unable to marry in monogamous cultures, the real surplus of men unable to marry in polygamous cultures needs to be demonstrated. Men unable to marry are at risk of resorting to crime or of taking girls from outside their area. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on polygamy as a social issue with many disadvantages; for instance, showing how polygamy is dangerous to a society where it is practised. These disadvantages should be focused on while highlighting the numerous advantages of monogamy. Discussing polygamy as a social issue will be a good starting point capable of re-orientating the minds of new converts while preparing them to appreciate aspects of the Bible that generally talk of what God expects in Christian marriage. This is also capable of winning back members who hitherto believed that polygamy is not sin. Such people can then be well informed through the new forms of teaching suggested in this research.

3. The Church should teach its members to understand that infertility in marriage is not caused only by women but that men can also be infertile. This understanding will encourage both women and men to strive to keep their marriage relationships without seeking to immediately resort to divorce or remarriage on account of being childless. Additionally, men will not be hasty in initiating break-ups but would first seek medical attention and advice. As explained by Hastings, the Church must insist that a childless marriage is not to be regarded as invalid, and those within such a union should be encouraged to persevere (Hastings, 1973:90). However, the Church must also pay attention to Hastings' advice that because the production of children is such a central part of marriage it may be easier for the Church to accept the dissolution of a brief

childless union than one in which children have been born (Hastings, 1973:90). In other words, if a couple insists that a child must be born, the Church must insist on a fertility test before marriage so that couples are able to make a decision at this point of their relationship. However, this view is held with the assumption that a fertility test does not reinforce cultural thinking that the only purpose of marriage is to have children and to give an excuse for divorce if no children appear as soon as they are expected. A Christian man that has been blessed with sons and/or daughters but still involves himself in the practice of polygamy should not be treated the same way as a marriage without children. To achieve such a change in Africa means changing the worldview on one of the critical aspects so that having children is no longer seen as essential for living life to the fullest.

4. It is generally observed that the gifts and needs of women are undermined by most men. For this reason, women are not usually considered equal to their male counterparts, thereby allowing them to be disrespected by men. Unfortunately, the majority of women have yielded to the long-standing claim that men are superior to women and conceded that what they say or do both at home and in the Church should be accepted without debate. Whereas a previous recommendation was to educate the women, I recommend that in addition to this the men need to be educated on issues that men have taken for granted—for instance, about Paul’s advice to consider one another, that only the male sex drive needs to be considered, that infertility problems are only female, and that a childless marriage is unacceptable. The Church should make it a point to encourage men to consider both the gifts and needs of women, both in marriage relationships and in the Church. This would indirectly also encourage women to recognize and perhaps express their gifts and needs in these two areas also. Thus, women would be respected and given a say in how their husbands must act in the marriage in times of challenges.

5. Culture is said to be the way of life of a people: their food, clothing, marriage systems, etc. It is also true to say that some cultures hinge mostly on some particular practices, and the marriage practice is one of such in most African cultures. It is therefore challenging to imagine that such a key element of a people’s culture can altogether be considered irrelevant. To assure the local community that the Church is not generally against culture, the Church must work to incorporate into the Church some aspects of good cultural practices while endeavouring to provide good education on why

some cultural practices are bad and should be discarded. This way, the local community will have the confidence that the Church is not underrating their culture but is providing useful insight to what is good for them. This is also intended to ensure that culture is not accepted wholesale into the Church, as this would make the Church become syncretistic, worshipping many gods. Thus, the members would not understand the gospel, or a relationship with God, or even basic things of the Bible. The attitude of accepting every culture because of the desire to fill the Church with members has the tendency to encourage people to go to Church on Sunday but also go to the local pagan priest on other days, and their Church-going would become superficial and confused.

6. Many African Churches have the notion that the global Church is biased against Africa, accepting and describing practices from some parts of the world as modernization while condemning theirs as discourteous. The most recent claim is on the issue of sexuality. Most African Christians argue that western governments accept these practices and even request African nations to allow the same while the Church is almost silent. In order to disabuse this notion, the Church must demonstrate the courage to discuss western cultural practices that are clearly at variance with the teachings of the Scripture and explain those that are consonant with the Bible. On the other hand, the African Church congregation must not assume that because violations occur in the West, it is also acceptable to do the same in Africa. The principles of morality that are cherished by every culture must be the same in Africa as in the West. Thus, the Church must separate itself from non-Christian views from the West just as it would do in the South.

7. Why African Christians practice polygamy continues to be a challenging puzzle. Responses derived from the survey suggest many conflicting opinions and point to why this puzzle is really challenging. For instance, the majority opinion is that God does not prohibit polygamy but the Bible does. Polygamy is not sin because, even though the Bible describes it as such, God does not because he does not prohibit it. Therefore, the member who violates the Church's teaching on polygamy should not be punished. Monogamy is better than polygamy but the Church cannot stop its practice. What is demonstrated here is culture versus the Gospel. At one point the respondent acts like a Christian and in another is turned towards what favours culture. The Bible is associated with what the Church teaches on polygamy because the usual teaching is that the Bible is against polygamy. Many respondents therefore put the teaching on polygamy with

what the Bible says but separate it from what they believe the culture and God's purpose in marriage is: the teachers say the Bible prohibits polygamy but God and culture do not say so. In order to overcome this challenge, the Church must emphasize the role of God in the Bible. This is because some Christians are of the opinion that the Bible is a collection of Christian do's and don'ts. The Bible should be viewed as God's document for correcting, rebuking and instructing believers. When members acquire the understanding that God is responsible for the Bible and any violation of it means disobedience to the will of God, they will appreciate that the prohibition of polygamy as contained in the Bible is a teaching from God and those who violate God's teaching commit sin and therefore should be punished by the Church. (A point of interest that someone noted during the survey was that for every violation, God has a prescribed punishment, and since there seems to be none—not one that he knows, on polygamy—then it should not be prohibited.)

8. The current practice in the Anglican Church is that first-comers to the Church who are polygamous should be accepted irrespective of whether they are new converts or coming from another Church. These are usually permitted to take the Holy Communion at the discretion of the bishop. When a male member takes a second wife, the first wife continues to partake in the Lord's Supper while the man and the second wife are denied. But if the first wife has agreed for the husband to take a second wife, then she is complicit in this polygamy and it doesn't seem right to assume that she is innocent and the man guilty if she has agreed or even suggested that he takes a second wife. Of course, she might feel under a lot of pressure to agree even though she feels unhappy about it. Through supportive conversation with each person separately, this matter should be dealt with pastorally and justly, not just on the basis of gender. This has brought a lot of intimidation and embarrassment to both the man and the second wife (the second wife being the most affected because she may have been ignorantly brought into the church by the man). For this reason, some men have moved with the second wife to other churches leaving only the first wife and maybe her children, if she has any. This obviously reduces church membership and also divides hitherto peaceful families. Therefore, I propose that in order to keep all three in the Church, the man and second wife should be denied Holy Communion only for a period of time, after which they may be allowed to partake in Holy Communion depending on their level of remorse and sense of guilt. During the period when they are denied Holy Communion, some form of

counselling must be given them to ensure that they appreciate the gravity of the violation they have committed, using appropriate biblical texts on marriage. It is assumed that these counselling sessions will increase their knowledge of the Bible and make them more committed to the matters of God. In cases where non-Christian family members compel a member to marry an additional wife or become a co-wife, adequate counselling must be given by the Church to reassure the victim of the Church's continuous prayer support. The Church should then make regular follow-ups to check on such members to ensure that there is justice and equity in the family. A failure to do so may result in the withdrawal from Church of such members because they feel either intimidated or neglected. Such members are likely to move to another church where they and their family would be accepted and welcomed as first-comers.

9. Although the elements at Holy Communion are gifts of grace, St Paul makes some distinctions between people. He urges people to warn a divisive person several times, and only then, after the warnings have been ignored, to stop the person from joining the meeting. He says similarly about unrepentant blatantly immoral people. The point should be made clear in Church teaching that persistent refusal to accept a Church rule (such as that regarding polygamy) which is clearly identified as posing a moral challenge to the growth and development of the Church, would result in disciplinary action, not only because such nonconformity is sin (because it violates God's command) but also because it is morally unacceptable (because it goes against the norms of the Church community).

10. The calibre of priests determines the effectiveness of teaching. It is therefore proposed that people with high educational potential should be recommended for seminary education. In doing this, the needs of the various congregations should be considered and members from these locations encouraged undergoing seminary education with the aim of returning to serve such local congregations. It is assumed that such people understand the dynamics of their community and are able to communicate effectively. Priests trained at the Bishop's court are usually non-academic priests and should not be assigned parishes as they will not have all the components of holistic seminary education, including ministerial formation. Additionally, seminary education should be designed to include an in-depth study of the culture and traditions of Africa, especially those issues that are attested to pose interpretational challenges. An in-depth knowledge of African culture by African clergy would serve to provide the appropriate

knowledge base to support their teaching on why some elements of culture must be sustained or eradicated. It is further proposed that critical social challenges should be given prominence and the capacities of priests built up in such areas so that they can serve as resource persons for the diocese. Post-seminary training courses should be organized regularly to refresh priests and discuss trending issues that need the attention of the Church. Those who are well versed in matters of marriage should be identified and assigned to provide periodic support to parishes where the priest is not strong in that field. It must be noted that not all priests are good teachers and therefore such should not be assigned teaching responsibilities in the Church. It is also advisable to rotate priests such that no single priest offers a wrong teaching for a very long time.

11. For some time now the translation of the Bible into local and native languages has been ongoing in some parts of the region where the Anglican Diocese operates. The Anglican Church must participate in this project, which aims to translate the Bible into all the dominant ethnic languages within the region. Non-formal education classes and clubs for young readers in the local languages should also be established to groom readers in the Church to support the clergy. Through this, the majority of Christians would be able to read and write in the local languages and this will facilitate effective translation and interpretation and limit or prevent misinterpretation.

12. It is obvious that some aspects of polygamy are based on false notions. These include views that there are more men than women, that sex during child-nursing causes stunting in children, that sex during pregnancy causes harm to the unborn child, that polygamy is no sin, that the Bible is against polygamy but God is not, and many other instances as revealed in this research. All of these provide a better understanding for the Church, allowing for a much more improved engagement in discourse on marriage while continuing to listen more to those who have resisted this form of teaching for centuries. The Church should develop a handbook for pre-marriage counselling and encourage all couples to devote sufficient time for counselling (at least two times every week for three months) before the wedding.

13. Lyimo, (2011:226) notes that unity and mutual cooperation among the clergy themselves and in conjunction with the bishop are very important for providing pastoral care to polygamists. This view is critical in the case under review because as long as the clergy are not united and with a common voice regarding how to handle the issue on polygamy, they will present different theological understandings, thereby confusing

their members and further dividing them on the issue of polygamy in the church. I therefore propose regular meetings between the bishop and clergy to emphasise the new teaching on polygamy and to ensure that all clergy are of the same theological opinion on polygamy and the church.

5.7 Conclusion

Many things happened in the Old Testament era that were clearly against God's laws or ideals, such as murder, theft, rape and lying, and these were all recorded in the Old Testament. But one cannot assume that God tolerated anything just because people did it. In the present just as in the past, people have continued to indulge in practices of varying kinds, including polygamy, despite a general disapproval by the Church and a section of society who have always maintained that God does not approve of its practice.

The Old Testament does not give any explicit approval of polygamy and the examples it gives of family dynamics within polygamous families all demonstrate problems that are due to rivalry between wives. The New Testament does not mention polygamy but its teaching on marriage is clearer. The New Testament model of mutual respect and love in marriage support an understanding of marriage that is monogamous. In fact, any form of marriage which inherently prioritizes the needs of the man or the woman against the other would not be acceptable. Even though there are some examples of polygamy in the Old Testament and there is no explicit condemnation of polygamy there, the church needs to prioritize the teaching in the New Testament, which brings greater clarity to this issue.

There are matters on which the Church should more easily consider changing and those that the Church should NOT change unless there is clear proof that the Church has been operating in an unbiblical way. I think polygamy fits into this second category. The Church should, therefore, deal with polygamy by re-examining its approach and teaching on polygamy. Whereas Gospel and culture must interact, caution is given that wholesale acceptance of culture would make the church syncretistic, but a good knowledge of the culture and assumptions of the people would facilitate a more effective transformation of the people in the Church within the Anglican Diocese of Tamale.

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Appendix 1: Sample questionnaire

Greenwich School of Theology

Research Questionnaire

My name is Reverend Father Paul Shaibu Katampu, a Ghanaian by Nationality, an Anglican Priest by Vocation and a PhD Student of the North West University/ Greenwich School of Theology, SA/UK. I am currently writing my thesis on “Polygamy and the teachings of the Church: the case of the Anglican Diocese of Tamale” for the award of a PhD in Ethics. I would kindly need your opinion by answering these questions for me. I assure you that any information given here would be used for academic purposes only and would be held strictly confidential.

You may contact me through the following channels in case of further enquiries:

Email: skpaul6@yahoo.co.uk

Phone: 0244885519, 0504935218

Please, tick the appropriate letter where applicable.

Research question 1: What is your gender? (A) Male (B) Female

Research question 2: What is your age group? (A) 18-25yrs (B) 26-35yrs (C) 36-45yrs (D) 46-50yrs (E) 51+

Research question 3: What is the level of your education? (A) West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and below (B) Diploma (C) Higher National Diploma (HND) (D) Undergraduate Degree (E) Graduate Degree (Masters) (F) PhD (G) Other (specify).

Research question 4: What is your religious affiliation? (A) Christian (B) Muslim (C) African Traditional Religion (D) Other (specify)

Research question 5: What position do you hold in your religion? (A) Priest (B) Imam (C) Elder (D) Ordinary Member (E) Other (specify)

Research question 6: Does your tribal culture allow polygamy? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 7a: Do you come from a polygamous home? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 7b: If yes, why do you think your father married a second or subsequent wife?
.....

Research question 8: Was his reason for marrying acceptable to you? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 9a: In your culture can a woman have sex during pregnancy?
(A) Yes (B) No

Research question 9b:

Why?.....

Research question 10a: In your culture can a woman have sex while nursing a child?

(A) Yes (B) No

Research question 10b:

Why?.....

Research question 11a: In your view, does God prohibit polygamy? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 11b:

Why?.....

Research question 12a: In your view is the Bible against polygamy? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 12b:

Why?.....

Research question 13a: Do you agree with those who teach that polygamy is sin?

(A) Yes (B) No

Research question 13b:

Why?.....

Research question 14. Why do you think the Church teaches against polygamy?
.....

Research question 15a: Should the Church punish those who violate its teaching on polygamy? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 15b:

Why?.....

Research question 16a: Is the practice of polygamy still relevant in Africa today?

(A) Yes (B) No

Research question 16b:

Why?.....

Research question 17a: Should African Christians be allowed to practice polygamy?

(A) Yes (B) No

Research question 17b:

Why?.....

Research question 18a: In your opinion, is monogamy better than polygamy? (A) Yes

(B) No

Research question 18b:

Why?.....

Research question 19a: In your view, can the Church stop the practice of polygamy among Christians in Africa? (A) Yes (B) No

Research question 19b: If yes, how? If no, why?

.....

Research question 20: Do you have any general comments or suggestions on polygamy?

.....

Appendix 2: Categories of persons surveyed

Serial Number	Category	Number participating	Remarks
1	Anglican Bishops	2	One current and one retired
2	Anglican Priests	10	Priests in active service
3	Anglicans	50	10 members from 5 parishes
4	Catholics	20	10 members each from two parishes
5	Protestants	20	10 members each from two churches
6	Pentecostals	20	10 members each from two churches
7	Non-Anglican priests/pastors	9	9 priests/pastors picked at random from within the diocese
8	Adult Children from a monogamous home	5	Children from monogamous homes
9	Adult children from a polygamous home	5	Children from polygamous homes
10	Polygamous husband	10	Polygamists who are either Christians or non-Christians
11	Polygamous wife	10	Women from polygamous relationships who are either Christians or non-Christians
12	Monogamous husband	10	Monogamists who are either Christians or non-Christians
13	Monogamous wife	10	Women from monogamous relationships who are either Christians or non-Christians
14	Muslim cleric	7	Clerics who are teachers of the Islamic faith
15	Muslim woman	5	Muslim women who are formally educated
16	Court staff	3	Staff in the court who deal with family issues
17	Social workers	4	Professional social workers who deal with family cases
Total		200	

Appendix 3: Unedited data of persons surveyed by categories for questions seeking a Yes or No answer.

Please note that responses to questions seeking a longer answer have been summarised within Chapter 4.

In this chart NA means Not Applicable.

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
1	Anglican	A	E	E	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
2	Bishop	A	E	F	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
1	Anglican Priests	A	B	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		A	B	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4		A	B	D	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
5		A	B	D	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
6		A	C	D	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
7		A	C	E	A	A	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8		A	C	E	A	A	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No	No	Yes	No	
9		B	D	F	A	A	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No		No	No	No	No	No	
10		A	D	F	A	A	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Anglicans	A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4		A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
5		B	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
6		B	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
7		A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
8		A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
9		A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
10	Anglicans (cont.)	A	B	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
11		A	B	B	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
12		A	B	B	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
13		A	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
14		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
15		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
16		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
17		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
18		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
19		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
20		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
21		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
22		B	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
23		B	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
24		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
25		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
26		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
27		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
28		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
29		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
30		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
31		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
32		A	C	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
33		A	C	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
34		B	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
35		B	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
36		B	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
37		A	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
38	B	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No		

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
39	Anglicans (cont.)	B	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
40		B	D	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
41		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
42		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
43		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
44		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
45		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
46		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
47		A	E	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
48		A	E	E	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
49		A	E	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
50		A	E	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Catholics	A	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		B	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		B	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
4		B	A	B	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
5		B	A	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
6		B	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
7		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
8		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
9		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
10		A	B	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
11		B	C	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
12		B	C	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
13		A	C	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
14		A	C	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
15		A	C	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
16		A	C	D	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
17	Catholics (cont'd)	A	C	E	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
18		B	D	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	No	No	
19		B	D	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	No	No	
20		B	E	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Protestants	B	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		B	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		B	A	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4		A	A	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
5		A	A	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
6		A	B	D	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
7		A	B	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
8		A	B	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
9		B	B	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
10		B	B	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
11		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
12		A	C	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
13		A	C	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
14		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	Yes	NA	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
15		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
16		B	C	E	A	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
17		B	C	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
18		A	C	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No	
19		A	C	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
20		A	D	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19
1	Pentecostals	A	A	A	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2		A	A	A	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3		A	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4		A	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5		A	A	A	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6		A	A	B	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7		A	A	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
8		A	B	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
9		B	B	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
10		B	B	C	A	C	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
11		B	B	D	A	C	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
12		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
13		A	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No
14		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No
15		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No
16		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No
17		B	C	E	A	C	Yes	No	NA	No	No	Yes	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No
18		B	D	E	A	C	No	No	NA	No	No	Yes	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No
19		B	D	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	Yes	No
20		A	E	E	A	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
1	Non-Anglican Priest/Pastor	A	B	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		A	C	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
4		A	C	B	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
5		A	C	C	A	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
6		A	C	D	A	A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
7		A	C	G	A	A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
8		A	D	G	A	A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
9		A	E	G	A	A	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Adult children from monogamous home	A	B	B	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		B	C	C	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
4		B	C	D	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
5		A	C	D	A	D	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Adult children from polygamous home	B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
3		A	C	B	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
4		A	C	C	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
5		A	C	C	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
1	Polygamous husband	A	B	A	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	A	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
3		A	B	A	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
4		A	B	A	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
5		A	D	A	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
6		A	D	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
7		A	D	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
8		A	E	B	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
9		A	E	C	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
10		A	E	G	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
1	Polygamous wife	B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		B	B	G	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
4		B	B	G	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
5		B	B	G	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
6		B	B	G	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
7		B	D	G	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
8		B	D	G	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
9		B	D	G	B	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
10		B	D	G	B	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
1	Monogamous husband	A	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		A	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
4		A	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
5		A	B	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
6		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
7		A	C	C	A	D	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
8	Monogamous husband (cont'd)	A	C	C	B	D	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
9		A	D	D	B	D	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
10		A	D	D	B	D	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Monogamous wife	B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
3		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
4		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
5		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
6		B	B	B	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
7		B	C	B	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	Yes	
8		B	C	G	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
9		B	D	G	B	D	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
10		B	D	G	B	D	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		No	No	No	No	No	
1	Muslim cleric	A	C	E	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
2		A	D	G	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
3		A	E	G	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
4		A	E	G	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
5		A	E	G	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
6		A	E	G	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
7		A	E	G	B	B	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
1	Muslim woman	B	B	B	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
2		B	C	B	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
3		B	C	B	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
4		B	D	B	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
5		B	D	E	B	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	Yes	No	No	

S/N	Category of Respondents	Responses																			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
1	Court staff	A	B	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
2		B	C	E	A	D	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
3		B	C	E	B	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
1	Social worker	B	B	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
2		A	B	D	A	D	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
3		A	C	E	B	D	Yes	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	
4		B	E	E	B	D	No	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No		No	Yes	No	No	No	