"To Whom Do I Belong?" A STUDY OF INTER-RELIGIOUS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND ITS CHALLENGE IN USANGI – MWANGA TANZANIA
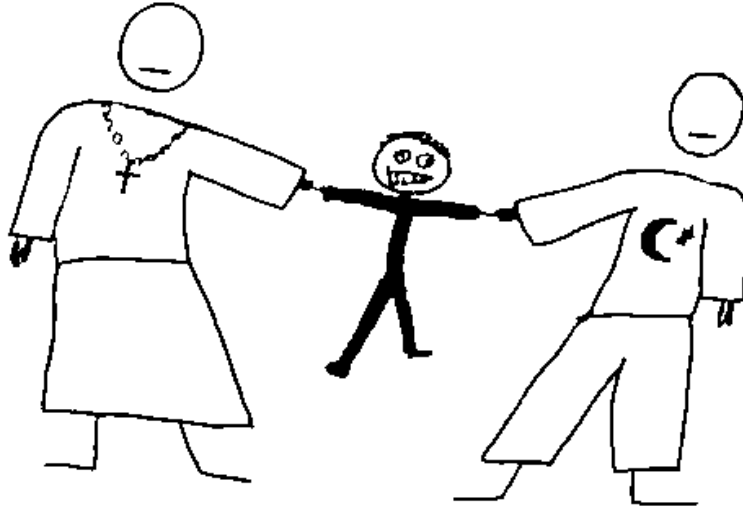

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger
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ABBREVIATION

Bakwata	*Baraza kuu la Waislam Tanzania* (The National Muslim Council of Tanzania)
Ch.	Chapter
Cor.	Corinthians
Deut.	Deuteronomy
DSM	Dar-es-Salaam
ELCT	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
Eph.	Ephesians
Ex.	Exodus
Lk.	Luke
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
Mk.	Mark
Matt.	Matthew
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
PD	Pare Diocese
Tim.	Timothy
UN	United Nations

1. INTRODUCTION

"If you want to have a lasting influence upon the world you must invest in People's lives; and if you want to maximize your investment, then you must invest in those lives while they are young" (Brewster and MacDonald 2002:13).

1.1 Background of the Study and Motivation

Inter- religious marriages are becoming common in Tanzania, particularly between Muslims and Christians. The strong social stiles among the societies living in Tanzania have brought this. However, there are many ethnic groups but there is a strong unity between these groups. Many factors have been pointed out to this unity but Rasmussen's is the strongest as he says Swahili as the national language in Tanzania has played an important part in fostering unity and nationalism in the country and there by also in uniting Christians and Muslims. Other factors is the increased of secularization urbanization and industrialization of Tanzanian society which has resulted in religious practices and beliefs becoming less important in the governing of people's lives. Due to this social change of life, many things are growing such as the mobility and encounters, made people from different contemporary means of transport that enable people from different cultural and religious backgrounds to meet. In growing number of cases, this has led to marriages between of different backgrounds, such as inter-religious marriage for simply intermarriage implies the crossing of ethnic, linguistic, religious and racial boundaries by a woman and a man in life's most intimate union.

Formerly, there was a common Swahili say *" mwanamke hana dini"* meaning "a woman is a non-religious person" This was due to the fact that, African culture especially in Tanzania most of the ethnic groups, after marriage a woman has no option to decide independently on which religious to belong, but has to follow a man's religion. But today, as women are being educated most of them do not see the logic of being converted to another religion as a condition for marriage, as a result when they fall in love they get married to men of other religions while each remaining with her or his religion and this is inter-religious marriage.

Inter- religious marriages have been looked upon from different angles. Some people see them as a problem not only among the married couples but also the outcome of the marriage such as, children are in danger. Having that view, African scholars like John Mbiti and Kisembo strongly stress that it is hard to work out a marriage union across religions because different in beliefs and practices may separate the couples or trigger unnecessary differences a situation which will affect children as well (Mbiti 1973:87-88); also see (Kisembo 1977:149-150). The basic problem seen by these scholars here is the difference of understanding between Christianity and other religious systems on the vital purpose of marriage. From the side of the ones going to get married the main question has been can our different religions be barrier to the extent of not getting married. When they consider the depth of their love, they may become blind of religious differences and they get married.

Moreover, the married coupes in inter-religious marriages have been blessed with children. Raising children is an important issue for each parent, and each is authentically concerned that the best thing possible be done for children, as well often, though what each sees as best is what each has known and been taught. Past experience is what will generally be repeated (Romono 1997, 113). However, there have been some challenges among the couples and to children as well. One of the challenging issues is concerning the children who are born in inter-religious marriage to choose which religion to follow. One boy from inter-religious marriage told me "I love my father and my mother, but they belong to different religions! To whom do I belong?" this question is very challenging since none of his parents could answer and even I as a pastor as well.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem and Aim of the Study

As it has already being noted that, inter-religious marriages are very common in Tanzania, in particular between Muslims and Christians. In my description and discussion on this paper, children   and parents go hand in hand. For it is hard to separate children from the parents when discussing such a very crucial subject. As I see, the problem is not to be born in inter-religious marriage. The problem might be how parents and society understand their obligations towards children upbringing despite their cultural and religious differences.

However, many people believe that having parents of two different religions cause, also psychological stress on the children in such a marriage, as they often are effectively forced to choose one parent over other. This results in children growing up in the other faith, or torn between the two faiths. I have formulated the following research questions which I wish to answer in my thesis and which will contribute to answering the main question with which the thesis deals:

- Do religious differences inevitably create barriers or problems?
- What are the causes of inter-religious marriages in contemporary Tanzanian society?
- What are the challenges in inter-religious marriages?
- Are all inter-religious marriages harmful to children?
- How can a child grow up in two faiths

The study aims at exploring Inter-religious families with children who are born in such families. The main focus is upbringing of children in inter-religious families and its challenge in Tanzania society. In this case, how do the families, religious community, and society as whole understand their role on upbringing of children who are in such marriage? I have confined myself to the children born in a marriage between a Muslim and a Christian.

1.3 The Scope and Limitations

The research concentrates mainly on Usangi in Mwanga district. I have chosen this area to be the center of the field research and to present the whole Tanzania society for the following reasons: First, the area is highly characterized by intermarriages, in particular between Muslims and Christians. Second, as a pastor who works in this area, I have come across with issues concerning intermarried couples. Many of these couples live together either officially or customarily and they have children.

As to the limitations of the paper, I have used the families as it is noting that marriage in Africa involves not only interpersonal relations, but also the inter-community relations.

In this writing, I focus on one main perspective, namely Science of Religion. However, social-theological and anthropological approaches will be used according to the different concerns dealt with in the various chapters of this paper.

The writings comprises of six chapters, of which introduction is the first and the Conclusion is the last. Chapter two looks the families and children in Tanzanian society, including traditional marriage and children up-bringing, this is also including children's rights in Tanzanian society. Chapter three gives an overview of marriage and children in Christianity and Islam. Here one will get to understand what are differences and commonalities of marriage and children up-bringing in Christianity and Islam. Chapter three examines inter-religious families with children in Tanzania society. Here one will get to know the causes of inter-religious marriages and the challenges facing couples and children who are in such families. Chapter five deals with prosperous children in inter-religious Families, in this case here one will get to know how then families, religious communities and Tanzanian society can play role in children up-bringing despite of the cultural and religious differences. Finally chapter six gives up of the conclusive remarks. Thereafter, will follow a bibliography, interview guide, and appendixes.

1.4 Methodology and Sources

This paper is mainly based on qualitative research method. I have chosen this method because qualitative research refers to research that focuses on qualities of human behaviour, as well as the holistic nature of social behaviour (Le Roux 1999:3). Therefore the researcher is requires to collect people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour. Thus, it is a fieldwork research. The data collection for this paper has been gained in three ways:

The first part of the research was achieved through library research at MHS.

- During summer holiday June- August 2007, I had the opportunity to use the library of Makumira University College in Arusha, Tanzania, where I found some academic interconnecting part of work related to my research work.

- The second way has been by means of field research. This was done in the period of summer vocation in July to August 2007. During this fieldwork, I arranged

meeting with some religious leaders, such as Pastors and Sheikhs. Some was visited in their homes, churches/mosques. This was also including partners who are in Inter-religious families. The interviewees were orally interviewed and the conversation was documented and some of them were taped. I used interview guide questions, which allowed respondents to speak freely instead of dominating or restricting them in their answers. The interview guides (listed in the appendix 1) were prepared in English and translated into Swahili, this is the reason that, many informants were Swahili- speaking people, and only a few could speak English, many interviews were done in Swahili language (A Tanzanian National Language). However, some of the interviewees requested their names not to be mentioned because of the nature of the information they gave. For this case some of the names of the interviewees will be anonymised in some places.

- The third source of data collection was diary documentation through observation as a pastor of the Evangelical Church in Tanzania. Personal experience and observation of the researcher was of great importance, especially in planning, consultation, and evaluation of reliability of collected data. The nature of the researcher observation was in semipublic setting including life style of the parents and children in inter-religious marriages. Nevertheless, also religious communities were observed. All translation and the direct quotations are the work of the researcher. Bible quotations in this work are from the Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Furthermore, this thesis is science of religious, social-theological and anthropological study. It derives from social realities giving them science of religious and theological interpretations. For this case, it has been necessary to use a broad variety of sources. With reference to written sources, I will call particular to use of science of religion books and other disciplines, which connected to this research paper. In particular some documents and statements of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the UN Declaration of Children's Rights, the Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Bakwata: *Mwongozo katika ndoa*, [Guiding instructions to Islamic form of marriage] (Bakwata: is

The National Muslim Council Of Tanzania), The Tanzanian Marriage Law Act of 1971, Constitution of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania Pare Diocese (ELCT: PD) (Marriage section).

1.5 Previous Research

In my research field area no one else has ever attempted the research as par the title of this study. The researcher is aware that, due to modernity and increase of globalization life style of Tanzanian people has changed; this is the reason behind the increasing of inter-religious marriages in Tanzanian society. Thus, the researcher saw a great need of such kind of research in Tanzanian society. However, in spite of the fact that, the researcher was eager to study this title, although, it was a big challenge due to the fact that, there is no much that has been written, particularly in a systematic way, on inter-religious families and children in Tanzanian society.

Another challenge of the study was a researcher gender role. It was a challenge for researcher to interview Muslim leaders taking to consideration that, the researcher is a woman, a non-Muslim, and also a Christian Pastor. They were asking many question such as why I want to know all that and how is their information been used. This was overcome through the letter from my supervisor which I gave to a leading Muslim leader in the country who gave me an additional introductory letter. The letter helped me a lot for the cooperation with my interviewees. This letter helped to overcome this rigid challenge.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Inter-religious Families

Macquarrie and Childress they define *marriage* as a "joining of two lives". They added that, "it is defined in law as the voluntary union for life of a man and a woman" (Macquarrie 1986:366).In that case, from that definition then, in this paper the term *Inter-religious marriage*, (either religious, civil or customary) is marriage between partners professing different religions. I have used the families as I am aware that marriage as

already stated (see1.3) in Tanzanian society like other   Africans is not only a relationship between two people but also it involves the community relationship.

1.6.2 Children

In the *Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, the National Child Development Policy*, *Conversion on the Rights of the Child*, and the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*, a child is defined as 'every human being below the age of 18'(Martin 1987:131).[1] However, children in this paper are taken to be young person under the age of 18. These young people are generally incapable of making good decisions that affect them. They are incapable of entering into contracts, instituting legal proceedings and managing property that may help their right. Therefore, they require protection from parents, state and society as whole.

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[1] See also; The United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children 2004, 30.

2. Family and Children in Tanzanian Society

2.1 Traditional Understanding of a family with Children

The purpose of the traditional marriage according to Tanzanian society is to bear children, build a family, to extend life, and to 'hand down the living walking stick of human existence'. Marriage could not be considered true marriage until it produced children and to create a stable family. The concept behind is that a child is a combination of elements from both parents. Children therefore acted a unifying factor to the families and clans of the couples. The vitality of Tanzanian family could be understood in an African context as Mbiti argues:

> In African life, we cannot speak of marriage alone. It is always in terms of marriage and family life. One gets married within the context of family life, and one gets married in order to enlarge that family life. One stands on the roots of family life; and one puts outs branches of family life. The idea of the individual in relation to marriage and family life is deeply rooted in African thinking (Mbiti 1978:109).

Marriage belongs to the two families rather than the individuals. Families are involved through all the stages of establishing a family to sustaining it. African societies have elaborate ways to help their young people choose life partners. Marriage arrangements including pre-marital formalities are done cooperatively. The two families inform their would-be couple on the pros and cons of married life. Apart from molding the new family, the two families also protect the marriage from falling apart at all costs at all times through caring advice and activities. A lot of caring is given to the woman during pregnancy and after delivery of the child. Families are discouraged to interfere with the marriage by creating tensions between the couple.

In Tanzanian societies like other African the family (extended family), kinship, village and ethnic group at large are all built on caring activities. These actions are believed to be visible moral signs of being good neighbors. The content and structure of the indigenous holistic educational system provided a proper guidance into the family for its members. Members were nurtured in matters of collective responsibility in courtship practices, sexual purity, marriage, procreation, parenthood, death, self-reliance, cooperation and sharing in order to make them to be willingly ready to care for one another. Such

dynamism of collective responsibility of life foster intimate relationships that provide adequate emotional nurture.

Moreover, Inability to ensure the family's belongness in the community is a form of poverty. This is a social deprivation, which in the African context is the worst kind of poverty. Being secluded, alienated, isolated or ostracized from the family or community is a curse because life is meant to be shared. In Africa, the family is the most basic social unit, which defines a person in terms of human relationship and traditional socialization processes: 'I am because we are; and since I am therefore we are'(Mbiti 1990:141). The deep sense of belonging to the family and community is indicated by behaviour of solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue, trust and care for others in terms of reciprocating and sharing obligations and responsibilities amongst each other. Hence, the existence of African people counts more on community support and strength than on individualism (Magesa 1998:241-247)**.** The family community, which includes the extended family and the clan, is considered a sacred institution. As a result, its firm principles of co-operation and co-responsibility bear on the individual's performance in life. By means of the traditional strong spirit of solidarity the individual is integrated into the larger human community's moral and material supportive system as reciprocation for acting in accordance with the norms and virtues of the society

2.2 The Traditional Marriage with Children

2.2.1 The Issue of Polygamy

For traditional marriage, a man could have more than one wife but each wife stayed in her own separate house with her children. All wives and children together were regarded as one nuclear family since they shared the same husband and the same father respectively. Social status depends more upon one's position in family than upon individual achievement. Children born in and out of wedlock are nowadays both found in the Tanzanian traditional families. The traditional importance of children was not in a different way approached among the majority of the tribes in Tanzania. Many tribes have many in common in value the children Traditionally Tanzanian families as many in African societies; many ethnic groups regard children as necessary and important in every marriage. The marriages without procreation were not valued. They were regarded

as incomplete marriages. It was believed that there no family should be without children, because through childbearing, the parents are remembered through their children when they die. In this case, anyone who dies without getting married and without children is considered unfortunate because there will be nobody to remember him or her, after physical death. It is like to be completely cut off from the human society, to become disconnected, to become an outcast and to lose all links with mankind (Mbiti 1990:130-131). Therefore, to get married and bear children was the greatest hope and expectation of the individual for himself/herself and of the community for the individual.

In this way, children act as a bridge between the married and their families, especially the married woman and her in-laws. Children also unite the family of the two families together, but also they strengthen the marriage bond between the husband and the wife. They are the seal of marriage. When Laurent Magesa quoting Evans-Pritchard, emphasizes that:

> At the conclusion of the marriage through the birth of a child, husband and wife belong completely to one another, and the bond between the two families and communities is sealed. The wife gains a new status, certain elderhood, among her husband's people (1997:121).

Therefore, children are the glory of marriage, the more children you have, the bigger and the glory.Once a marriage has produced children, it becomes stable to the extent that it is very difficult to break up, because none of the spouses would wish to part with his or her children. Childless marriages were often in danger of breaking up. Some arrangements were therefore put in place to preserve such marriages (Namkunda, Farmer 2007: 2, July). On the other hand, traditionally, marriages legitimize children. Additionally, in Tanzanian traditional marriage like other African society,   a child is not merely a child but a great event. Childlessness is not merely an unfavourable incident, but a calamity. This is to say, to an African, marriage is not an event, but a process that, if normal and blessed, culminates in the birth of a child. One of the informants explaining that, to have a child is to have a mirror for looking at your back. He added that, having a child makes you take leave out of yourself in order to have an outside view of yourself, which should be, by itself, an exciting experience. He said that, as I failed to achieve such and such, I

would try my best to make it possible for my child to achieve it (Juma, Businessman 2007: 14, July). In other words, the achievement will be made on behalf of the parent; hence, it will be a success to both parties.

Thus, the most important attitude was 'the more they are, the bigger He is'(Mbiti 1978:108). In this case, low birth rate is not an asset but a liability. A man, whose wife has produced only one or two children, would obviously consider increasing the number of his family hands by bringing another wife into the family. If a woman is barren she might allow her husband to marry another wife so that children could be born to the family. If the problem of procreation was on the husband then a close relative or friend could secretly be requested to sleep with wife/wives to bear children for the family. Children in this manner were regarded to the born in wedlock; therefore, they are product of that particular marriage regardless of the help. Thus children strengthen marriage and make it more stable than the childless marriages. In turn marriage legitimizes children this was one of the reasons for a traditional Tanzanian marriage to have more than one wife.

2.3 Upbringing of Children in a Family

In Tanzanian traditional marriage is a knot or bridge in family life. One started in his/her parents' family, and now in getting married he/she is keeping the family going. Traditionally, marriage puts someone into a situation where he/she begins to become family conscious. The one cannot avoid family responsibility once he/she get married. In someone's growing up he/she was gests of his/her parents, in someone's marriage he/she become a host and hostess to his/her children. Traditionally, when a child is born physically, he/she must also be born ritually or religiously in order to make it a social member of the community. This means that, at a later age, it goes through a series of initiation rites. Thus, these initiation rites are like the birth of the young people into the state of maturity and responsibility. However, traditionally In Kiswahili there is a saying that, *"Mtoto umleavyo ndivyo akuavyo"* translated in English it means, the way you raise your child it is how she/he will behave in adulthood. Thus, one of someone's areas of family consciousness relates to parenthood, which brings us into the following part

2.3.1 The Mother's Role in Raising the Children

African child upbringing started soon after conception. As a tradition, soon after conception, a woman was required to reduce her daily workload and she was also fed with special food in order to make sure that she remained safe before and after birth. The expectant woman was to abstain from basking in the sun, long journeys, crowds and attending funerals. All these were for the sake of protecting the pregnant woman from any kind of danger. The husband was advised to treat his wife politely and give her the food she desired. Both husband and wife were asked to avoid anger and anything that might cause disturbance in the home for they would affect the life of the unborn child (Lutahoire 1974:24). The pregnant woman was advised to either use certain traditional medicine for prevention or cure some diseases.

African women are the primary care givers in African families. Their role is crucial, as they are the ones to bear and nurture life. Africans are aware of the significance of women in sustaining life and that is why there are several African sayings attributing to the significance care provided by women: 'Who is like the mother'. This means there is nothing you can compare to the care provided by mother. "Asiyefunzwa na mamaye hufunzwa na Ulimwengu" 'A child not raised by her/his mother will be raised by the world'. The mother is important in the upbringing of life. African women as mothers, have significant role as the foundation of life in any society in this continent. They give birth for every child and have responsibility to care for those who live. Women within their families are to provide physical, social and emotional support for every member of their family. The mother also was responsible to teach their daughter how to prepare food, how to behave towards men, how to care for children, how to look after the husband and other domestic affairs.

2.3.2 The Father's Role in Raising the Children

One of the informants pointed out that in a traditional marriage, soon after delivery, the husband's responsibility was to make sure that the wife and the children got enough food. In some communities, if the husband was working in the army and the wife had delivered, the husband was given permission to go home to attend to his wife and children. The informant added that, the Tanzanian traditional family regards a family as

the centre of religious worship, with the father as a family priest. Thus, it is the link between family members and the Deity, as well as unity in land holding, vengeance or creation. Social status depends more upon one's position in family than upon individual achievement (Juma, Business man 2007: 14, July).

One of the interviewees agreed with Mbiti by pointing out that, the children contribute to social, economic and religious life of the family. At home, there are different duties, which the children are expected to do as their share in the family. They are taught to respect the parents and elders. They help in work around the house and in the field, in looking after the cattle, sheep and goats, digging, fishing, hunting and building and this was for boys. Teaching boys was the responsibility of the father. However, boys were also taught how to be responsible as the 'head' of the family. The children are taught skills and how to trade. As they grow older, they gain a different status and gain more responsibilities to look after the family (Mbiti 1978:109).

2.4 Inheritance of Property in a Family

As it has already been noted, children are considered to be a blessing in a family. They are expected to take care of parents in their old age. They are also source of labour and prestige to the family. Since children are considered a source of labour, then a family without children will stay in need because they would not produce enough. Among the many tribes in Tanzania like other African societies, no father would wish to die without an heir. The same applies to a matrilineal family where inheritance is through the mother to the daughter(Mbiti 1978:24). This means that, Tanzania society like other African, as they are some ethnic groups who are patriarchal society, there also some other ethnic groups who follow matrilineal society.

2.4.1 Male Children

Traditionally, Tanzanian marriage may give the family this most desired to have a son. Over and above, and for emotional reasons too this happens for some societies, having a son is always more cherished than having a daughter. For this case, for that society, if couples were given a choice to have only one child and had to choose the sex, the majority would prefer a son. The reason for this was, traditionally, some of the family inheritance is through father- son relation, and most if not all traditional Tanzanian

husband prefer to have boys to girls. Mbiti's words agree that the boys become the heirs in many African societies(Mbiti 1978:109). Therefore, for those families, to die without having sons, is to die without heirs. And as already been noted for traditional African people do not wish to without heirs.

Furthermore, one of the informants stated that, for traditional society, it is an embarrassment or a taboo for a parent, regardless of his or her needs, to go and live with his or her married daughter in order to secure social protection. He added that, it is equally embarrassing for the married daughter to bring her husband along to her parent's home in order to take care for her ailing or needy parents; neither is it feasible for her to come alone to live with them as to attend to their needs (Juma, Business man 2007: 14, July). Sons are, therefore, brought up to live with or within the domain of the parents and, for this reason, they and their wives become the custodians of the parents' security and social life.

2.4.2 Female Children

Most customary law disadvantages woman, particularly in property rights and inheritance. One of the informants reported that, under the customary law of most ethnic groups in Tanzania, a woman cannot inherit land, and must live on the land as a guest of male relatives by blood or marriage. She added that, a woman does not inherit land from her natal family, as only male children are obliged to inherit land. A family member, most of the time a brother of the diseased, inherits not only all property, but also the widows. However, in traditional Tanzanian family, daughters are brought up for marriage, or at least, bearing the faith that they will eventually get married in order to urge to have a male partner (Mwanaidi, Farmer 2007:23, July). This means that, they therefore grow up with the knowledge that one day they will leave the parents' home to start their own home since, in nearly all cases; it is the girl who goes to the man's home to start a marriage.

However, as it has already noted, children are considered born in wedlock if they were born to a family following clan approval allowing a man and a woman to live as husband and wife. Children born in wedlock are recognized and respected at the family and clan

levels. They have all the clan rights including land inheritance, succession of clan leadership extensive care and advocacy from the clan, and attending to clan meetings for communal decisions. Moreover, the 1971 Marriage Act of Tanzania provides for inheritance and property rights for women. Thus, as stated above, application of these provisions depends on the status and wishes of the head of the household. The researcher noted that, for above reason, women's legal inheritance rights are commonly ignored, particularly in rural areas. It is thought that girls do not need property, for they will marry and the property will leave the family stead.

2.5 The Tanzanian Marriage Law Act of 1971

The Marriage Law Act of Tanzania of 1971 validates four types of marriage: a) civil Marriage which are understood to be potentially polygnous b) monogamous Christian marriage c) polygynous Muslim marriage and d) customary/Traditional Marriage. (According to the customary Marriage Law it is also understood to be potentially polygaynous).The law stipulates that, marriage must be registered as monogamous or polygaynous and cannot be changed, but also, marriages are not considered invalid if they are not registered. A woman who cohabit with a man for two years have the legal rights of a wife. However, the marriage Act explicitly states that it takes precedence over both Islamic and customary law in regulation of all four types of marriage(An-Na'im 2002:44). Act, article 25(1), inter-religious marriages are legally allowed and recognized. The Law Act, however, does not specify anything about children's rights. What it says is the right of the father to take care of his children. This is to say that according to the Tanzanian Marriage Law Act, the children belong to the father. This means that, the marriage act provides that a father is responsible for the maintenance of children until 18 years of age, unless started otherwise by the Court, the children may belong to the mother, especially when it is noticed that the father is mentally disordered or has other intolerable problems to the family(An-Na'im 2002:43-53).

2.6 Children's Rights in Tanzanian Society

Children rights to play part in society are defined in UN Convention articles 12, 13, 14, and 17. These include children's rights to have their views heard and respected, freedom of thought, belief and religion, and children's rights of information. The Convention

intends children to have the right to make their views known in decisions that affect them. It also shows that children have the rights to have their opinions taken seriously. They have the rights to express themselves freely through talking, writing, painting, drama and singing. Children also have the rights to seek, receive and give out information and thoughts of all kinds. Together with these rights, children have the responsibility to express themselves in the way that respects the rights and reputations of other people. This freedom of expression does not mean that children may choose something that may harm them. Parents and other authorities have the right and the responsibility to help children make choices which are safe and that which correspond to their best interests.

However, as it has noted from one of informants, many parents, guardians and Tanzanian society as a whole do not play their role seriously to meet children's rights. Children have become a burden and not a gift from God as they were intended to be. They are abused in many ways in the society. For example, many people value land for their own business, thus children's playgrounds are seen as a misuse of land. Sometimes it happens that there is a playground, but children do not become free to play there as some parents count children playing as misuse of time.

Rights to Freedom of thought are elaborated in Article 14 of UN Convention on the Rights of the child. The article states that:

> 1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. 2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. 3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.[2]

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[2] Convention on the Rights of the Child U.N Article 17; many countries of the world are members of United Nations. These nations worked for many years to write a convention on the right of children. The convention includes the ideas and beliefs of different societies, tribes and religious children and how they should be raised. Hence, UN Convention of children Rights is an international agreement that is obeyed by all countries, which accept including Tanzania. Also, http//www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm, 12.09.2007.

Moreover, According to the some respondents who were interviewed by a researcher said that it is not fair to give children under the age 18 freedom to choose which religion to belong to. They said that children under 18 years are too young to make good decisions (Amon and Enighenja, Social workers 2007: 14, July). Nevertheless, other respondents told the researcher that it would be fair to give children freedom to choose which religion to belong because believing is a personal decision rather than group decision (Philipina, Social worker and others 2007: 14, July).

Nevertheless, the Children's rights to family life in African tradition were that, children belong to the society and not only to the two parents. The reason behind was that, for the traditional person in Africa, a communal unity of essence is possible- an individual is never a mere individual, but is also other(who is not merely another). Harmony in interpersonal relationship is premised upon the old Swahili saying: *Mtu ni watu* approximately translated as 'A person is a person through other people'. Mbiti agreed with that by insisting that, when talking about children, African uses plural word "our child" instead of "my child" which shows individualism. After a child is born, the whole society created the child into social being as part of the society. The task of child rearing begins with the unborn child then continues after the child is born. On the responsibility of childcare in an African community, Mbiti asserts that the community is responsible for protecting, feeding, bringing up and educating the child in the community (1990, 107-109). This means that, every child in the society belongs to the whole society. Therefore, every individual in the society has the responsibility of raising the child. In such a society where every member recognizes his/her responsibility in raising the child, it is obvious that the parents and the society are proud of a child who behaves well.

2.7 Evaluative Summary

Traditionally, it was the role of parents to look after the physical, social, economic, spiritual and religious well-being and development of their children. It was a blessed trust for which parents made sacrifices. On the other hand, the children owed their obedience, respect, gratitude and love, especially when the parents grew older. A child also was a concern of all members of the extended family, and the society at large. This means that, even if the parents are not there or die still the child or children in that household were

not left alone. In the extended family they help each other in times of happiness and in times of sorrow.

This traditional practice, however, was connected to the belief in the existence of the living-dead. They believed that those departed ones, who were still part of the family, were concerned in matters and accountable to see that fairness is done to all. From the understanding of traditional Tanzanian family and children upbringing, we can know discuss what is the Christian and Muslim understanding of marriage. This question leads us in to the following part.

3. Marriage and Children in Christianity and Islam

3.1 Marriage Among Christians

3.1.1 The Right Couples to Get Married

A starting point for biblical teaching on marriage is found in the statement: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), Jesus in Matthew 19:5 also quotes this statement. The Bible also explains more about marriage that, in the beginning it is God who created male and female, as read: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). This means that, in Christianity marriage is a unity between male and female. Yet it is God who brings the helper fit for man. "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2: 18). The expression "It is not good that the man should be alone" Genesis 2: 18 indicated the need of both man and wife of a companion fit him/her, and this sets forth marriage as the means through which this can be achieved (Via 1985:102).

Additionally, in Christianity, marriage is a covenant relationship between man and woman, and each has an obligation to the other. The key expression in marriage is that they should be 'one flesh' (Mark. 10:8). *Flesh* here implies kinship or fellowship with the body as a medium, thus setting forth, marriage as the deepest corporeal and spiritual unity of man and woman. This is to say, marriage is a unity between husband and wife, and the two live together in complete fellowship to help one another in mutual love. The union between a man and a woman into one flesh expresses the divine intention that has been there since creation. Collins said that, "The creator who created by his spoken word has expressed his will in regards to the creation of man and his wife," To join in one flesh, which resolves in unity through marriage (Collins 1992:137).

It applies to the question of why God created them male and female. Hence again, Marriage is an exclusive relationship. The total unity of person; physically, emotional, intellectual and spiritually. One flesh expresses marriage as something much deeper than human convenience or social convection (France 1985:280). It becomes natural to say

that those who were created male and female became one flesh in marriage, as in Mark 10:8.

Who is legitimate person to marry or who has the right to marry?
The minimum marriage age under the Tanzanian Marriage Act 1971 is 18 for males and 15 for females. Courts may permit under-age marriage of parties who have reached 14 years of age if specific circumstances make the marriage appear desirable. The Marriage Act only specifies the free consent of marrying parties for validity, and dispenses with the need for guardian's consent if they have attained 18 years of age. Marriage registration is obligatory and non-compliance is punishable by a fine, but will not render the marriage void. The Marriage Act provides for licensing of religious functionaries as Marriage Registrars (An-Na'im 2002:59). Moreover, according to Christianity, divine origin and purpose of marriage is specified in Biblical quotations as follows: Genesis 2:18 and the lord said that, "He will make for a man a helper comparable to him, as is not good that man should be alone"; also, Proverbs 18:22 "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains from the Lord". God's plan for marriage is to provide companionship, to prevent sexual immorality, and to provide children with loving parents. For this case I can see that, for Christian marriage, one wife was permitted for one man at the beginning of time. Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul authorized one wife for one man. Elders and deacons are allowed only one wife. Moreover, the first couple in the Bible are commanded to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth…' Genesis 1:28. This verse expresses the further end of marriage which is to work together as man and wife and to increase through progeny (Westermann 1984:161).

Inter-religious marriages in Christian tradition: What does the Bible say about such a marriage? Does it accept or reject it?

   a) In the Old Testament, special care was taken to avoid this type of marriage (Genesis.24:1-6). In the wilderness, the Israelites were warned against this kind of

marriage lest they be led astray from the Lord because inter-religious marriage could have been one of the causes of apostasy (Ex.34:16).

b) In the New Testament, there is not much evidence to support or disqualify inter-religious marriages. In 1Cor.7:12-16, Paul has given his instructions in the light of this issue. However, there is need to examine this text before we come to any conclusion whether Paul in this passage was in favour of or against inter-religious marriages.

The question may have been something like this: What would be for the partners before their conversion to Christianity, since then they had a non-believing husband or wife; were they to continue with their heathen partners or divorce them? "Perhaps such Christians were already divorcing their non-Christian partners and perhaps people were accusing the church of breaking up family life" (Hargreaves 1978:84). Paul's answer to the above question is No! (1Cor.7:12). The Christian should not dissolve the marriage, if the non-believing partner does not desire it to be so. If the heathen partner seeks to divorce, the Christian partner may consent. (1Cor.7:15).

Paul shows the blessing of mixed union. According to verse 14, Paul gives the ethical reason for maintaining the marriage. According to the Lenski, the believer is made holy by this marital union, even the children born in this marriage are made holy because of the believing Christian mother or father. From the Bible (1Cor.7: 16), in verse 16 it is assumed by some readers that in this type of marriage, a Christian wife or husband may win an unbelieving husband or wife. Nevertheless, together with the blessings, which may be mentioned in connection with this marriage, the passage cannot be taken for granted that it was written to justify or encourage mixed marriage as an ideal institution in the church. Paul was dealing with the situation, which was already there, and which needed his instruction as a church leader (Lenski 1946:292).

Moreover, verse 16 is not intended to teach people that in inter-religious marriages Christians will bring people to conversion either. The questions "Christian wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband?" are not to conform to such marriages as a means to save the unbelieving partners, but the questions raise doubts more than hopes.

We have no way of knowing that the believing part spouse shall save the unbelieving after their marriage. Lenski commenting on verse 16 says, "After all the business of saving a soul belongs to God; He alone determines the human instruments as well as all other providential aids which He will employ. Let not even a spouse assume too readily that she/he is the God-chosen instrument" (Lenski 1946:297).

Therefore, even in the New Testament mixed marriages are certainly not ideal. Paul did not entertain the idea of a fellowship between the believer and no-believer (2Cor.6:14). Lenski again leads us to this issue by saying that: "Mixed marriages are certainly not ideal; yet they are as truly marriages as other marriages are. Paul also does not forbid them as of course he does not advise them. He takes them as they are and delivers his instructions accordingly (Lenski 1946:291).

Nevertheless, the constitution of Lutheran Church in Tanzania Pare Diocese is saying this about inter-religious marriage: "This Diocese does not solemnize a marriage between a Christian and a Non –Christian; but if it happens that a Christian of this Diocese is engaged with a non- Christian the following procedure is to be followed:-

(a) They can marry one another by having their marriage solemnized by the government register of marriages, followed by a prayer conducted by a church elder at their home.

(b) When later on the Non-Christian partner is converted to Christianity, their marriage can be blessed in the church (Constitution 1975:8).

3.1.2 Concubine in Marriage

Macquarrie and Childress define concubine as "the habitual practice of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not married to one another" (Macquarrie 1986:111). This means that, concubine is a woman who lives with a married or unmarried man as if she were his wife, without being lawfully married to him. One of informants commented that this habit is   more kind or less a modern phenomenon in Africa especially in Tanzania, brought to Africa by the influence of western civilization. The reason behind is that, before civilization and modernity traditional Tanzanian men, like

others African men they were very open in polygamy than practising concubinage (Msofe, Sheikh 2007: 12, July).

There many are circumstances that can lead to concubinage; one of them is failure to get a man for marriage and some socio-economic reasons. It is not easy for every woman to find a man for marriage these days. One of informants reported that, traditionally, most Tanzanian female persons were born and brought up to get married and have children. There were extremely few cases of single women, if there were any at all, who remained so up to the end of their lives. As marriage was a cornerstone of social security, it was not merely any man who could attract women for marriage. With the social security in mind, a woman was likely to go for (and her family was likely to give her to) the man who appeared responsible, kind, and gentle. Such a man was not always the unmarried. In so many instances, he was a married man already. But nowadays due to Christianity, a man is supposed to be a monogamist. In this case for a man to practice polygamy and remain Christian, it will simply change its face into that of the modernity resolving on concubinage or what is popularly known in Tanzania as *'nyumba ndogo or mke wa nje'* literally means 'small house or the outside wife' (Mwanaidi, Parent 2007: 23, July). This means that, there is 'inside wife' and 'outside wife'. An 'inside wife is frequently, not always, an selected woman who has been married in a church wedding or through legal law, usually both.

A man who originally married under legal law, or in a church wedding, consequently, may decide to take an additional wife through local and custom law, although this is legally unacceptable. 'The church wife' may not (usually she does not) be aware of the new 'wife' as properly married to her husband. As it has already been stated (see chapter 2.5,), Tanzanian Marriage Law Act of 1971 Christian marriage is monogamous. It has also been noted that, a Christian marriage consists of one husband and one wife. This is Jesus' ideal from His teaching on marriage in Mathew 19:3-6, in this passage He cited the Genesis creation account, in particular Gen.1:27 and 2:24 saying, the two will become one flesh, not more than two. Paul also wrote; 'each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband (1Tim.3:2). This means that Christian marriage is

monogamy marriage (see also chapter 3.1). One of the interviewed church leaders pointed that, Christianity has restored the sacred institution of marriage to its original character, and concubinage is linked with the sin of fornication and adultery. He added that, one can associate concubine with cohabitation (Kadiva, Pastor 2007; July) ; see also (Macquarrie 1986:111).

Additionally, another situation that can lead to concubine is becoming a widow. One of the informant said that, it is not the wish of any wife to become a widow. As widow, she wants rather to remain with her children than marry to another man and leave her children. This is for the reason that, in some Tanzanian ethnic groups, when a widow wants to get married, she has to leave her children to the clan of the deceased husband. Or she has to be inherited by one of his relatives. Therefore, if she wants to live with her children she has two choices either to be inherited or remain a widow.   In this case, in order to cover a part of loneliness, some widows, decide to have partners even if is someone's husband. There are many reasons this gives rise to socio-economic problems. Natural disasters are neither man –made nor woman-made. Physical and psychological diseases, disabilities and accidents are always waiting for people in all corners of life. She added that, the incontestable truth is that no woman wants to be a concubine; events of life lead her into it. Given the choice, every normal woman would love to be married and earn the respect of married life (Enighenja, Social worker 2007: 14 July) see also(Mbiti 1990:138-141).

3.1.3 Children in a Christian Family

Christianity considers children as a blessing. After God created Adam and Eve He blessed them, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds…" (Gen.1:26-28). This is to say, according to the Bible privilege of procreation is blessing given by God. This means that, from the beginning of the biblical documentation, then, children are considered as a blessing. Christian marriage has a social dimension, which extends beyond the partners and their relatives. The partners are integrated in a new way into the church and community, through marriage. Just as the marriage, partners have a responsibility for building up of the church, so the church community itself has a responsibility to teach

Christian family to foster its life of faith. In particular, the community shares in the responsibility for the spiritual formation of children.

Moreover, loving and care for children is an aspect in Christian family. The most striking biblical picture of loving care for children become visible in the parent-child metaphors and similar metaphors used to give glimpses of God. For a metaphor to have an impact, it must recall a reality acknowledged to the hearers. The use of these metaphors therefore implies that many Jewish parents did love their children attentively and kindly. In Psalm 103 David uses the father metaphor to picture God; "As father compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him" Verse.13. In Psalm 131 David turns to a mother-child image; "But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me" Verse 2. David pictures himself as a weaned child calmly resting in God's arms, through remembering the love and tenderness he has seen between a mother and her baby. (Scottie 2005:26-45).

In addition to that, Hosea also paints a beautiful picture of God as parent. "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son..." (Hosea. 11:1-4). Here God modelling how children should be loved. Love includes instruction, tender touch, healing, kindness, meeting needs, and continuing love in the face of denial or rebellion. Jesus also turned the awareness of his hearers to an instance of how is to be good father: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"(Luke 11:13). Jesus assumed that the fathers among the listeners gave good gifts to their children, or at least knew of fathers who did. However, Jesus required his hearers to realize that God's love and giving goes far ahead of that of the best father. In these word pictures of God as the ideal parent, it shows the kind of love children need from the parents. But there is more, children and parents relationship with them lead children into wonderful new discoveries regarding Gods' relationship and His people (Scottie 2005:26-45).

Faith formation of children is also God's plan in Christian family. In Deuteronomy 6 the Bible states that God intends the home to be the primary context for teaching children God's ways. "Recite God's words to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise…"(Verses.7-9). The home is the most everyday setting in which these activities can take place, a home where parents love the lord their God with all their heart, soul, and strength (Deut. 6:5). However, the home is to be nurtured and supported in a vital faith community. The family is primary context for faith formation of children (Scottie 2005:151-164). More about primary formation of a child will be discussed in the following chapter 5.

Fathers' role in Christian family it is as noted in the bible; "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it (Eph.5:25). In addition, "Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (1Cor.6:4). Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged (Cor.3:21).Proverbs 13:24. He who spares his rod his son, but he who love him disciplines him promptly. Proverbs 3:4, 24. Through wisdom, a house is built, and by understanding, it is established; by knowledge, the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. Psalm 127:1, unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it. However, one of Christian church leader suggested that, Christian parents are advised to have this in their mind. What kind of marriage do they wish for their children, they have to show them how to be good partners and parents. They have to be the example of a good Christian marriage! They conducts as well reflects to their children they walk with the lord! He added that, what they are teaching their children by their example. They have to remember that, they are raising someone else's future husband or wife, mother or father! Parents with solid Christian marriages have a spiritual, loving home that filters down to their children, which provides them security love, the foundation for self-esteem, and the example with to make a good decision in for themselves (Kombo, Pastor 2007:25, July). Kombo's points are very close to what we find in Proverbs 22:6. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

3.2 Marriage Among Muslims

3.2.1 The Right couple to Get Married

In Islam, the term used for marriage is from an Arabic word, which is *Nikah*. The word is closed to Contract". However, in Islam the special reference to marriage is *Mithaq*, which means a solemn covenant or agreement between the husband and wife. This is from the verses "…and they have taken a strong covenant". (Qur'an 4:21). In addition to that, the Qur'an also uses the word *Zawj* which means a pair or a mate. This also used to connotes marriage(Rahman 1984:114-115).

The background of marriage is from Allah's creation. Allah created from one soul and from in He created the male and female. This means that, even in paradise, the Qur'an informs about having mates. Further more, marriage in Islam as a meaningful institution, it has two purposes. The first one is in its *"Ibadah"* aspect where by marriage is an act of worshiping Allah because it is in accordance with His commandments that, husband and wife love each other and help each other. The motivation here is that they can make effort of continuation of the human race and rear and nurse their children to become true servants of Allah. The second purpose of marriage is to respond to the basic biological desire of production. This means that, it can ensure production of human species and continuation of human race. According to Islam, children are the realization of maternity and paternity. This is to say that, to give birth to children and abandon them is a crime toward society, toward the children and even toward parents themselves (Rahman 1984:116-117). What is of importance here is the husband and wife due to their relationship and also their sex role with the context of Islamic comprehension.

According to the Islamic marriage, the man is a leader of the family. As a leader he is concerned of what can be called influential functions which is; maintenance, protection and dealing with the sophisticated matters. The woman is entrusted with the task of caring for and moulding the children, organizing the home, and creating the loving impression inside he marital home " Men are the protectors and maintainers of women…" (Rahman 1984:34-36). Further more, In Islamic society the wife is not expected to be pressed to work attain money. Not only the married one but also the un

married woman, the divorced woman and the widow. All of them are assured by law, an income that helps them lead a sensibly contented life. In this case, a woman can work under the authorization of the husband and the work should be without unfairness to their husbands' rights.

Therefore, as far as marriage is a form of worshipping Allah and obedience to His word, then it becomes obligatory for all those who are able to fulfil its obligation and responsibilities. The Prophet Mohammed said; when a man marries, he has fulfilled his religion. For this case, the monastic attitude has no place in Islam. However, half of marriage is supererogatory for a person who can control his sexual desire. This also for whom wish has no desire to have children and who feels that marriage will not keep him away from his devotion to Allah. Additionally, "Marriage is a commitment and relationship that stats in this *Duny* (World) and will continue *Insha Allah* in Paradise together". For this aspect, preparation of marriage for Muslims becomes very essential. If so then how can a Muslim choose hi/her marriage partner? For a Muslim choosing, a partner must have an intention of looking for someone with whom they build a family. The Prophet said, "Men choose women for four reasons: for their money, for their rank, for their beauty, and for their religion, but marry one who is religious and you will succeed. It is advisable also for a Muslim when looking for a spouse to lower his gaze. "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze…" (Qur'an 24:30). Moreover, looking for spouse who has the right qualities and whom you are physically attracted to, do not mean throwing out the compulsion to lower the gaze for both sexes and leering or ogling the person. "And tell believing women to lower their gaze."(Qur'an 24:31). For this reason Rahman suggest that, a man should not throw an obsessive to gaze at the appearance and hands to gain enough idea about her behaviour and attractiveness (Rahman 1984:121-124).

Several writings point out that, one can contract someone to help on the process of looking for a spouse. The one to help can be parents, relatives, an Imam or respected and trustworthy members of the community. The one will not only assist for looking a spouse but also initiate and participate in a communication process. This also is very important.

However, involving others by the way does not mean signing over your right to say yes or no to a marriage proposal. It is only increases the possibilities of finding out important information about an eventual partner in a way that maintains rules of Islamic humility. Rahman suggest that as far as marriage in its authenticity is a *Mithaq* which has the meaning of a solemn covenant or agreement among the husband and wife so the free consent of the parties is very important "They should agree in a lawful manner" (Qur'an ch.2:232) also (Rahman 1984:121-124).

What about the comments on inter-religious marriage in Islamic understanding? Friedmann pointed out that, the Qur'an deals with the issue of mixed marriages in three verses which have become the basis or prohibits for the development of the relevant Muslim law. The first verse clearly prohibits Muslims from wedding polytheist women (*Mushirika*t), as well as giving Muslim women in marriage to polytheists (Qur'an 2:22). The second, though using the term *kaffir* rather than *Mushrikat*, is understood in the same manner (Qur'an 60:10). The third verse allows Muslims to marry *virtuous* or (*muhsanat*) free women of the book (Qur'an 5:5). The verse does not refer to the opportunity of giving Muslim women in marriage to scripture men, but this possibility is fixed and generally rejected in the book of law and tradition. Several Muslim of the first century A.H. are accredited to this result with unambiguous statements.

Moreover, the author added that, a marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man would result in an unacceptable strangeness between the superiority, which the woman should enjoy by virtue of being Muslim. Also this will not be easy for the wife avoiding be too submissive to her infidel husband. In terms of Islam law, such marriage would involve an intense lack of *kafa* that is; of the compatibility between wife and husband. This means it requires a woman not to marry a man who is lower in status than herself. However, this principle is not useful for religious matters only but also it requires a husband be higher in social status. Additionally, according to the author, a tradition connected on the authority of *'Umar b. al-Khattab*, reads after ordaining in the usual manner that a Christian man may not marry a Muslim woman but that a Muslim may marry a Christian woman (Friedmann 2003:161-163); also see (Rahman 1984:134-136).

What I can observe here is that, a Muslim wife of a non-Muslim husband would not have the same assurances of religious freedom and personal rights as same cases does her Christian counterpart with a Muslim spouse. This is also due to the fact that, the expectation that the children will be raised as Muslims, since, according to Islamic law, the child of a Muslim father is a Muslim and has to be brought up as such.

However, some of Muslim leaders interviewed commented that, inter-religious marriage is against the teaching of the Qur'an and "*Mwongozo wa Bakwata*".[3] A Muslim is not allowed to marry a Mushrik woman, such as an Idolatress, until she has believed.

> The Holy Qur'an puts it in this way: Do not marry an idolatress until she believes, a believing handmaid is better than an idolatress even though ye admire her, and not marry idolaters until they believe, a believe slave is better than an idolater even though ye admire him (Qur'an surah. 2:220).

According to "*Bakwata"*, the guideline (*Mwongozo katika ndoa*) to marriage is this:
The bridegroom must be a Muslim if the bride is a Muslim; if the bridegroom is not a Muslim, such a marriage cannot be solemnized"(Bakwata). In this case, the husband and the wife differ in their faith the *Mwongozo wa Bakwata* has this to say:

> [A Muslim is not allowed to marry a woman who is not a Muslim. A woman who is not a Muslim can be married by Muslim if only it is known certain that 'traditionally' she originates from a family which was attached to a religion whose holy scriptures had been descended from heaven. Under no circumstance can a Muslim woman be allowed to be married by a man who is not a Muslim] (Sayyid saeed 1998:1).

In yet another reference the question of inter-religious marriage is forbidden by Islam:

> "Therefore Muslim men are forbidden to marry Mushrik (one who ascribes divinity to anything besides Allah) women unless they are converted and a Muslim woman not marry a non-Muslim man unless he is converted (Islamic 1976:2).

In the light of these references, one can ask; is a Christian considered by Muslim to be member of the people of the book so that he or she can marry a Muslim without changing his or her religion? Is a Christian one who ascribes divinity to anything besides Allah or

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[3] 'Mwongozo' is a small booklet which gives guiding instructions to Islamic form of marriage, what is allowed and forbidden. 'Bakwata'(Baraza kuu la Waislam Tanzania), is a The National Muslim Council of Tanzania.

not? According to some Muslim leaders interviewed, here, the people of the book mentioned in the "*Mwongozo wa Bakwata*" who could marry Muslims or be married to Muslim are the Jews and Christians who lived at the time of Mohammed the prophet. So for these leaders the present Christians are not the people of the book, so marriage with them is prohibited.

Additionally, the view held by Muslim leaders is that Christians believe in the Trinity, the incarnation and the Sonship of Jesus Christ, such teachings are rejected by Muslim and in their eyes Christians are considered to worship three distinct gods, so Christians are Mushrik, because they associate Allah with something else. Another point given for inter-religious marriage from Muslim leaders is that this kind of marriage is not a perfect marriage since it is not solemnized by the official Muslim Qadi[4] (In Swahili Kadhi; Islamic judge), for this kind of marriage takes place in the Area Commissioner's office. They also added that, children born and brought up in this marriage are not brought up in accordance with Islamic religious teachings, since their mothers are not Muslims and may not help them accordingly(Abed, Sheikh 200:12, July; and Msofe, Sheikh 2007:12, July).

3.2.2 Polygamy in Islam

The meaning of polygamy in general is the idea or practice of multiple marriages, such as more than one male or than one female. Where by, the practice of a man having more than one wife is mentioned as polygyny. In Islam, polygamy is practices of a man marry more than one wife, and for Islam there is limited amount of marriage (Rahman 1984:144). The author adds that, the concept of marrying more than one wife or polygamy is not a contemporary marvel. It has always been with humankind from time immemorial among different people in various parts of the world. Before the arrival of Islam, the Arabians were polygamous and other people on most parts of the world during that time. He added that, with the advent of Islam, the polygamy was restricted limited to four wives and with number of rules attached to it. However, it is interested to not that, there is only one verse that refers to and permits polygamy, "If you fear that you shall not

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[4] Qadi is also known as Qazi and Kadi(Swahili Kadhi) is a jurge ruling in accordance with the Sharia Islamic religious law.

be able to deal just with the orphans, marry the women of your choice, two or three, or four. But if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with them then only one" (Qur'an 4, aya3). These verses not merely limited to the orphans but it has a general application about the marriage laws in Islam. The concept here is that the treatment was to be governed by principles of greatest humanity and equality (Rahman 1984:144-146).

The Muslims have the conditions for someone who wants to take more than one wife. First, he should have enough financial capacity to look after the needs of the additional wives that he has undertaken. Second, he must do equal justice to them all. This means that each wife should be treated equally. However according to Tanzanian Marriage Act 1971 states that, maintenance of the wife or wives is specified as the husband's duty, and becomes the wife's duty in cases where her husband is incapacitated and unable to earn a living. The court may order the payment of maintenance in limited circumstances where the husband refuses or neglects to support his wife (An-Na'im 2002:59).

It is my view that, for this case, man has a challenge of treating his wives equally and with justice. As a human being, divide to love for more than one person equally as wives is very difficult. This is the reason that, by any means, there might be one wife who will win the husband's love. However, here I agree with the verses form the Qur'an which Allah says that husbands will not be able to treat all wives justly even if they tried (You will not be able to deal equally between 'your' wives, however you must wish 'to do so'… Qur'an 4, aya 3).

Additionally, what are the reasons given for addition of more than one wife? Or in which situations will allow polygamy as the best solution for a Muslims? According to Allah creation, for some men to have one spouse is not enough. This means that, some need more than one to satisfy their natural desire. For this case, Rahman has the view that in order for a man to satisfy this natural desire, which is very strong and as far as, he has enough means to support the woman, the dissolution is to take another wife. The author added that, in other case if a wife is proved that is not capable of bearing a child and this is after medical examination. According to him, a man has to get another wife since in

Islam a child is a joy of life (Rahman 1984:144-146). As it has already noted for this point he agreed with Mbiti that, in African context, children are the glory of the marriage, and the more you add them the greater the glory, "the more we are, the bigger I am" (Mbiti 1990:139).

However, Polygyny is legally recognized with the consent of the first wife. The marrying parties must state in the notice of intention to marry whether the marriage is anticipated to be monogamous, polygnous or potentially polygynous. There is a rebuttable assumption that traditional and Muslim marriages are potentially monogamous or polygynous by joint declaration of the spouses. This ability exists in the registration of civil marriages as well. Although for Christians married in church as long as both parties remain Christian, cannot be applicable (An-Na'im 2002:59).

3.2.3 Children in an Islamic Family

Religious leaders interviewed commented that, according to Islam, a family has some unique features such as, it provides a secure and healthy home environment for its members, it guards against passions of whims and desires and channels them to wholesome and meaningful pursuit, and it proliferates human virtues, such as, love compassion, sacrifice and justice. In addition, it provides a refuge against any difficulty. Family is the microcosm of a society and such there are distinct role for its members. "Each one of you is a trustee (shepherd) and is accountable for that which is entrusted to him. A ruler is trustee in respect of her husband's house and children."(Sahih al-Bukhar and Muslim). Men has obviously the leadership role in the family and in the family context women have to be loyal to men (al-Qur'an 2:228, 4:34). Leadership raises the question of responsibility, consultation (shoora) and justice. As shepherd of the house women have responsibility over the house and children;

> Each one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The ruler is a shepherd of his subjects and is responsible for them; a husband is a guardian of his family and is responsible for it; and a lady a servant is a guardian of his master's and responsible for it." (Bukhari, 3:592).

A Muslim parent should desire both the good of his world and the good of the hereafter for his or her child. If a choice must be made between these two, the life-to-come is eternal and it is most important goal for them. In practical terms, this may mean giving up or leaving off something that may be seen fine for the child in terms of this world's life but which will lead him to unhappiness hereafter.

> "And know that your possessions and your children are a test, and that with Allah is a mighty reward. No soul shall be taxed with more than its capacity. No mother shall be injured on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child" (Qur'an 8:28; 2:233).

Islam makes it clear that children are, at one and the same time, blessing, a trust and test from *Allah Taala.* That parents instinctively love their children and want to protect them and have the best for them, Allah knows. This is to say, parental duties is incumbent on parents to provide their children with basis human necessities, such as food, cloth, shelter, education and medical support. This is treated as and worship *(Ibadah)* for the parents. It is also important for the parents to provide their children with love, warmth and compassion. As human being consists of body and spirit, parents must provide their children with the life skills and spiritual nourishment (al-Qur'an 31:13-19).

One of informants suggested that, from the Qur'an and Hadith we know that Allah recognizes and takes into account the complexity of rearing children, and we pray that His leniency is greater for those of us who are rearing children in this extremely difficult time. Parenting in not a minor, insignificant matter, but a tremendously important, time-consuming task for which there is, justifiably, the promise of great reward. It is hoped that more and more Muslim parents will educate themselves about how children developed, take note of their children's unique personalities and abilities, and try to find the best way to rear them accordingly (Saleh, Sheikh 2007: 12, July).

Additionally, children's responsibilities are to have their share at home (al-Qur'an 2:83, 4:36, 17:23-24, 29:8, 31:14-15, 46:15). There are many traditions regarding children's responsibility toward their parents. The rights and responsibilities inter-twined. One's responsibility is the other's right. Rights and duties of husband, wife, parents and children

are inscribed in Shariah. No Superiority except in piety Qur'an also declares that no one is superior to other except in the quality of piety (Qur'an 49:13). What Islam has established is equitability in the role of sexes because of many factors, such as, psychological, physical and emotional. Allah has no bias for or against men and women (al-Qur'an 33:35). No burden bearer can bear another's burden (al-Qur'an 35:18); see also (Zawaj.com 2007: 10,October).

3.3 Evaluative Summary

Marriage in Christianity is union between man and woman. It is also monogamy marriage as God created them male and female, a teaching that Jesus echoes in Mk 10:6-7. "Each man should have his own wife and each wife her own husband" (1Cor 7:2) the two become one flesh (Mk 10: 8). The blessing of children is a gift from God. This means that, the blessing of children in marriage is a gift of God and a reason for joy in marriage. (Ps. 127: 3ff, 128: 3-6). Therefore, it is plain from the Bible that marriage is a lifetime fellowship of the two partners (Mt. 19:6). However, home is place intended to be the primary context for faith formation of children in Christian family.

As it has already been noted, marriage in Islam intended to provide to several purposes which include, above all, spiritual harmony and peace, and cooperation and partnership in fulfilling the divine mandate. This is to say, Allah refers to the relationship between males and females in terms of partnership of achieving goodness and fulfilling the divine mandate for their lives. Muslim family, Children are a trust from Allah, both a test and a joy. According to Qur'an and Hadith teaching, Muslim parents will be judged according to their intentions and efforts as parents, and they always pray that they may be able to make Allah Taala pleased with them and their children.

However as it has been mentioned for Christian marriage is for one wife and one husband, while for a Muslim man it is acceptable for him to marry more than one wife. This is to say, according to Christian teachings marriage is monogamous (Matt.19:3-6), while for Muslims marriage is acceptable for a man to be polygamist with restricted to four wives (Qur'an 4:3). Additionally, Christian family and Islamic family all together hold that, children are blessing from God and joy of the marriage. Nevertheless, for

Christian's family, the home is expected to be place where parents love their God and faith formation for their children. While Islamic family, parents instinctively love their children and must provide for them with skills and spiritual nourishment. This for Muslim parents is treated as and worship (Ibadah) to Allah.

Moreover, from the two aspects religious traditional backgrounds each of one has been brought up, people meet and fall in lover to each other. What are the causes of inter-religious marriages and challenges of such marriage with children in Tanzanian Society? This topic turns us into the following chapter.

4. Inter-religious Families with Children in Tanzanian Society

4.1 Causes of Inter-religious Marriages

4.1.2 Internal Factors

The writer met with the youths in their church meetings during her research and had interviewed with individuals. The question of finding a life partner is so important for young girls and boys. During question time in their meetings, the question frequently came up, "What shall I do so that I can be married? What if my lover is a Muslim? One of the interviewer commented that, she was 18 years old and she had fallen in love with a Muslim boy. She admitted that she had some Christian friends, but she did not like to marry any one of them because they were drunkards and she did not like their behaviour. She said she preferred the Muslim man because he was of good character, and had a good post in the government. When asked about the difference in their religion she answered confidently, "Oh! There is no problem; everyone shall keep his/her faith". And about children she said they were going to decide for themselves which religion they want to follow (Nakiete, student 2007:25, July).

Another informant commented that, she is in an inter-religious marriage after being converted from Islam to Christianity. She added that, before being converted she was married as a Muslim with her husband who is still a Muslim. The reason of her conversion was that, it happened that she was serious sick and she heard about Christians' preaching and prayer. She attended that meeting and those Christians prayed for her and she was healed. Since that time she was commited to be converted to Christianity. Her husband allowed her to change to Christianity but for him he remains as Muslim with their children (Nakijwa, Farmer 2007: 27, July). This is to say conversion from one religion to another can be one of the reasons for inter-religious marriage.

Moreover, premarital pregnancy is one of the causes for inter-religious marriages. One informant commented that she found her self in inter-religious marriage without really her wish. She was a Christian girl having a Muslim boyfriend. At that time, she was not sure enough that she is going to be married to that man. But unfortunately, while they were still in their relationship she realized that she was pregnant. She added that, her

parents advised her to marry to the same person despite of their differences in faith, for the sake of their child who is going to be born. For those reasons, she decided to be married to a Muslim man and they agreed that every one will keep his/her own faith. Concerning the children in the family, they agreed that, they are going to be Muslims as it is their father's religion (Nte, housewife 2007:12, July).

4.1.3. External Factors

According to the research, some of traditions force girls to be married even by people whom were not their choice. Due to this, one of the informants while commenting about the causes of inter- religious marriages she admitted that, she is very much wished a Christian man could marry her, but that she had waited so long and no one came. Her young sisters and friends they were already married but she is not yet. But that she had now found a Muslim who was prepared to marry her. "What could I do?" she asked. This happened when she attend wedding ceremonies either for relatives or friends, some people asks her "*ya kwako lini nawe utualike*?" means that, "when is your wedding so that you also can invite us? However, she said that she wanted to be married and have children when she is still young and strong enough to take care of them. She decided that she is going to marry that man even if they have differences in faith (Pamela, Youth 2007: 12, July). This is to say, the society expect her to be married and they think that she is late, so she is forced to take an action. This can also be the motivation from her background as traditionally daughters were brought for the knowledge that one day they will leave their parent's home and get married to start their own home (see also chapter 2.4.2).

Moreover, group-psychology can be another reason for inter-religious marriage. Some people enter in such marriage with the attitude of just having a husband/wife like others. For them it is better to be married than remain single. However, some times some of the girls loose hope of waiting for someone of their own religion to marry them. This can be relevant to the comments from one of the informants who argued that, for her it is better to have children with a legitimate father even if that father should be from different religion, than dying without a child. She added that, how could a society look at her when she grows an old

woman without a child, even a husband (Nte, house wife 2007: 12, July). The reason behind as it has already stated in chapter2, traditionally a married man and a woman are regarded with more respect than a single. And also traditionally as already stated childlessness is not merely an unfavourable event, but a misfortune. (See also chapter 2.2.1).

The economical hardship can be also one of the reasons for inter-religious marriages. One can be tempted to marry to a rich man as a solution to the problems concerning economic issues. For this case, the religion is not an issue to consider as far as someone can be supported economically. One of the informants reported that, she passed her primary school examination to join secondary school. But she did not make it. The reason was that her parents could not afford to pay her school fees. They advised her to marry to a rich man at that time. They told her that may be he could pay for her a school fees. Nevertheless, that was the end of her education and the start of a new life an in inter-religious marriage as her husband was a Muslim (Hawael, farmer 2007:13, July).

Additionally, another cause of inter-religious marriages is increased secularization, which has resulted in religious practices and beliefs becoming less important in the governing of people's lives. While willingness to cross religious lines to marry is increasing, a similar willingness to cross-racial lines to marry is not occurring. Due to increased secularization urbanization and industrialization of Tanzanian society, this trend will likely continue. This also is the almost close to the Freuds' statement that saw religion as an illusion that would vanish as humanity matured. According to the secularization narrative, pluralism is one chief cause of this decline in religious belief. The modern world brings together many people with views –unlike previous times, in which people were surrounded by people like faith and, thus, not likely to question their own group's beliefs. The growing pluralism version of secularization narrative tells that religions are threatened by the presence of multiple views of the world (Herbert 2003:8-9).What I can see here is the impacts of Societalization as part of modernization which has brought about transformations in people's attitudes, values, and in the consciousness of individuals and groups. This means that, due to an increase of modernity and globalization the social life

of Tanzanian people change. This is also relating to modernization processes to cultural change, including religious change on global world.

Furthermore, one of the informants pointed to his own experience which can be relevant to the above points. He gave an example of himself when he met with a girl (his wife now) and fell in love with her while they were still students at university and decided to marry. He was and still is a Muslim and his wife was a Christian. He added that, because of cultural change that has taken place in Tanzania since today's parents were themselves children. Due to those changes, even the social life has changed as a result of modernity. Now for some of the families they have given a freedom to boy or a girl to choice for his/her own partner. This is to say, the whole issue of decision for whom to marry it is someone's freedom for some families not like how it has been used in traditional marriages (Mkilaha, Professor 2007:25, July) (see also, chapter 2.1). People have a tendency to marry within their social group, or to marry a person who is close to them in status. Although many characteristics play a role in the choice of spouse, from my knowledge most often is concerning with endogamy and homogamy with respect to race/ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status.

Another informant noted that she had to marry a Muslim because of their agreement before their marriage. She was promised to remain a Christian, and fortunately, her husband has kept his promise. She is allowed to go to the church and practice Christianity without barriers. The informant admits however that, through she is given that freedom; sometimes she felt lonely in the family, because she had no one to share with her spiritual experiences (the more discussion about this is in chapter 4:2) (Stella, Business woman 2007:25, July).

In addition, another informant commented that, they were both Christians in their marriage. But it happened that her husband died and she became a widow. However, due to her traditional ethnic group she has to be inherited. The head of the clan told her that if she will refuse to be inherited from one of the relative, the clan would not be responsible of taking care of her children. Therefore, she decided to be inherited to one of her

deceased husband's relative for the sake of her children, and she remains to be a Christian (See also chapter 3.1.2). The husband who inherited her was a Muslim, that is how she found herself in inter-religious marriage. She was not only in inter-religious marriage but also in polygamy family as she was a second wife. Her challenges were how would it be concerning the religion of her children? How is the future going to be in this inter-religious marriage for her children in her new marriage? (Magreth, teacher 2007:12, July) These issues and others will be discussed in the following chapter 4.2

4.2 Christian and Muslim Challenges of Inter-religious Marriages and Children

4.2.1 Challenges Within the Family

Choosing to marry someone of a different faith tradition than one's own, including no faith tradition at all, is an implicit admission that one has accepted a less-than-orthodox arrangement for marriage and child rearing. Some of the interviewees admitted that things are not so smooth at home with a partner of another faith. They enjoy a kind of superficial happiness in their marriage. Yet neither of them is naive enough to think that everyone else in the world holds the same positive view of marriage arrangements like some of them have. Parents and religious institutions can and have traditionally taken a negative view of such marriages. The source of any such opposition is pretty predictable. Parents want their children to pass on their family's heritage. Religious institutions don't want their congregations to thin out. Also as the parents of such marriage they want their children to grow up and have their religious identity. How do this entire situation work out, as every one as partners in such marriage holds on to his/ her own religiously; traditionally, socially and psychologically?

The researcher remarked others live with unbearable condition. The reason behind this was from some female partners who said that, their husbands had promised them that they could retain their religion after marriage. Then after marriage, they experience every kind of pressure put in them so that they should be converted to Islam. Some are able to resist the pressure and remain Christians while others have been unsuccessful and were in the process of being converted. Some admit that they got married to a Muslim without thinking beforehand about the implications and the problems ahead of them. Some say

they were not aware of the differences of the religious practices and belief between Islam and Christianity, they thought it was easy and stay and live with a Muslim husband, as it may be   easy to stay with a Christian husband. Some say if they were to do it again they would not marry someone with different faiths for a second time. They would not even recommend their daughters to enter inter-religious marriages as they did.

In addition to that, some of partners (especially Christian women) who are in this kind of marriage tell stories of how husbands and relatives use different ways and methods to force them to be Muslims, example; some are denied clothes, money and food. Some are prevented from attending Church services or say prayers in the house. Church workers are not allowed to visit them. Some husbands threaten these Christian women that they will marry a second wife and these worries the women very much, for a second marriage would bring more troubles into this home than solving them. Concerning this issue, one of the informants gave an example from her own life that, her husband decided to marry a second wife because he wanted to have an official marriage which had been solemnized by a Qadi or Qazi (Swahili: Kadhi an Islamic judge), (Hawael, farmer 2007:13, July); (see also 3.2.1). The challenge here is: Do these decisions solve the problems? How is the condition of the children in such kinds of marriage? Nevertheless, is this allowed according to the Islamic law? We will deal with these questions in the following.

However, when a researcher interviewed one of the Muslim leaders concerning the issue above he commented that, the best option under these circumstances is to introduce the woman to Islam and wait for her to accept Islam before getting married. Imposing any firm conditions of her accepting Islam before marriage will not do any good. Because, if a woman is willing to accept Islam merely to get married to a Muslim man that she likes, she will be most likely to leave Islam if the marriage ends up in a divorce or even if the marriage becomes unpleasant for her. The informant added that, it should be desirable that a woman accepts Islam solely for the reason that she likes Islam. Any forceful acceptance of Islam is not likely to be neither permanent nor very suitable for a happy marriage. If the woman is not a Muslim by her own choice, then in case of divorce, she may leave Islam and be free to date and marry a non-Muslim. Her new family may

ultimately decide how to raise the Muslim man's children. This situation should never be acceptable to any Muslim man (Msafiri Sheikh, 2007:12, July).

The Attitudes of Parents on the issue of an Inter-religious Marriages

For some of the parents whom their daughters are in such marriages, they commented that, they do not like them to marry someone with different faith, yet these marriages often take place against the will of the parents. On the other hand, one of the Christian parents said that, he refused to permit his daughter to marry a Muslim, and then she eloped. "So what could I do?" he asked. According to the informant, this is for some of the ethnic groups in Tanzania a kind of traditional marriage which is well known as '*chagua bega nikubebe'* literally translated as 'decide which side of a shoulder you want to be carried'. This is kind of forced marriage where by the marriage can be planned only by one side of the family (boy's family) without the permission from the girl's family. Even sometimes they can just take a girl without her willing, they just carry her and after a girl slept one night in the boy's place it is a shame for a her to go back home, so she has to accept that she has already been married. But after they have taken a girl to the boys place they make an arrangement or an agreement between two parties in order that, the marriage can be official. (Ntekijwa, parent 2007:23, July).

Committed Christian parents reject Muslim/Christian marriage at any rate. Some extreme Christian parents swore and vowed themselves not to pay any visit to the daughter who is married to a Muslim man, and their children should not bear the names of their parents. The researcher wanted to know what the reasons behind these decisions of those parents were. One of the parents claimed that they have to take such measures because their daughters are lost according to scripture (Acts.4:12, John.14:6). For these parents the destiny of soul of their daughters is more than anything else (Zakaria, parent 2007:23, July). The question here is still, rejection as strategy will it save the daughter. What I can observe here is that, the parents should be helped to see that their basic duty to their children at this stage is to give advice, educate them about the marriage they want to enter into, and that they have no right to go beyond that limit. After all, swearing will not help solve the problem.

4.2.2 Upbringing of Children

The concern in this section is mainly about children born and brought up in a family where the mother is a Christian and the father a Muslim. How can a child grow up in two faiths? What are the challenges concerning parents and children in such marriage?

Foremost, in principle, in some Tanzanian families which follow a paternalistic family system children usually belong to the father, as well to the entire clan of the husband, thus the husband's religion must stand to be the religion of the children. Taking this into consideration, according to one of the couples who is a Christian woman married to a Muslim man, pointed out some challenges concerning her experiences in such marriage. How does one raise children with the mixing two faiths? According to the informant, for some of Tanzanian ethnic groups like other Africans a child is supposed to follow the fathers' faith. Is that what you want of your children, to be of a different faith from what you as their mother believes? She added that, our children are supposed to be our heirs and thus you want that they too will inherit the kingdom of God, how will they if they do not 'belong' with you (in faith)? Children are our gifts from God but are not ours but His and we have been given the authority and power to take care of them and bring them up in Lords' way. Jesus says in John 5:19 -20 "the Son does what He sees His Father do…" Your children will therefore follow the ways of their father since he is not of the same faith as you, "I know about Christianity and my husband knows about his faith". The informant added that, thus "I as a Christian (Lutheran) mother can only tell children about the (Lutheran) Christian faith. I can only tell them about the Bible". It's the mother who spends more time with the children and builds them in many aspects of life, much as in today's world the mother may have a job that takes her away from home a lot etc. She said, it is difficult to teach her children about Jesus.

The informant added that, from her knowledge, Muslims revere Jesus ('Isa) as a great prophet, but do not believe that he is divine. Knowing this, makes it her (as a Christian mother) shy away from describing Jesus as Son of God, or praying in Jesus' name? Or if she decides to teach them about Islam, does she teach her children the doctrine of *tawhid*, the absolute oneness of God, and the Muslim belief that Jesus is a prophet but not divine?

It is thus difficult that as a mother should be teaching children things that she herself does not believe in, much as one could put it ' we believe in one God but we have many faiths' Will my husband accept it? Will the extended family accept it? It does not feel alright that you can only speak to them on some matters and others you are not supposed to say anything about? How will the children grow? Are the parents here really fulfilling their responsibility? (Stella, Businesswoman 2007:25, July).

Furthermore, another informant who is a Muslim father married to a Christian wife, he posed such question; I know naturally my wife would like them (children) to be Christians and I would like them to be Muslim and it's my religious obligation as well. What is the solution? He added that, I loved my wife as Christian when I met her as Christian and she did the same. And now I still love her as Christian but I want my children to be Muslims because I think Islam will save them from eternal hell. Wouldn't it be double standards? That the person I loved the most is Christian and I am ok with that and she can die without having true faith but I want my children to be saved! (Mkilaha, Professor 2007:25, July).

Notwithstanding, it has happened that some parents regarding their values system may still find that they emphasize different values while raising their children. The desire and result might be the same, but the route along the way might differ radically. If situation occurs, children are greatly affected. Parent who clash over child-rearing issues are often really battling over some basic difference in philosophy, values, or beliefs that they as a couple has not managed to solve; the child merely provides the spark for the conflict.

Often differences show up before the child is born. What religion and what language should be taught? Should family celebrations reflect both cultures and both religion, as a means of keeping the child connected to the traditions of both parents. Should the child be raised monocultural or monolingual? Choosing the name can be a cause of discord: should it be a family name, and if so, whose family? Should the name be typical of one culture, one religion or should it be one which is acceptable to both? These questions

remain to be a big challenge to the parents' upbringing of a child and obviously if not well attended, may lead a child into difficulties.

The writer however, discussed the question with the Muslim leader, about the children who are considered to be Muslims because of their father's and asked him to express his view. He agreed that in principle it was true that the children are Muslim but in practice they are experiencing problems. This is because the father here goes to work away from home for long time. So it is the mother who is a Christian who stays with the children for longer time in the earliest period of their life which is so important in laying down the foundation of Islamic religion. So according to this Muslim leader, Muslim husbands were complaining that their children were not being brought up in accordance with Islamic teachings since their wives knew nothing about it; instead the children were being influenced by Christianity (Abeid, Sheikh 2007: 12.July).

In addition to that, another answer which came from same parents of an inter-religious marriage, regarding their children's religion is simply that, they will have to decide for themselves which religion they want to follow when they grow up. Hassan and Pamela said that, they continue to struggle with the challenge of their choice. They emphasized that they were not attempting a synthesis. They have intentionally chosen to raise their children in a single, coherent system of letting them choose later. They feel that this is the best way to help their children become adults of strong faith. (Hassan and Pamela, couples2007:25, July). Nevertheless, it is more painful that some couples who are involved in this kind of marriage give up their religious practices in order that they may keep peace in their new family, so they bring up their children without religious practices; they contend that the children will decide for themselves later which religion they will follow. Concerning this issue one of the informants commented that, she really came to the decision of not practicing her Christianity because of her Muslim husband restricted her not to attend church service with children. She added that, her child was still young baby at the age of six mouths and no one could stay with a child at home while the mother attending church service. But her husband told her, 'if you want to attend the church service go alone and leave my son at home'. She asks, in that situation, what did

really her husband meant? She decided to remain a Christian but not attending church service (Nte, house wife 2007:12, July).

Moreover, concerning values and beliefs, I agreed with Romano who commented that, values and beliefs define whom you are, what is right or wrong and what is true or false. As well as, the musts and must not. They are primary learned at home and then often vanish into your subconscious until something causes them to reappear, something which challenges them and also sometimes challenges the parents. Many fortunate couples realize that, regardless of many other differences, their basic beliefs and values are the same, and they are able, each in his or her own way, to implant the same strong personal code in their children (Romano 1997:116-118).

Nevertheless, other couples collide; only privately, others in front of the children, when the parents' values are not only different but also conflicting, there is bound to be dilemma for both parents and children. Since so few couples are able to stand and analyze their beliefs and behaviors, the disagreement between them can be also hard to realize. For this case the result is that the clashes can be difficult to solve. Though, one or the other might compromise, but also feel a sense of loss or of failure for not being able to pass along deeply felt beliefs and values. One of the parent may feel alienated from his or her children if they adopt the standards of the other's culture (Romano 1997:116-118). The children themselves often feel confused by the lack of clarity and consistency in the messages they receive from their parents. In the most awful case situation for the same behaviour of a child one of the parent can be pleased and the other parent can be unhappy for the some behaviour of the child.

What happens is that you get another division among the children. Some children identify with one parent and some with the other. There is the tendency in the same family to despise and neglect the other parent and his/her religion. All the same, some of the children may turn to be atheists. Some of the parents complain that the question of religion has caused more disunity in the family and increased strife, arrogance, negative attitudes and hostilities towards each other's religion. This can be the same like one case

of a family where the first born son decided to be baptized like his mother. His father was a Muslim and his mother was a Christian. The son secretly began with Christian religious studies and was baptized while he was in a boarding school. When the father got the news he was very angry about the son's decision to be leaving the Islamic faith. He was complaining that, how can his son be a Christian. He suggested that, at list his daughter can follow her mother's faith (Christianity) but not his son (Mkilaha, Professor 2007:25, July). As already noted in chapter 2, for some ethnic groups in Tanzanian context, they value male children more than girls because boys become the heirs in those societies.

Additionally, from the above discussion, it is possible to have some children like their parents divided in the question of faith. When the researcher wanted one of the Muslim leaders to comment about this issue, he contested that, if any Muslim marries a woman from "People of the Books" (Christians) , the children, by *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) are considered to be Muslim. For instance, often, in other families the kids adopt the religion of their mother; and, sometimes, a marriage is arranged upon agreements between the couples that half of kids will adopt mother's religion and the other half will follow father's religion. If a Muslim man agrees to any of such terms accepting the kids to be raised non-Muslims, the person will be regarded as a *Murtadd* (the one who has denied Islam or: left/an apostate) because he has allowed his kids who might have been brought up in Islamic religion to become *kaafir* (unbelievers) instead. Anyone who willingly and knowingly allows/agrees for his kids to become *kaafir* is himself regarded as *kaafir*. He is out of the Islamic circle. If he had any Muslim woman in his *nikaah* before this marriage, the Muslim woman is free from his bond (because a Muslim woman can not remain married a non-Muslim) (Abdullah, Sheikh 2007:12, July).

However, it is possible to have children who are well-committed to their religion, in spite of the fact that they are born and brought up in this kind of marriage. It all depends on the environment under which they will be brought up. The second possibility is that of having children who are very poorly brought up in matters of faith. It is obvious that children learn the content and nature of their religion from their parents, then if their parents have no unity in faith; this is most likely to confuse their children.

These points are summarized here to show what a challenge it would be to bring up a child by a Christian and a Muslim who are living together in marriage to march together theologically on what each other believes. Inter-religious marriage as it has been already noted can affect children in different ways. As already pointed out, children are blessings and gifts from God, and they bring joy in marriage. The fact that children are gifts from God implies that their parents are held responsible for their welfare. The family in a narrow sense consists of father, mother and children. Children need the love and care of parents. In a Christian perspective,   Children are expected to grow strong in faith, full of wisdom and blessed by God's savior (Lk.2:40). It is therefore the responsibility of the parents to teach them diligently the word of the Lord and his ways made known to them. (Deut.4:9-10, 6:7, 21; Ps.78:4). Since the children are among the most precious gifts of the Lord and among the chief blessings to be given to parents, then it is the function of the parents to help the children to fear the Lord and love Him as their creator.

In this respect the parents are responsible for their children's religious education. Children learn to love, honor and fear God through the practical daily life of their parents at home. As it has been noted, religious education starts at home and among the parents it is especially the mother (in African context, see also chapter2.3) who is the care-taker of children from earliest stages has a greater role to help the children spiritually. S. Lutahoire showed a similar point when he wrote:

> "It is therefore, important that parents should be constructive religious examples. A child observes parents attitudes of reverence and devotion to a higher source of values. A child tends to take up the moral and religious traits of his own parents or guardians" (Lutahoire 1968:151).

Moreover, children need proper care and treatment at early ages if really the parents want to enjoy their presence in the families. To the best of my knowledge, from early years, a child looks up to each of the parents as someone great to imitate, someone who gives him or her love, security, affection and protection. Thus, raising children is an important issue for parents, and each is genuinely concerned that the best thing possible should be done for the children.

In inter-religious marriage it is sometimes difficult to fulfill the parental obligation of giving religious knowledge to the children because of the religious conflicts in faith which lead to serious results in the spiritual life of the children as the earliest time of their life or later on. S. Lutahoire again gives relevant remarks:

> Mixed marriages produce neurotic children because of husband-wife and parent-child relationship. It is not uncommon for interfaith marriage and family to be regarded as a correlative factor in producing potential atheists, agnostics, relativists, syncretists and ultra- nationalists who would affect the religious communities, institutions, families, and the entire nation" (Lutahoire 1968:107-108).

However, as already pointed out, unsolved conflicts stemmed from differences in values may cause a child to feel torn apart by parents' differences. The result may be that the child finds itself unable to obey one without turning against the other, and finally learns to play one against the other to achieve his or her own goals. At time goes on, the child definitely become more confused and unsure of herself or himself, indecisive, and at the same time, rebellious against any authority. From a religious point of view, the great danger here is that the child is likely to be raised without any formal religion whatsoever.

4.2.3 Social Life

It is not easy to give a simple answer to the questions concerning someone's personality. In my understanding, the question of individual personality depends on many factors; such as, the environment in which one grew and lived, the way he/she was socialized, and the attitude he or she may regard his position. Taking this into consideration, Nte found that for a Christian woman to marry a Muslim man it is not a simple matter of just an agreement that each individual shall maintain his/her religion; it meant a lot, especially for a woman, accepting a totally different style of life for her new marriage. She gave her own experience as a Christian woman married to a Muslim man she had to change her way of dressing, which meant wearing clothes with sleeves and avoiding makeup. The informant added that, before their marriage she was promised that she would never have to wear a veil as she is a Christian. But after their marriage, she is now covering her head

whenever they leave the house. And her husband and his family continually offer her books written in Swahili about Islam.

Additionally, the informant added that, her husband is a traditional Muslim who thinks the place for the woman is in the home. She does not ever leave the house without him or one of his relatives (a woman), not even to the corner shop. She has had to give up many kind of food like eating pork, as is it is against his religion and her husband told her that, he is not allowed to be in the company with people who drink alcohol, so he does not want even any company of her friends who drink alcohol. Her husband suggested that their marriage can be blessed in the church as long as Jesus' name is not mentioned. She suggested that, through her experience in such a kind of marriage; it seems that a Christian woman changes everything while a Muslim man changes nothing. Nevertheless, she said 'I love my husband dearly and for this reason I will do all I can to keep my marriage alive, yes it is difficult'. Feelings of resentment and loss of one's own self do creep in. It is all about whether one feels it is worth it. Also for her as a wife she should always ask for advice before deciding on anything major. Her reflection concerning this was that, after all when someone is a Christian, marrying a Muslim, it is indeed a major thing, even if people do not realize it (Nte, house wife 2007:12, July).

Death is something that concerns everybody, partly because sooner or later everyone personally faces it and partly because it brings loss and sorrows to every family and community. For Tanzanians like other African, the death of close family members will usually require someone's attendance at large family gatherings and religious ceremonies. From this perspective Stella who is a Christian wife, married to a Muslim husband commented that, if you are married to someone of different faith you have to be prepared to deal not only with the grief and stress of the loss of a loved one, but also with adverse reactions of family and friends to your inter-religious relationship. From this ground, the challenging dilemma which she sometimes thinking of concerning her inter-religious marriage is that; What if her husband or her children passes away, she will not be able to participate fully in their funeral, it is a painful time and she is not really there for them. The same way should anything happen to her they are not in the same faith to experience

the comforting words of the Lord? The informant added that, in the Muslim religion when the husband dies the wife is supposed to be in mourning (*'Iddah*) at home for three months and she has to perform other things concerning their religion(See also, (Rahman 1984:198-215). Therefore, if that is the case, Will she be obliged to do the same? What about inheritance matters concerning Islamic law as she is not herself a Muslim, will it be applicable to her also and their children? The informant proceeded that, another issue concerning such kind of marriage is about Islamic law concerning marriage. As already noted Christians and Muslims have differences concerning the issue of how many wives are allowed for a man to marry. The challenging questions for her concerning this issue were; what about the fact that a Muslim man is allowed to marry four wives which is different from Christianity in which marriage is limited to one man with one wife (See also 3.2.2). In this case then, what if her husband comes and tells her that he wants to add another wife, what will happen to her and their children? The informants added that, there are many questions, therefore someone should go through and ask herself/himself before and even after she/he gets into this life changing experience called marriage and especially when the person you are to marry does not share your religious faith or belief (Stella, Business woman 2007:25, July).

Another thing which can be challenging for an inter-religious family can well be disruptive if not carefully attended to; it is on how holidays will be spent at home. How much time will be devoted to religious ceremonies and celebrations and which will be observed in the home? Holiday times are opportunities for inter-religious couples to define how their family will handle both the differences and similarities in their religions. Thus, they can be proud of cultural and faith traditions, and create ways to celebrate them. Nevertheless, one of the informants remarked how they were challenged by the question asked from their son. He said that, his wife is a Christian and he himself is a Muslim. When their son was four years old, his father began explaining differences between Islam and Christian traditions and celebrations. One day their son explained to a friend that his mother celebrates Christmas and Easter while his father celebrates *Ramadan* (In Swahili *Ramazan*)[5] and the *Eid ul-Fitr'* (In Swahili *Idd-el-fitri*).[6] The son

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[5] Ramazan is the ninth of the Muslim year, a period of daily fasting.

turned to his parents and asked, "What do I celebrate?" They were surprised and did not know really, what the answer was because they avoided discussing those issues before they married (Omary, businessman 2007:12, July). In other words, the son asked his parents: to whom did he belong? Such differences were point of clashes in marriages of this nature. Learning beliefs and traditions of multiple faiths can be confusing to children. Teaching them to be proud of parents' diverse faiths can be difficult.

Nevertheless, the researcher noted that, sometimes these partners realize that though they live physically in peace with each other, yet they live separately spiritually. This they claim, creates disharmony among themselves and the children, and since there is lack of basic understanding of purpose and motivation which springs from common worship, devotions, commitment and spiritual interests, this interferes with the individual, creating problems which may lead to a divided personality.

The above discussion is more likely the same as an example given by one of the informants. A respondent gave a true story from one of her relatives. The story was about a woman who nearly got mad because she was opposed by her husband and his relatives that she could not go to church to worship on Sundays. She was not allowed to have Christian visitors at home; she could not possess a Bible. She thus became sleepless for many nights. When she heard the bell ringing on Sundays she was even more troubled. She was uncomfortable. She was afraid to meet Christians on Sundays on the way. She was hurt when she heard Christians singing in funeral services. Since this woman could not endure the situation she had to fled left her husband and returned to her parents (Hawael, farmer 2007:25, July). She left her children with their father in this situation. This is a challenge to the children in that family, and also the husband of such a marriage.

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[6] Idd-el-fitri(swahili) or in Arabic Eid ul-Fitr (Id-Ul-Fitr) is a Musilim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic ninth year of fasting. *Eid* is an Arabic word meaning "festivity", while *fitri* means "to break the fast" (and can also mean "nature", from the word "fitrah") and so symbolizes the breaking of the fasting period.

Additionally, from the points above, what I can observe is that, partners in Inter-religious marriages sometimes find themselves in open clash and disagreement on certain points because of their differences in faith, and these create disputes causing unhappiness and frustrations. If the partners have no unity in faith, they are likely to become insecure, anxious and may breed inner conflicts which are likely to contribute to psychiatric diagnosis partners. What affects one's soul may also affect his/her mind and body and weaken the partner's personalities. And it may also affect the children in that family, like the case above where by a woman face that kind of situation while children are in that family, and the worse thing is that, the mother left her children in such situation.

Nevertheless, despite of their difference in faith/ beliefs, inter-religious couples can still impart a religious identity to their children. A religious leader commented how a Muslim father can impart Muslim identity to the children who are in inter-religious marriage. He said that, in this connection the main requirement evidently is that parents (the father) themselves should have a strong Muslim identity. But there are traditional important points to be kept in mind. In developing their Muslim identity they have to naturally impress upon their children that Muslims ways are quite different form those of the Christians. But this should not be done in such a way as to create hostility towards the Christians as whole. This can create emotional conflict in a child and it is also against Islam. The Qur'an says of the people of the book that" they are not all alike" (3:113) and it praises some their good qualities along with condemnation of what is wrong with them (5:85-87, 57:27). The informant added that, they must not therefore make a general condemnation for all Christians and what is bad. Parents (fathers) should help children identify themselves with what is good in Christianity and to reject what is bad. The informant added by giving an example that, parents should tell children: "Most Christians believe in the Trinity and in the divinity of Jesus (may peace be upon him), which Islam rejects totally" (Abdullah, Sheikh 2007:12, July). What I can see here is that, inter-religious couples can live in peace at home as long as the agreement they made before their marriage is honored by both parties. This means that the agreement like faith formation of their children and for each partners to keep her/ his religious faith. As such

they accept that the marriage does not affect them psychologically, socially and religiously and that their personalities are not impaired at least in general.

4.2.4 Religious Life

The main question in this part is to find out if it is possible for those partners who live in inte-religious marriage to remain loyal to their religious faith. Are they able to stand firm in their faith and upbringing of their children in faith under all circumstances in this type of marriage? The study has shown that one gets different answers to the question. There are those who are in such marriage whose religious loyalty has never been shaken ever since they got married. This is not to say that they did not experience difficulties and obstacles on their way, but they admitted that despite of this situation their faith grew stronger and stronger. The couples in such marriage commented that regardless of the seeming contradictions inherent to this approach of not raising their children in each of their faith, they were not convinced that their decision would confuse their children or result in their having no cultural or faith identity as adults. It is less the presence of a single religious identity in the home and more the parental style of discipline and involvement with the children and with each other that produces well-adjusted children. They added that for them they think that children whose parents were firm, consistent, involved and affectionate did best in school and in their relationships later in life. The particular religious affiliation of one or both parents is less important to good adjustment than the fact that the parents love and support their children. thus, they suggest for inter-religious couples it is best for them both to be role models of their own faiths and to help their kids discover their own faith journey and not to insist or demand their participation in either of parents faiths or beliefs or non-beliefs (Hassan and Pamela, couples 2007:25, July) .

Additionally concerning religious identity of the children in inter-religious marriage, Kadiva said that, before the kids start to ask questions about faith and religion, parents have to make sure they have provided their children with positive religious experiences in both of their faiths. They have to listen to their children and they have to share their concerns, doubts, possible prejudices, and questions. As adults, their children will choose

their own religious identity and path. For example, the Islamic religion requires that children of a mixed marriage must be raised as Muslims. The problem is aggravated if one partner is intensely religious and the other less, so to say. Even people who do not actively practice their religion are often influenced by the values and thought patterns of their religious past (Kadiva, Pastor 2007:25, July).

Sometimes couples think they have resolved the religion issue because they have settled issues like where to marry and in what kind of ceremony and have come to sort of agreement regarding where to worship and how to raise the children. But religion runs deeper than this and can very well end up being disruptively if not carefully attended to. Stella who is Christian woman married to a Muslim man, she calls her marriage life 'alone in faith'. She said that, her faith tells her that,   Jesus is the only way to eternal life, if that is the case; will she be the only one in her new family to go to heaven? What about her husband, her children whom she loves dearly? She added that the walk of faith becomes lonely, as she is not with her much loved family whom she live with and share all joys and pains with. She attends church alone, she attends seminars alone. She prays alone. The informant claimed that, there are marriage seminars, church activities for family and so many lovely fellowships and sharing times that she cannot share with her family. They do not share those contexts with her. (Stella, Business woman 2007:25, July).

The research showed that, there is another group of Christian women who were close to change their religious loyalty because of their marriage to Muslims husbands. These women said that in the beginning they did not intend to change their faith. Some say that they thought they could easily live with their husbands while they remained Christians. Then they found out that is was difficult to continue with their faith because they experienced direct and indirect pressure either from their husbands or husband's relatives, trying to force them to be converted to Islam. As already noted, some pressures applied include; denial of clothes, food and money (for those who are not earning some money). As already pointed out, they were sometimes refused permission to attend church services

and other activities. So in order to live in harmony with their husbands and children and relatives these women decided to give up their faith loyalty and not practicing their faith.

Another group includes those who had learned to live in compromises or some kind of neutrality, not being too cold or too hot in matters of religion, so that they may not offend their partners. One of the informants pointed out that she was not allowed to go to church on Sundays until she fed the cows, or because some guests are invited to come home on Sundays. As already noted traditionally, all domestic affairs are the women responsibilities at home, and also it is the same in Islamic Marriage law (see chapter 2 and 3.2). The Informants claimed that she had to give in to the orders of her husband sometimes so that she could be allowed to continue being a Christian (Nakijwa, Farmer 2007: 27, July).

The possibility for a woman married to a Muslim to remain loyal to Christianity cannot completely be ruled out. However this depends on certain factors: such as, on the agreement before the marriage between the wife and husband regarding the question of each other's faith after marrying. Then of course it depends on the extent to which the husband will continue to honor the agreement after marriage, for it is known that some husbands agreed with their wives to continue with faith at the time of engagement, and then the same husbands turned against their agreement sooner or later after marriage. Also depending on the individual's moral power and the courage she may have to fight and persist on her right of religious loyalty after marriage in case it should be interfered with. Some husbands honor their agreement and the tension is lessened. But where the husbands become unreasonable, some of these Christian women have had to fight hard to remain Christians, and did not care in spite of what happened to them, even if it meant divorces. Which also as already noted can affects children in one way or another in that situation of such family. That, on the other hand, the possibility of apostasy in inter-religious marriage cannot be ruled out. Male dominance is considered to be a factor of major importance in causing wives to adopt the religion of their husbands. Holway made this observation: "Women are much likely than men to transfer their religious allegiance because of marriage (Holway 1976:4).

Among the Tanzanian ethnic group, the head of the family has to pray for his family. Traditionally, in such family they   know that it means to have family devotions (see chapter2). Thus a woman belongs to another religion would find herself out of place. She would experience loneliness and feel unfit for the family. In traditional Tanzanian marriage, it is the husband who takes the wife to his home; as such the woman has no right to introduce her religion in the clan or family. The situation is slightly changing in the current society, so that freedom of worship is given to the woman in some families at least more than before, the writer thinks that this tradition is one of the   factors contributing to some Christian women who give up their   loyalty to their religion soon after their marriage or later.

The previously remark in this section is not less important. As it has already been noted, those couples who are loyal to their faith in inter-religious marriage admitted that it is not easy. Many times they find themselves spiritually lonely. They find no one to pray with in the family, during meal time or in other occasions like evening and morning. They have no one in the house to share with their interest in spiritual affairs. So if the husband and wife can not support each other spiritually because of faith, then it is most likely that one or both may run the danger of spiritual dryness or complete apostasy.

4.3 Parents and Children in Inter-religious Family

For interfaith couples as the researcher observed is that, there are any number of possible outcomes that can result from these deeply and intensely personal discussions. Some couples opt for no religion at all in the home, leaving it to their children to forge the religious path of their own choosing. Some couples opt to include only one faith tradition in their home, with the other partner either celebrating his or her own faith separately, or else converting to the household faith, while other couples choose to celebrate both faith traditions. In terms of deciding to celebrate both of their faith traditions, an inter-religious couples they most have to ask themselves on how they will raise their kids. They have been outright discouraged by more than one person from going the dual-faith route, and others have merely questioned how such an arrangement can work. In most of these

cases, the questioner is primarily concerned as to what type of identity issues this might cause for their children some day.

The writer had an interview with the Muslim leaders in Usangi community regarded the question of marriage between Christian and Muslim. First of all the leaders here teach and hold that the ideal kind of marriage they would recommend is marriage between Muslim and Muslim and not inter-religious. One of these leaders frankly admitted that he would never accept marriage gifts for his daughter if she married a Christian, because as he understood it marriage between a Muslim and a Christian is forbidden by Qur'an and "*Mwongozo wa Bakwata*" (see also chapter 3.2.1). Secondly, the leaders admit that although inter-religious marriage was not recommended in their faith, still they admit that they saw no way of avoiding it completely in the society. They think that it is something which, when it takes place, should be tolerated though not encouraged. Marriage with a non-Muslim is accepted with reservation provided one does not change his/her faith (Msafiri, Msofe and Abdull, Sheikhs 2007: 12, July).

Practically as the researcher observes, a Christian woman married to a Muslim is often pressed and pressured to be converted. Everything possible is done to see that this aim is achieved. Even if the wife does not become a Muslim, her children must be raised as Muslims. According to what these religious leaders said, if one of the partners in a Muslim marriage should change her/his faith from Islam, she or he is may be committing the sin of apostasy and she or he is automatically divorced (see also, chapter 4.2.2).

Children whose parents are involved in a value tug of conflict may choose values along with the more lenient parent; others, forced to choose those of more dominant parent, may give lip service to them but underneath it all remain confused or unsure. Some whose parents expose them to (but do not fight over) contradicting standards, benefit from the double exposure and, having had to work things through for themselves, actually are stronger as a result. Needless to say, the socialization process does not depend on the parents alone, children are influenced by the other adults they encounter during their lives

such as; relatives, teachers and religious figures. As well as by their own peers, and so the place where they live will play a big part.

4.3.1 Parents and Children in the Religious Community

The writer asked the Muslim leaders if they saw anything positive contributed to their religion by marriage between their member and a Christian. They thought that if marriage between Muslim and Christian had any positive result to Islam, it was that some Christian girls married by Muslim were converted. That many times there are conflicts between the husband and wife because of different religious background and practices, such as; when one goes to church on Sundays, the other goes to worship on Friday. When one observes the practices of Holy Month of Ramazan and celebrates the Idd-el-fitri, the other observes and celebrates Christmas and Easter. As one Muslim leader said, such differences were point of clashes in marriages of this nature. That this form of marriage weakens the faith of the one or both of the partners, because they cannot strengthen, sustain each other in spiritual matters (Abdullah, Sheikh 2007:12, July).

The researcher observes here that, regarding the Muslim point of view on the question of marriage between Christian and Muslim, are that the committed Muslims and their leaders are not in favor of it as an ideal family life. Marriage between Muslim and Christian in the eyes of a pure Muslim is considered to be imperfect. All the tolerance will be shown to a Muslim married to a non-Muslim and who is accepted as a member of Islamic community, while the children are raised as Muslim believers, and the Christian wife is expected to be converted one day and make their marriage perfect.

In a panel interview with church leaders on the question of marriage between Muslim and Christian the writer found the following:

- First that the church leaders reject this kind of marriage as an ideal institution for Christians. A marriage where each partner has his/her faith is not conductive to the welfare of either partner in marriage.
- Secondly, the church leaders could not support marriage between Christian and Muslims because this has led to the conversion of Christians to Islam in the Usangi area.

- Thirdly, the leaders observed that children born in this kind of marriage have not been well raised spiritually. They gave an example where in certain families some children are Muslim while others are Christians, and some do not know for sure whether they should follow the faith of their father of mother.

- Fourthly, the leaders here were doubtful if the young Christians girls who enter this kind of marriage were well equipped to face and live in inter-religious marriages. There is a fear that such girls have been moved by quick decisions based on emotional feelings rather than logical and mature thinking, so they fail withstand the spiritual temptations which they encounter in these marriages.

- Fifthly, they think that the issue of inter-religious marriages cannot be abolished completely. It has to be accepted as a reality with the inconveniences it may cause to the church; children and the partners in all points of life. They insist that in the future the church should do more teach, educate and counsel parents and youths about the unconstructive and constructive issues concerning this kind of marriage. The leaders accepted that they have duty to take care of those who are married to Muslim, and that they should be tolerated, accepted and given guidance regarding their situation. They should be given pastoral care rather than be considered lost and outcast (Pastors and Bishops 2007: 12, July).

On the Christian side, many Christians believe that anyone has the freedom to choose her or his partner for life, and that love has no boundaries. This attitude is favored most often among those who may be identified as *nominal Christians*. Nevertheless, some Christian's denominations forbid and discourage inter-religious marriages. One of the informants who is church leader said that, before entering into a marriage, one has to look for a Christian wife or husband that suits her/his temperament and personality. He added that, if someone is a Christian, He/she should not marry a woman or man who is not Christian. This may cause that person big problems later down the line, one must be aware of that; 2cor 6:14-15, Gen.24:3-4 (Mbwambo, Pastor 2007: 13, July).

Additionally, as researcher observes children of such forbidden alliances meet rejection from Christian care as well. Why is that? Because some churches, view inter-religious

marriage as an act of rebellion, a rejection of Christianity. Actually, nearly all the churches hold a wedding ceremony or a marriage blessing and regard church members who live together in marriage without it as somehow *bad Christians*. Often such people are not allowed to receive Holy Communion or are punished in other ways. Such as, in Lutheran Church in Tanzania in their baptism liturgy there is a section where parents receives blessing after the child has been baptized. The parents who are allowed to reserve these blessings are those who only have church marriage. This means that, if a woman give birth to a child with someone with whom she is not married in church, she is not allowed to reserve those blessings even if her child is baptized in that church. The question is being asked whether the churches are right to do so. For one thing, it frequently happens that those Christians who are being punished for not getting married in church are, in other respects, active and fervent church members. Some partners find themselves a prey to anxiety and victims of psychosis because they find themselves isolated, separated from religious institutions and religious community of their own origin and this impairs their personalities greatly.

The Roman Catholic Church in Tanzania has moved one step ahead in dealing with issue of inter-religious marriages. This church permits two types of inter-religious marriages: First, marriage between a Catholic and member of other Christian denominations. Second, between a catholic and member of religion/faith. The reason given is that there is a big number of people who live together as married couples despite their religious differences. So, instead of separating them, this church has decided to permit it and solemnize. The church has allowed it for the condition that each partner must respect the faith of the other and also that the children must be brought up in Christian faith. Mutual respect for the other's religion is a must for a compatible marriage. This should be declared also in church. (Mmbaga, Priest 2007:24, July).

4.3.2 Parents and Children in the Society

The other common theme which lies in inter-religious marriage is the issue of consequences of such kind of marriage. Foremost, this kind of marriage decreases the salience of cultural distinctions in future generations because the children of such marriages are less likely to identify themselves with a single group. Although inter-

religious couples may socialize their children into the culture of a single group, these children are less likely to identify with that group when intermarriage in society is common. Next, by intermarrying, individuals may lose the negative attitudes they have toward other groups. Although personal interaction between groups sometimes fosters conflicts by making economic and cultural differences more apparent, if the relationship is intimate, interaction gives people an opportunity to realize the individual variety among the members of another group and, in doing so, may ultimately weaken their prejudices and stereotypes. Because intermarriage often connects the social networks of the two spouses, this applies to a range of out-group members and not just to the immediate partners. Eriksen agreed with this by using Anthony P. Cohen's words that;

> People become aware of their culture when they stand at its boundaries; when they encounter other cultures, or when they become aware of other ways of doing things, or merely of contradictions to their own culture(Eriksen 2001:261)

That is to say, what makes inter- religious marriage sociologically relevant lies in its inherent dynamic: It is not just a reflection of the boundaries that currently separate groups in society; it also bears the potential of cultural and socioeconomic change. While marriage patterns are in this sense telling social indicators, they do not tell us everything. Thus, if members of two groups do not marry one another, it does not necessarily mean that both groups are closed. It takes two to marry, and if one group is closed while the other is open, endogamy may still prevail. Research on marriage is less informative in this respect than, for instance, research on individual racial prejudice. In a similar vein, homogeny tells a somewhat ambiguous story about the preferences and prejudices of status groups.

The family is the first tier in the process of social upbringing. It is the family that instills in the child the standards by which she judges everything that she later receives from all social institutions. When she goes to school, her attitude towards her teacher is formed on the basis of the educations he has received at home. Her selection of friends at school is also based on the way she was raised by her family. She evaluates everything she hears and sees and every situation she finds herself in or witness through what her family has

instilled in her. That is the role of the family and society as whole in education, a very important and serious role.

4.4 Evaluative Summary

As already noted boys and girls with different faiths often meet and fall in love to one another and marry. Their love may cause them not to think very carefully or to plan about their marriage. The only thing they think and plan is about how they can maintain their love in their marriage. But as we have seen, different religious beliefs can be a cause of conflict in marriage, not only because the partners may not be in agreement on where and how to worship as a family, but because so much of what people do and believe, their attitudes about what is right and wrong, and their philosophy of life stem from their religious background. When couples have different religious beliefs they may experience miscommunication, misunderstanding, resentment, and even guilt. As already noted, many of these couples who are in such marriage find themselves in emotionally heated debates especially over religious doctrine and how to rear their children. Disapproval or even rejection from others, especially from religious institutions and parents often adds to the tension. Inter-religious marriages also face challenges over how to handle life events such as birth, death, and holiday celebrations. They have to decide what holidays to celebrate, whether to join a religious organization together or separately, and what religion to raise their children in.

The question of inter-religious marriage may seem to be a matter of two persons only. But as we have seen in this chapter this kind of marriage has serious consequences for the families of the couples in such marriage, the children's life in such marriage, the religious communities and society as whole. Inter-religious couples can find happiness if they learn to work out their challenges in a way that is fair to both spouses and their children. From this perspective, what is the role of the family, religious community and society as whole on upbringing of children who are in such marriage? This question brings us in to the following chapter which is dealing with the issue of prosperous children in inter-religious families.

5. Prosperous Children in Inter-religious Families

5.1 Family Obligation in Children Upbringing

For inter-religious couples, weddings mark the beginning of journeys in finding out more about themselves, their faiths, and their obligation in children upbringing. This is the way to live in families and a world often intolerant of such marriages. For this case one of the informants commented that in their inter-religious marriage they realised that the key to come to with the sacrifices inherent to their marriage arrangement is open communication and maintaining a strong sense of trust. The benefits of relating this way are obviously not limited to questions of faith and religion, but for any harmony to exist around such questions these are absolutely necessary. She added that, through her experience in such marriage, the first thing for couples who are in different faiths is every one to have the knowledge of his/her faith and each need to be strong in his/her own faith. If one of the couples feels confusion about His/her faith life, they have to deal with their own issues before trying to impart religious values to their children (Stella, Business woman 2007; 25, July). For this case, it will help the parent to bring-up their children in faith and to have strong family with no confusion in their faiths. What I can observe here for inter-religious couples is the issue of the question of how important is their own religious faith to each of parents?

Another thing which the researcher noted for inter-religious couples it is the issue for them to know their differences. Concerning this issue one of the informants commented that, through his experience in inter-religious family, it is good for couples with different faiths to discuss their religious differences regarding topics such as diet, parenting preferences, grief, where to worship, finances, extended family relationships, gender roles, religious regulations and traditions. The informant added that it is also good for inter-religious couples each one to tell about the loyalty to past, so that they can share with each other what is truly important to them as individuals in their faith life. For this case, he commented that couples can discuss how they can support one another's religious needs. The good thing about these discussions in such marriage it makes each one think deeply about one's own religion and can help someone learning more, reading and

investigating of his/her own faith since in side marriage. This also can help children in such marriage with relationship to the extended family. He added that through his experience in such marriage, it is not only enough for the parents themselves to have to some agreement regarding these matters, but also to share their understanding with the extended families like the new grandparents, uncles, and aunts. These relatives often take an active role and offer advice, comments and criticism solicited or not. Sometimes they actually interfere, occasionally showing preference or support for the child who is more like them, which makes the parents' job harder (Mkilaha, Professor 2007:25, July). What the researcher can observe here is that, the issue it is not only about the partners having different faiths but it is very important how they deal with their differences. This is because if the couples in such marriages are not constructively dealing with their differences, this can create a big challenge concerning the relationship toward themselves, extended family and how they deal with the issues of children upbringing in their family.

The researcher interviewed church leader concerning successful upbringing children in inter-religious marriage with regards to faith formation of a child. He commented that, it is better for couples who are in different faiths to focus on God. If they place more emphasis on their relationship with God rather than on institutions they each belong to, they will quickly find common ground. This means that it is better for couples who belong to different faiths to focus on what they have in common than on their differences. It is easy to focus on differences, but when they look for commonalities, chances are they will find more than they expected. The informant added that, most religions have similar basic beliefs about God (such as, God cares for us, requires obedience, is just, merciful, and loving) and share many teachings (it is important to treat others with respect and kindness, to do good to those in need, and to be honest). Once they recognize shared beliefs, it will be easier to pray together, even if they pray differently. It will also become easier to live their own faith, to give a little, and to have a sense of harmony when working out their problems and faith formation of their children (Msangi, Bishop 2007; 12, July).

Additionally, from the points above I can see that, the key of making marriage work between couples of different faiths   is open communication about similarities and differences. For this case I can observe that for this kind of marriage is for each one to 'Be very giving'. This is to say that, in order to maintain harmony and peace at home it is better for every one   not to say anything negative about the other person's faith. According to this point of view, one informant admitted that marriage is not always easy when you come from different faiths. However, to succeed, couples must set boundaries. He added that he have had to learn to respect his wife's boundaries. For this case he said that, Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the son of God, but he does not tell his wife that he is not. This is for the sake of maintaining the love and relationship to his wife and his children. Also the informant added that, during the time of the Holy Month of Ramadan for a Muslim husband is not allowed to eat the first meal after fasting which is prepared by a wife who is not a Muslim. For his case, in order for him not to embarrass his wife he starts his first meal in the mosque before going back home. But this is done without his children's and his wife's knowledge (Juma, farmer 2007: 25, July).

Moreover, from the points above I can see that, it is better for inter-religious couples to treat their marriage with reverence and also to build a sense of sacredness in their marriage. This is a glowing core of commitment to each other regardless of what one and the other spouse believe about God. From this perspective their marriage will be deeper and stronger if couples see their life together as a holy task and if they see one another as sacred, this is not only for themselves but also for their children who finds themselves in such a family without their choice. However, one of the informants commented relevant points that, focusing on non-religious shared interests can also be helpful for inter-religious families to maintain harmony at their home. The more they can enjoy one another in such activities as hobbies, work, or recreation, the more unified their family will be. The informant added that, it is not for one of the couples to try to change the other spouse. This only adds tension rather than building unity (Stella, Business woman 2007; 25, July).

Moreover, it is of interest also to note that one informant who is a Christian woman married to a Muslim man said that she pray, fast, she is on knees, and she have people praying for her. The informant added that, she believes her inter-religious marriage has strengthened her belief in Christ. Exploration of the Islamic faith has helped her understand it better, she said. The informant commented that, there is a sense of order in the Islamic faith that makes her to see the need to seeking God everyday as opposed to making herself available for God on Sundays. The informant emphasized that, every day in the morning, they are doing their prayers on their knees as a family, which make them understanding in their family that they are all there for one reason. She added that in her exploration of Islam, she found revelations of the love of Christ, a reverence for God and what she wants in a church. The informant added, she belong to a Pentecostal church where it is important to praise God daily, to fellowship, to grow, to understand forgiveness, the truth, the word and the power of God which is an individuals consecrated to each other. Thus from this ground the informant commented that, inter-religious couples can keep their family strong by remembering the reverence that they felt on their wedding day and by keeping that reverence alive in their daily life (Magreth, teacher 2007: 12,July) . For this case, the important issue here for inter-religious partners is to pay attention to what is one willing to contribute to his/her child's religious development in a faith different his/her own. This will be helpful for themselves (Couples) and for the faith formation of their children in such marriage.

Choosing Religion for the children

A Christian woman married to a Muslim man commented that, it is better for inter-religious couples to choose the religion in which their children will be raised. She added that, when children are born in such marriage, religious differences can become even more overwhelming. (See also chapter 4). Couples must now decide whose religion is going to be best for the children. Will the children have Islamic rituals? Will children be baptized? Or will they have a Christian confirmation? All these questions have to be resolved early before the family enter to a big conflict, which may be difficult to resolve later. (Pamela, farmer 2007:25, July).

However the researcher noted that, it is not easy for one spouse in inter-religious couples to see his/her children with different faith from what she/he belong. Though the parents in such marriage may have considered issues like; which religion provides the best support for children and teenagers by providing programs for them? According to this, one informant who is a Christian mother admitted that, the decision to raise their children in the Islamic faith was not an easy one for the mother who remembers always Christian traditions like Christmas and Easter. She added that, Being Muslim is more than religious, it is cultural, genetic and more than this, she wants her children to understand this heritage. She added that, it is not easy for her in such marriage when she consider that weddings and funerals are X-rays of family relationships. Some one can see where the bones and breaks are. Some one can add to those emotional charge religious differences and she/he may have a potential for further difficulty (Pamela, 2007:25, July).

Moreover, from the points above I can notice that, for the best of the inter-religious couples to prepare their children in religious matters as they express their desires, they may keep the interests of their children first, with their interests secondary. Also for couples in such marriage it is important thing to be fair in considering all sides of the discussion and looking at all of the possibilities. Nevertheless, they may also consider the following questions honestly and fairly and then can come to an agreement more smoothly: What does one part find of value in his/her spouse's faith? If they resolve this, the issue then is: How involved does each of the parents want to be in their child's religious formation? If this is issue resolved, then the couples may consider how comfortable will parents be carrying the major responsibility of sharing their faith with their children?

Additionally, one of the informants commented that they decided to expose the children to both faiths and let them choose when they are older. Their oldest daughter, who is ten years old, is finding it difficult to see her Christian's friends celebrate their confirmation she feels left out, the mother tried to explain to her that a confirmation is not for the money or the party. The informant added that, her daughter friends are becoming grownup Christians, reading the Bible and much more. Parents decided that in order to

expose the children to both faiths, they enrolled their children in a church Sunday school. As a family, they attend services on Islamic holidays and Christian holidays. On one hand, parents have tried to introduce their children to traditions in each religion. On the other hand, the informant added that, for the better of their family they have discussed Christian baptism and the Islamic naming ceremony. For this case they have basically concluded that they believe in God and this does not necessarily that they believe or know about all of their traditions. As long as their children pray and have faith, that is what is important (Hassan, Professor 2007: 25, july).

Nevertheless, what I can observe from the points above is, that does not mean parents in inter-religious family do not have all the answers, but they can take time to consider the questions like; do they believe in God? Do they believe there was a divine element in the creation of the world? What do they think happens when a person dies? In addition to their own beliefs, parents consider what kind of spiritual education they want for their children; will their family join a church, Mosque, or other house of worship? Do the parents want their children to attend services regularly? This means that, if the couples in their marriage have different religions, it is wise to decide how they will approach spirituality with their children at an early stage before children is old enough to get confused by their differing opinions.

Moreover, this is to say, it is a good idea for the parent who are in different faiths to introduce spirituality early on. Young children do not fully understand who God is, but they do not really fully understand who a grandparent is either. Still, the parents want them to know Grandma, so they start talking about her from day one. It is the same thing with the idea of God. Just as the children take the words from their parents that Grandma is an important person in their life (even if they rarely see her), so they will take their parents words for it that God is, too. And by introducing spiritual practices early the children will view them as a natural part of life, and the parents will have a spiritual influence on their children before other people do. Even if the parents do not believe in God or see God as a single all-powerful being, it is worth talking to their children about

it. Children are going to hear about God all over. So if the parents do not put their own spin on it, with their own values, their children will absorb someone else's.

It is also good for the parents in inter-religious marriages to use daily events to teach spirituality. There is a saying that, 'big ideas do not always require big action'. This means that, someone can demonstrate that spirituality is a part of everyday life by incorporating it into ordinary actions and words. The question here for the parents can be: How involved in religion do parents want their children to be? Parents can tell their children stories as one way of teaching them religious matters. For this case one young boy in inter-religious family commented that for him he decided to become a Christian because of his mother who used to tell him a Bible stories like Abraham who was having strong faith and other stories. The informant added that, for him this made a big mark in his mind and his heart. He said that, he likes Bible stories as it is easy for him to understand, because the Bible is translated in Swahili which is the language he is used to (Daniel, student 2007:12, July). Spiritual traditions are full of stories designed to explain everything from how the world was created to why people sometimes do bad things. It may be good also for inter-religious parents to introduce to the children to the notion that different people have different ideas about God by drawing on this wealth of literature.

However, family togetherness can be also helpful for inter-religious family. But what adjustments could make those times together more meaningful? This is how children are developing physically, mentally, emotionally, and in their sense of self affects their spiritual development. The ways family members relate to one another from day to day are profoundly determining. How does this work? The way parents love and relate to their children, in daily life, in good times and bad, has the most powerful influence on the formation of their children. Nevertheless, children do not need perfect parents, but rather good enough parents. Gunnar Norlen commented relevant points to this by admitting that:

> Elementary scientific knowledge of psychology tells us that children need not only both parents for their upbringing, but also a stable situation in the home, especially between the father and mother. We all know the essential role of the mother for nurturing her children, but today also the importance of the father, as an ideal and as one to look up as an example in life, has been strongly emphasized in Morden psychology. Generally, a

stable and harmonious home, where the child feels that he is loved and protected, is the best background for creating a harmonious human being (Norlen 2003:303).

Inter-religious families can also build on family traditions. Spirituality not only connects us to the divine; it also connects us to each other and to the past. If parents are raising their children in the same spiritual tradition that they were raised in, they have to be sure that they know that they are carrying on family rituals that were passed along by their grandparents and even great-grandparents. And also they have to be sure to tell the same family stories at holiday time that parents listened to when they themselves were children. This means that couples with different faiths also have the great privilege of walking with their children on the spiritual journey, though they have to remember that from a Christian point of view, faith is a gift only God can give to the human heart. Human beings can merely affirm, support, and encourage faith in one another at no matter what stage of growth it is expressed. For this case it is better for children to find faith for themselves (Scottie 2005:165). This means that the parents in inter-religious marriages have to pay attention to which degree of freedom to choose a religion the parents will are willing to give their children.

Celebrating religious holidays in the family

Inter-religious families can make the best of the Holiday Dilemma by planning together how they can celebrate their religious holidays. As already noted in chapter 4, dealing with differences in how to celebrate holidays can cause conflict in what should be a time of unity and togetherness. Holidays can be extra difficult because they involve not only immediate family, but other relatives as well. Nevertheless, concerning this issue the researcher interviewed one of the informants on how inter-religious couples can deal with the issue of celebrating religious holidays in their family. The informant commented that, through his experience in such marriage he is advising different discussion of four approaches to the issue of approaching the choice of celebrating religious holidays.

- The traditional approach of celebrating religious holidays. This is approach whereby the family choose the holidays of one religion and celebrate them in a full-bodied way. He added that, if the family choose this approach, it is wise not to completely ignore the holidays that the other spouse grew up with. It is better to

be sensitive to the emotional needs of the spouse whose holidays the family is not celebrating

- The family also can celebrate by a more modest approach. In this approach, the family celebrate only the major holidays, focusing on cultural aspects rather than religious meaning. For example, if they decide to celebrate Christmas, they celebrate it as a secular holiday just like they would celebrate Independence Day or Labour Day. Things like the eating nice food, shopping, and festivities are all included, but they have to make sure that they do not address religious meaning behind these symbols.

- Actively celebrate Holidays from both Religions. If they choose this approach, couples and their children should all learn about the religious meanings and customs behind both religious holidays. Couples have to be sure to focus equal attention on each religion's holidays.

- Moreover, another way is the non-traditional approach of celebrating religious holidays. The family in this approach, they draw traditions from different cultures and regions of the world and incorporate them into their own innovative holiday celebration and they clarify it in their own beliefs. The informant added that, whether or not the family practice an organized religion, they will need to decide what they believe in order to foster spirituality in their children (Mkilaha, Professor 2007: July).

From the points above, it is therefore possible for inter-religious families to make religious holidays for it fun. Religion and spirituality should be more joyful than sombre and serious. On one side the family can stress the spiritual side of holidays. But in on the other side such family can try to balance the commercialism of the holiday season with activities that underscore its deeper meaning. The best ways for inter-religious families approaching celebration of religious holidays is for the family to avoid creating more conflict in the family by ignoring celebrating the holidays that the other spouse grew up

with. And also is for the family avoiding celebrating religious holidays in syncretistic way by celebrating it in non-traditional approach.

5.2 The Role of the Society in Children Upbringing

In traditional Tanzanian society and the family are considered to be the cornerstone for building the right society. Every child in the society belongs to the whole society. Therefore every individual in the society has the responsibility of raising the child (see also Chapter 2). The system of traditional social order was quite different from what is seen nowadays in modern Tanzanian society which is affected by the general trend of individualism. Many people tend to live for themselves and are mainly concerned about members of their immediate families. The traditional system of transferring accepted values, knowledge and skills from one generation to another was carried out in two ways: Formal and informal. Much of the teachings were informal and few teachings were formal. The traditional education given dealt with life in the community. The obligation of educating children was shared among parents, grandparents and others adults, and occasionally youngsters (Lutahoire 1974:24).

However, raising children in inter-religious family and expecting religious values from them is a unique and very tough challenge. As already mentioned, inter-religious families have a disadvantage in meeting the psychological and spiritual needs of the children. Giving more religious teachings to children at home is not enough. It is extremely important for parents to spend time with their children. Parents may find time to be with their children at home and other social places. The most essential element is to establish an open channel of communication with the children. An effort may be made to create an environment wherein children should not hesitate to tell to their parents their thinking and feelings. The parents can try to teach values and morals to the children, hence children are to maintain these values at home environment. Outside the home, the children are in a totally different environment. At times, the outside social environment is in opposition to what children are learning at home.

Moreover, the discussion above is the equivalent points from one informant who is a child born in inter-religious marriage. The informant reported that, his family agreed

that as the father is a Muslim, the children in that family should belong to the Islamic religion. He emphasized that he is a Muslim, but when he was with Christian friends and also with the Christian community at school, he decided to learn and study more about Christianity. The informant added that, he found out that it is easier for him to study and understand the Christians Bible than the Qur'an. The reason behind is that the Christian Bible (in Tanzanian context) is also translated in Swahili which is different from the Qur'an which is in Arabic language and the option for him it is to reseats the language which he is not used to it. As a result he became interested in converting from Islam to Christianity. But his father and the whole family members refuse him to become a Christian as it is not his father's faith (Iddi, student 2007: 14, July); (see also chapter 4). The question here is that, does the child have to follow the fathers' faith just because it is his obligation as the father and his relative to do so, or does the child also have freedom to choose what he wants concerning his faith? According to this issue, the researcher interviewed one of the social worker who commented that, the parents who are in different faith are supposed to give their children the right to choose which religion they want to follow.

The informant added that this does not mean that, the parents do not have the right to advice their children what is the best for their faith, but they have to teach both faiths of each parents and leave room for their children to choose freely what is best for them concerning the issue of faith. The informant emphasized that the inter-religious families and adults in society as a whole are obliged to help and to lead the children to meet their rights in the families and in society as whole (Enighenja, social worker 2007:14, July). The question here for inter-religious parents to consider is; how cooperative will their family and friends be with their plan for their children's religious upbringing? Nevertheless, the parents and Tanzanian society as a whole has to pay attention to the children's rights according to the UN Convention. Children have a right to be heard and respected; this right is elaborated by Article 12 of UN Conversion on the Right of the Child. The article states that:

> States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own view the
> right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child

being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law (Conversion 2002).

It means that children have the right to make their views known in decisions that affect them. It is their rights to have their opinions taken seriously. But from the case mentioned above it seems that in many families in Tanzanian society the views of the children are still far from being considered. From this perspective the parents and the society as a whole have to consider that a child does not have his/her own world. This means that, a child have to come out to the society. For example, a child may be raised not only by his parents but also by a relative recruited from a cultural society. The parents mediate to the child the world of, say a successful nobility of one race; the relative mediates the world of subject class of another contest. It is even possible that the two mediations employ completely different languages, which the child learns at the same time but which the parents and relative find equally incomprehensible. In this case, the child will be recognized by all concerned and by himself/herself as belonging to his/her parent's group and not his/her relative's. This is to say the relationship between the individual and the objective social world is like an ongoing balancing act, although the child is not simply passive in the process of this socialization, it is the adults who set the rules of the play. The child can play the game with interest or with sullen struggling. This means that, the person is not born a member of society. He is born with a disposition toward sociality, and he becomes a member of society. In other words I can say that, a primary socialization is the first socialization where by an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society. The self is a reflected being, the attitudes first taken by noteworthy others toward it. The individual becomes what he is addressed as by his significant others. The individual not only takes on the roles and attitude of the others, but in the same process takes on their world. This is to say that, the individual is thus born into not only an objective social structure but also an objective social world (Berger and Luckmann 1967:131-169). To emphasize this Scottie and others quote Thompson's words who point out that,

Children learn what they live. They absorb knowledge of the world by what they experience and observe. [They] learn more from what adults say; they are sensitive to the hidden curriculum (Scottie 2005:159-160) .

This can mean that the child learns that he/she is what he/she is called. From this perspective the children early become aware of any difference between what we teach them and how we act.

5.3 Religious Community and Children

In this section, we may ask the question like who is ultimately responsible for the spiritual formation of the children. By emphasizing this, Scottie and others noted that, Families are important, but the authors quote   Herbert Anderson and Susan Johnson that, "raising children is a communal activity. Families do not and cannot do it alone" (Scottie 2005:165). We have already seen that in primary socialization it is the context where by the individual's first world is constructed. However, secondary socialization is an achievement of role-specific awareness, the roles being directly or indirectly rooted in the division of labour (Berger and Luckmann 1967:138). This means that, they best serve next generation when religious communities and parents work together as a term, celebrating the essential role of parents and the vital support role of the faith community. According to Christianity point of view, some Biblical evidence highlights the need for partnership between home and religious community. Moses' directives in Deuteronomy were given to the whole faith community. Parents and children were to walk about and live out God's commands and keep the feasts in their home. But, they would also gather for corporate celebrations of the feasts and observe other families in the community living God's laws. Children's faith questions would grow out of family and faith community experiences. In addition to that, in the New Testament we find insights on family life and parenting in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. Through these letters Paul equipped the church to provide regulation to families (see Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21); and also (Scottie 2005:165-166). However, this does not mean that this solution must work out in individualistic society but it can be the best way for Tanzanian society to learn from a Christian point of view.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned in chapter 2, in traditional Tanzanian like other Africans, the extended family has been an important means of support, nurture, and learning for children and their parents. But because of modernity most Tanzanians families live at a distance from their extended family. Thus, the religious communities have greater potential than any other institution for serving as an extended family for isolated nuclear families and singles. And yet as mentioned in chapter 4 very few churches in Tanzania have effectively stepped into that role. The role of religious communities in relation to inter-religious families is to help, serve, and lead those families to spiritual and joyful life. But as already noted, some churches in Tanzania punish Christians who are married to partners of different faiths for not getting married in church. In Tanzanian Lutheran Church such people are often not allowed to receive Holy Communion. From my knowledge according to the systematic doctrine of the Lutheran Church, Holy Communion is for sinners and not for the holy ones. If this is the case, then, why are some excluded from this act of blessing? What I can observe here is good intention for the church discipline. But also the church has to be aware that by excluding others in church services is not a best way of helping them grow spiritually rather than make them go away from the church. The obligation of the church is not to separate her members but to unite them as one body in Jesus Christ.

Moreover, concerning the discussion above, one informant commented that, the church has a role to play in creating the awareness, educating and serving children and couples who are in inter-religious families. The informant gave an example of her self that, she is a Christian married to a Muslim man. The church elected her to hold a position of church elder. For this case the pastor conducted a church service to consecrate those church elders. But the pastor did not invite her husband and her children to participate in such a special occasion in her church life. She would like the pastor to pay attention that her family are not church members. For this case she thinks that the church has more to do concerning inter-religious families (Stella, Business woman 2007:25, July). Thus, due to this I can observe that religious communities has still work to do for creating more awareness with regard to teaching and serving children and parents who are in inter-religious marriage.

In addition to that, the researcher interviewed a religious leader in the Islamic community who commented that the work of bringing up children as Muslims in inter-religious families is not easy. Most parents cannot manage it on their own. Therefore, a close cooperation is needed between parents and the community. The parents should, as part of this cooperation, take interest in community work and contribute to it whatever they can while the community, through its elected representatives, should provide the parents with all the facilities they need to educate their children in Islam and to make them comfortable with and proud of, Islamic values and traditions. Islamic communities create opportunities for Muslim children to get together to bond with each other as this would help in establishing confidence in an Islamic identity and get psychological support. When children meet other children who are Muslim, it enhances their confidence in being a Muslim and they feel more comfortable about their identity and they assert their Islamic identity in non-Muslim environment with more ease and comfort. The informant added that Islamic identity, according to some, refers to characteristics of thought, behaviour, and attitudes emanating from the Islamic beliefs; and it should be manifested in an Islamic way of life. The practice of Islam gives Muslims a tangible identity that they live with and project to the rest of the society. It can be preserved by their dynamic interaction with the realities of the non-Muslim society of life and influencing and reforming the society through Islamic thoughts. The best role model is the parent's character. The social support systems, such as Islamic teaching, at home and also in the mosque should be built in religious communities and Islamic families (Abdullah, Sheikh 2007: 12, July).

5.4 Evaluative Summary

All parents have a sacred responsibility for the spiritual upbringing of their children, but inter-religious couples have a doubly important responsibility because of the possibility of causing religious confusion in their children's lives. If adults can feel torn by religion, it is easy to imagine how much more children can feel two religions pulling on them. As already noted, some children of inter-religious parents experience overwhelming sadness because they are not like other children whose parents share the same faith. Some children in inter-religious homes may not want to be a part of any religion when they

grow older because of the conflicting feelings they experienced while growing up. Because of this mine field of competing interests and the delicate development of a child.

Therefore, inter-religious couples have a particular obligation to agree on how they will religiously and spiritually educate their children. As we have seen earlier, some couples find a way to teach both spouse's religious beliefs and practices while others decide on one or the other's faith for the children. Some couples find that neither of these options works in their circumstances. For the children who are born in inter-religious family there are also important issues. They often do not know where they belong, and they see parents who simply are avoiding facing what may be contradictions between the two religions. Children are smart they recognize a tension of parents avoiding rather than resolving major issues. As already pointed out, many inter-religious couples, however, consider this compromise type of marital contract better then no give- and- take. Both can claim to have done their part toward making the marriage work and for the best of their children formation. If these parents keep at it long enough, renegotiating and trying new solutions, they may eventually reach a compromise satisfying to both – which we are calling a consensus. As we have seen also for the religious community and Tanzanian society as a whole they have still to pay attention in inter-religious families and upbringing children who are in such families. This is more challenging, still religious community and Tanzanian society as whole the have a lot to do concerning this issue.

6. CONCLUSION

The impetus for undertaking this study was the inter-religious families with children who are born in such families. The major issue was to discuss and explore children who grow up in two faiths. In this case the study set out to analyze and evaluate the causes of inter-religious marriages in Tanzanian society. And also the challenges of inter-religious families in Tanzanian society and what are prosperous children who are born in such families. In order to understand these contemporary challenges, it was both necessary to study the traditional Tanzanian families, the Tanzanian Marriage law Act of 1971, and children's rights in Tanzanian society in chapter two, families in Islamic and Christianity understanding in chapter three, and the prosperous children in chapter five. In order to deal with this topic, a number of relevant question were raise in chapter one, which guided my work. As it has already being noted that it is very common to find couples with different religious faiths in contemporary Tanzanian society, especially between Muslims and Christians which is known as inter-religious marriages according to this particular research. We have seen that, the problem is not been born in inter-religious family but the problem might be how parents, religious communities and Tanzanian society as a whole understand their obligations toward children upbringing despite their cultural and religious differences. In the following paragraphs I will shortly outline my findings.

The research has shown that, boys and girls with different faiths meet and fall in love to one another and marry. There are many causes for one to enter in such kind of marriage for instance, cultural, economical, and social forces. For example couples meet at a university campus where everyone dresses alike and uses the same, currently popular modes of expression and behaviour, which might be quite different from what they would use in their families. When such couples meets, both are playing the role of student and are often quite different people from what they are at home. There is a free spirit and atmosphere. However, the two who are in love might not consider very carefully about their religious differences and their planning on their children upbringing. They might only think and plan about how they can maintain their love in their marriage. But as we have seen, different religious beliefs can be a reason for a clash in marriage, not only

because the partners may not be in agreement on where and how to worship as a family, but because so much of what people do and believe, their attitudes about what is correct and incorrect, and their viewpoint of life stalk from their religious background. This kind of differences in religious point of view can lead coupes into miscommunication, misunderstanding, resentment and even guilt. For this case, the inter-religious couples may experience difficult situation on planning how to handle life events such as birth, death, and holiday celebrations. This also is what kind of holidays they might celebrate in their family, and whether they might join religious institutes together or separately, and also the issue of which religion to raise their children in.

However, many ways the question of inter-religious marriage may seem to be a matter of two persons only. But the research reveals that, this kind of marriage has serious consequences for the religious communities, parents of the couples in such marriage, children's life in such marriage and Tanzanian society as whole. All parents have a sacred responsibility for the spiritual upbringing of their children, but inter-religious couples have an even more significant responsibility because of the possibility of causing religious puzzlement in their children's lives. As the research has already exposed, if adults can feel tattered by religion, it is easy to imagine how much more children can feel two religions pulling on them. They do not know where they belong, and they see parents who simply are avoiding opposite what may be contradictions between the two religions. For this case, some children of inter-religious parents experience irresistible sadness because they are not like other children whose parents share the same faith. Some children in inter-religious homes may not feel like to be a part of any religion when older because of the conflicted feelings they experienced while growing up.

Nevertheless, as it has already been noted, marriage in Islamic perspective anticipated to endow with several purposes, which comprise, above all, religious harmony and peace, and collaboration and partnership in fulfilling the divine mandate. In this case, Muslim family, Children are a trust from Allah, both a joy and a test. As mentioned earlier, according to Qur'an and Hadith teaching, Muslim parents will be accountable according

to their intentions and efforts as parents, and this make them always to pray that they may be able to make *Allah Taala* pleased with them and their children.

However as it has been mentioned for Christian marriage is for one wife and one husband, while for a Muslim man it is acceptable for him to marry more than one wife. This is to say, according to Tanzanian marriage law act of 1971, and also Christian teachings marriage is monogamous (Matt.19:3-6), while for Muslims marriage is acceptable for a man to be polygamist with limited to four wives (Qur'an 4:3). The researcher has shown that, Christian family and Islamic family all together hold that, children are blessing from God and joy of the marriage. Nevertheless, for Christian's family, the home is expected to be place where parents love their God and faith formation for their children. While Islamic family, parents impulsively love their children and must provide for them with skills and spiritual nourishment. This means that, for Muslim parents is treated as and worship *(Ibadah)* to Allah.

Marriage does not come without challenges, even for couples who are in the same faiths. Though for inter-religious couples they have a particular obligation to agree on how they will religiously and spiritually educate their children. The difference in religious faith, like any other difference of opinion, can result in tension and conflict, rather than an enriching of spiritual growth. Consequently, children are hardly ever being able to sort out the complexities of religious issues and many may conclude that religion is a negative influence rather than a positive aspect of life. Nevertheless, this research reveals that, despite of many challenges in inter-religious marriages, still couples in such marriages can find happiness if they learn to work out their challenges in a way that is fair to both spouses and their children. Thus, it is important for parents to come to some sort of agreement regarding where to worship and how to raise children, just from the very beginning of their relationships.

On the other hand, the study undertaken has revealed that not all inter-religious marriages are harmful to children. This actually depends on the parents themselves. Some do not find problems at all. What is important for both parents is that they should cooperate so

that the child is not frustrated by being shown or told one thing by his or her mother and a different or opposite thing by his or her father. In this case, parents always need to attend well their cultural and religious differences so as not to lead a child to disappointment, confusion, and dilemma. Parents need to consider religion because how one is brought up and what one believes is very important. It is vital to talk about culture and religion, no matter what discussion reveals, because many people are oblivious about other's culture and religion, which generate more fear than understanding so needed. Couples of different faiths should make a point of either taking religious instruction or individually studying each other's faith, even if they do not plan to convert. Especially if they plan to have children, they should be knowledgeable enough regarding each other's faith to respond to inevitable questions regarding conflicting messages and philosophies. Learning about the religion is particularly important if one partner is very devout or if one of the partner's religion is dominant: study of cultural values, rules, ceremonies, as well as gender roles and limitations. As the research reveals, for couples who are not practicing their faith, a study of the religion in which each of them was raised will give valuable insights into each other's formative background and character, a situation that will religiously be very helpful of the upbringing of the children, too.

As we have seen, a marriage between Muslim and Christian is a fact that is becoming daily more in Tanzania. The religious communities should have a vested interest in this fact. Insofar as children are concerned, such marriages should be seen as part of the religious community care among all cultures and religions. As we have seen, the research revealed that religious community and Tanzanian society as a whole they have still to focus on in inter-religious families with children. This is more challenging, still religious community and Tanzanian society as whole the have a lot to do concerning this issue. As the research reveals, they have to pay attention on UN Conversion on children's rights to have their views heard and respected, freedom of thought, belief and religion, and children's rights of information. Despite the fact that, today, Africa, as in the case in Tanzania, is experiencing rapid social, economic and cultural changes; this is reducing the role played by the extended family and the community at large, and the family becoming an even smaller unit. Nevertheless, the principle of collective, community

based on up bringing of children, therefore, it may serve as a guide for both religious community and Tanzanian society today. Thus, in Christianity perspective the highest goal for Christian ministry is to help people experience the love of Christ here and now in a full and joyfully life. For this case, Christians have not to place unnecessary barriers to people. Therefore, it is possible for the parents, religious communities, and Tanzanian society as whole to work together on bringing up children who are born in inter-religious marriages. This will be for the benefit of a child, the family, and Tanzanian society as a whole.

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Omary, businessman 2007:12, July. Interview with Nahana Mndeme. Usangi, Tanzania.

Pamela, couple (Farmer) 2007:25, July. Interview with Nahana Mndeme. Usangi,
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

LIST OF INFORMANTS

Name	Sex	Age	Occupation	Place	Date
Abullah, Saleh	M	55	Sheikh	Usangi	12.7. 2007
Abed, Msafiri	M	50	Sheikh	Usangi	12.7.2007
Amon, William	M	40	Social workers	Same	14.7.2007
Daniel, Hassan	M	18	Student	Usangi	12.7.2007
Enighenja, Joshua	F	32	Social workers	Usangi	14.7.2007
Hassan, M Rajabu	M	49	Senior lecture	Dar-es-Salaam	25.7.2007
Hawael, Msuya	M	36	farmer	Usangi	13.7.2007
Iddi, Omary	M	17	Student	Usangi	14.7.2007
Juma,Bakari	M	62	Business man	Usangi	14.7.2007
Juma,Salim	M	51	farmer	Usangi	25.7.2007
Kombo, Bonifas	M	34	Pastor	Dar-es-Salaam	25.7.2007
Magreth,Sekiondo	F	41	Teacher	Usangi	12.7.2007
Mbwambo,Safiel	M	34	Pastor	Same	13.7.2007
Mkilaha,Iddi S.N	M	51	Associate Professor	Dar-er-Salaam	25.7.2007
Mmbaga, Samwel	M	52	Priest	Same	24.7.2007
Msangi, Stephano	M		Bishop	Same	12.7.2007
Msofe,Miraji	M	48	Sheikh	Usangi	12.7.2007
Mwanaidi,Sepombe	F	70	Parent(Farmer)	Usangi	23.7.2007

Namkunda,Mmbaga	F	39	Farmer	Usangi	2.7.2007
Nte,Msangi	F	35	House wife	Usangi	12.7.2007
Ntekijwa, Sadiki	F	32	Parent(Farmer)	Usangi	23.7.2007
Omary,Hassan	M	50	Business man	Usangi	12.7.2007
Zakaria,Msemo	M	65	Parent(Business man)	Usangi	23.7.2007

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

Name…………………………

Sex…………………………….

Occupation……………………………….

Age……………………………….

Specific Denomination…………………….

Marital Status…………………………Christian……Islam……Civil...

Date………………………….Place………………………..

Section A: General Questions

1. Are you married? Yes/No
2. What type of marriage? Christian marriage/Islamic marriage?
3. When did you marry?
4. Have you sought advice from religious leaders? If Yes,
   a) Christian   Muslim   Both
   b) If Yes, in which cases?
5. Did you share with your parents/relatives the idea of your marriage before you married each other? Yes/No. If No, Why was that so? If Yes, what was their response?
6. Are there any religious leaders in your family?
7. Do you have children? Yes/No. If Yes, how many are they?
8. If you don't have children/not yet married what is your dreams about your children?

9. Did you have Muslim/Christian/Both religious rites performed when the children were born?

10. Did you have any agreements with regards to the upbringing of your children? Yes/No. If Yes, what are the agreements? If No Why?

11. How do you practice religious life in your family? (Are in agreement/conflict?)

12. Are you/children attending

- Church-Service, Sunday Schools?
- Mosque-Prayers, Fasting, Qur'anc School?

   Other activities: festivals- home, Church/Mosque?

13. In your opinion, which religious tradition should your children follow? Explain why?

14. In your own opinion are you a religious person?
    a. Extremely religious
    b. Very religious
    c. Religious
    d. A little
    e. Not religious at all

15. What is your plan for spiritual formation of your children?

16. What will happen to the children in the case of divorce?

17. Do you think your children will be accepted in your religious community?

18. What is your opinion about religious marriages and especially about the situation of children in such marriages?

19. a) In your understanding, what is the religious role of a mother and a father in raising/ bringing up children?

    b) Is that possible for you in your marriage? Yes/No. If No, why do you think so?

15. Do you have any good relationship with your parents and other relatives in your extended family?

20. Do you have any suggestions?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section B: Questions to Grandparents

1. What religion do you belong?
2. How did you feel when your Son/Daughter came to inform you about their decision of intermarrying?
3. What advice did you give them?
4. Are you comfortable with this type of marriage? If Yes/No Why?
5. How many grandchildren do you have?
6. In your opinion, which religious tradition should they follow?
7. In your view points, are there any effects on children born in such a marriage? Explain.
8. What advice would you give with regard to children born in inter-religious marriage?

Section C: Questions to Religious Leaders

1. How many intermarried couples are there in your community (Church/Mosque)?
2. Did they come for advice before? If Yes, What advice did you give them?
3. Is there any spiritual care/guidance rendered to them?
4. What is your viewpoint with regard to inter-religious marriage?
5. As a religious leader, what advice would you give to man and woman of two different religious backgrounds who fall in love to each other?
   a) In your opinion, they have to marry each other?
   b) If Yes, what religion do you think should they follow or abide to?
   c) If No, Why?
6. What challenges do you get from such a marriage?
7. How does your religion view inter-religious marriage?

8. In your opinion, what advice would you give to parents on the upbringing of children born in such a marriage?

9. From your viewpoints, how do you receive children born in inter-religious marriage? And how does your religion view this?

10. In your opinion, what religious tradition should they follow?

Section D: Question to Youth

1. Which are major reasons which may lead the youth to enter into an Inter-religious marriage?

2. Are the Christian and Islam the same religion? If not/ Yes, explain why?

3. What problems can you anticipate in a marriage between a Christian and Muslim?

The Content of Oral Information To Informants When Securing Their Consent.

"To Whom Do I Belong?" A Study Of Inter-religious Families With Children And Its Challenges In Usangi - Mwanga Tanzania

The purpose of this research is to describe and discuss Inter-religious families with children in Usangi- Mwanga Tanzania., with regard to how parents and society understand their obligations toward children despite their cultural and religion differences.

All information from my interviews will be anonymised to that your name and identity will not be disclosed to any but me and institution. Would you be willing to give me your consent to conduct such an interview and to make use of the material in the interviews in my master's thesis?

Consent Sheet
Personal Data:

Name……………………

Sex………………………………

Occupation……………………….

Specific Denomination………………

Marital Status…………………………

Date……………………………………..Place………………….

Consent…

Appendix 3:

The Law of Marriage Act, 1971. The Nature of Marriage

Appendix 4

Youth Group Photo in their Church Meeting (Photo by author)