



**Research Article**

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESS OF MARRIAGE ACROSS CULTURES AMONG CHRISTIAN COUPLES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE CHURCH: A SURVEY OF CHRIST IS THE ANSWER MINISTRIES, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Marriage across cultures are not fully accepted by many ethnic groups including those that have embraced Christianity. The study investigated on factors that contribute to success of marriage across cultures among Christian couples and its implications to the church. The case was Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) Kenya. The study used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative design methods in data collection and analysis. The sample comprised of 147 couples, seven senior pastors, seven pastors' in-charge of Family Care and Enrichment ministry (FACE) and three couples in a Focus Group discussion. The research instruments were a self-administered questionnaire for couples and structured interview schedules for pastors and focus group discussion. The study found that majority of couples considered their marriage as successful. The motivating factors to marriage across cultures were love for one another, a common faith in Jesus Christ and a demonstration of control of one's life. The main factors that have contributed to the success of marriage included: commitment to Christian faith, spending quality time together, a good knowledge of each other before marriage and ability to work through ethnic and cultural differences. The study recommends grounding of congregation from youth in faith community, religious practices and spiritual beliefs, couples to learn the basics of each other's culture, inclusion of a chapter on marriage across cultures in the Pre-marital Counseling Guide, church to establish why some of its couples go for premarital counseling to other churches, ministries or individuals, provision of post marital counseling and pulpit ministry on ethnicity.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Marriage across cultures (MAC) is a relationship between a man and a woman of the same nationality but from two different ethnic groups. MAC are not fully accepted even among ethnic groups that have embraced Christianity. Consequently, they are looked upon with suspicion, face some resistance and are characterized by delayed consent by parents and relatives (Kibuthu 2014). Despite the resistance young people are finding increasing opportunities to find spouses outside their ethnic groups. This is especially so when they leave their homelands either to visit, study or work among other ethnic groups. Factors that have contributed include: traditions and customs of many ethnic groups which are losing their grip on marriage; improved communication in terms of roads, air travel and technology which makes distance no longer a barrier and adaption of similar lifestyles in urban areas. Irrespective of their ethnicity, they are finding it easier to identify with their age mates who are living in the same

residential areas and are facing similar challenges at school or work place. These experiences influences their pool of friends and relationships that develop, with some ending in marriage. MAC in Kenya, are taking place in an environment where ethnic communities have for the last two decades experienced ethnic tensions and sometimes violence in every election year. Despite this, MAC in CITAM are on an increase. Among men, the leading ethnic groups involved are Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu, Kamba and Kisii, while among women are Kikuyu, Luhya, Kamba, Luo and Kalenjin. These marriages are however likely to experience seasons of anxiety, uncertainty and fear, whenever there are ethnic tensions and violence, with the potential to discourage marriage and encourage cohabitation, lead to unfulfilled marital expectations and increased separation and divorce ( Kibuthu2015).

**Literature Review**

Biblical Perspectives of Marriage across Cultures

The Church, like the ethnic communities have struggled on whether MCA are biblical or not and whether to support them or not. While the Bible imposes restrictionson marriage, the purpose is to ensure that marriage takes place within the

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confines God intended, maintains godly values, passes on of healthy genes and benefits children in matters of faith and inheritance (MacDonald 1975). The Israelites, for example, were forbidden from marrying foreigners because of the danger of idolatry (Unger, 1988). However there are biblical accounts of interracial and interethnic marriages which include: Abraham, who married Hagar the Egyptian (Gen. 16:1-4) and Keturah the Canaanite (Gen. 25:1-4); Moses who married a Cushitic/Ethiopian wife (Numbers 12:1-8) and Naomi, a Moabite daughter in-law of Ruth who was married to Boaz a Jew (Ruth 4). Naomi through marriage to Boaz ended in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5). Rehab (Joshua 2) a Canaanite, living in Jericho got married to an Israelite; is also found in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5). If God was against these marriages, the patriarchs will not have been involved, he will not have defended Moses against Aaron and Miriam when they spoke against his wife and Ruth and Rehab would never have found their way into the genealogy of Christ. What was forbidden then and still is today, is a marriage that would lead a believer to idolatry, is against expected moral behavior, would lead to heathen practices or affects one's social conscience (Unger 1988, Richardson & Bowen 1983).

The New Testament supports this view as expressed in 2 Corinthians 6:14 -16, where Christians are forbidden to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers. Where both partners are Christians, MAC is not forbidden and should therefore be accepted and even encouraged. This view is supported by Colossians 3:11, which states "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all." Nationality, ethnicity, economic or social status does not make any difference to those who are in Christ. What is unacceptable is a Christian marrying a non-Christian, because of the likely danger of the believer losing faith in Christ and the confusion children would suffer by being raised in an environment where one of the parents is not a Christian

### **Marital Success**

Kibuthu (2014) argues that MAC in Kenya experience challenges both before and after marriage. Before marriage they include: acceptability by one or both sets of parents and relatives, stereotyping, cultural expectations in dowry and negotiations, wedding preparations and the events on the wedding day. In marriage the challenges are adapting to a spouse's culture, managing in-laws and relatives, communication, husband/wife roles, parenting, sex/intimacy and food. The magnitude of these challenges depends on how deeply involved the partners are in their cultures of origin and how social or conservative their communities are. With this in mind, the desire of every couple entering MAC as they exchange their marriage vows is that their marriage will be successful and they would live happily together thereafter despite the challenges.

Successful marriages are characterized by permanence, love and submission to one another, happiness and growth as individuals and as a couple. This demands that the couple is able to manage both internal and external challenges to their marriage. Marital success is however a function of many factors, which includes: age at marriage, education, employment, pre-marital counseling, motivation and choice factors as discussed below;

### **Age at Marriage**

The age at marriage has a bearing on the success or failure of a marriage (Ross 1991). Marriages at under 20 years of age are associated with a higher probability of divorce (Cherline 1980), because couples are immature, impulsive, unprepared for mate selection and marital role performance. Consequently such couples experience a relatively low marital satisfaction and stability (Lee 1977). According to Ross (1991), Otto (1977) and Heaton (2002) marriages at over 20 years age, may reduce divorce and thereby enhancing marital success. They argue that as age increases couples are able to make mature decisions on marital commitment thus increasing marital stability. It is with this realization that many countries have set age limits for marriage to be at least 18 years in order for one to marry without parental consent. For marriages below 18, consent is required either from parents or court approval (Strong *et al.*; 2008).

Customary Law in Kenya does not provide age limit for marriage. However ethnic groups have rites of passage that must be fulfilled before one can get married. (Theological Advisory 1994). Among many African communities, marriage takes place after circumcision, which is considered a profound rite of passage because it declares the initiates ready for marriage (Mbiti 1975). Kibuthu (2014) established that from 1987 to 2013, CITAM conducted 1914 weddings out of which 742 were MCA. The average age at marriage for men was 30.9 years, while for women it was 27.6 years.

### **Level of Education**

An improved education status for women enhances marital stability and success because the couple is able to relate at same or near level of understanding (Goldscheinder & Waite (1991). Women's economic contribution to a marriage, as a consequence of education also enhances marital stability and success (Ono 1998). Heaton (2002) however observes that education can also have a negative effect, because it gives partners ability to independently support themselves and flexibility of leaving a marriage relationship that is not working.

### **Employment Status**

Gold scheinder & Waite (1991) and Ono (1998) argue that employment gives people independence and liberty to make many life choices. Young people who are employed and have an income to support themselves and are therefore not dependent on parents or anybody else are free to make independent decisions, which include the choice of a spouse from other ethnic groups. Because of this independence, parents have no option but to accept their choice of marriage partners. Strong *et al.* (2008), observes that work experience and near or same level of education are some of the characteristics that contribute to a successful marriage.

### **Motivation and Choice Factors**

Apart from the age at marriage, education and employment, there are motivation and choice factors that contribute to stability and success of marriage. Strong *et al.* (2008), argues that successful marriages are preceded by a good courtship period; which is characterized by couples being gentle and understanding, sensitive to each other's needs, helpful and good hearted. He further argues that for a successful Christian marriage, the partners should be born again as indicated in

John 3: 5-6 and Joshua 23:13. Hughes (2007) argues that, the new birth enables the marriage to be God-centered, couples to maintain proper scriptural roles and responsibilities and to share together in daily Bible reading and prayer.

According to McDonald (1975), marital success is also influenced by personality factors which include: attitudes, values, habits, preferences, personal histories and early life experiences. Personality factors determine whether couples are able to communicate well with each other, have the capacity to resolve conflicts in a constructive way, develop realistic expectations, appreciate each other irrespective of their differences, agree on religious and ethical issues and are able to balance between individual and couple leisure activities

Hughes (2007) identifies other requirements for successful marriage to include: maintaining communication channels open, living within couples' budget, clear guidelines for managing conflicts and a good sexual relationship. Hughes further argue that, at the start of marital journey, couples need to put in place, what he calls logical building blocks to happy marriages which includes: detachment from the family of origin, commitment to build their marriage, nurturing a sense of togetherness, bringing in the children to form a team, managing challenges of life and creating a sexual relationship that is satisfying to both.

While all these factors that contribute to marital success are applicable both to monoculture and MAC, whether a MAC succeeds or fails will also depend on the personalities of the couple as informed by their cultures (Appleby, 2014). Romano (1988) identifies additional unique factors that would contribute to success of a MCA to include: genuine love for one another; good motivation for marriage, good knowledge of each other, family and friends before marriage, respect for each other's culture, common interest and a similar lifestyle. The couple should also have a willingness and ability to work through their cultural differences, spend quality time together, ability to resolve conflicts, have similar expectations and willingness to learn each other's culture. Husband and wife should also have similar backgrounds in terms of education, travel and adjustments to new situations and a good knowledge of their culture of origin.

Mella, (2012) observes that couples in marriage across cultures should be able to agree on where to live, respects parents from both sides and major on the positive aspects of each other and their culture. While couples should maintain a close relationship with their two families and relatives, they should also be able to set boundaries in order to minimize interference.

### **Premarital Counselling**

Due to increasing rates of separations, divorces and dysfunctional families, premarital counseling is highly recommended. This is because couples come to marriage with different family background experiences, different marital expectations, predetermined ideas on conflict management, financial management, love, children and religion (Kift, n.d). They also have expectations of emotional intimacy, interdependence, affection, trust and caring (Bird & Melville, 1994). When conflicts arise and expectations are not met, the easier option for many couples is to seek ways out of marriage (Collins, 2007). Premarital counseling is therefore meant to

help couples to have an appreciation of their impending marriage and to make decisions that will ensure marital success (Sell 1981).

According to Collins (2007) premarital counseling helps to initiate communication where it is lacking, lay biblical foundation for family responsibilities, provide skills in financial management, provide wholesome information on sexual relations and prepare couples for future counseling if need arises. It also provides help in case of miss matching, assist to solve problems that couples cannot solve by themselves and in prevention of future problems through equipping on conflict management. Collins further argues that premarital counseling should help couples to deal with personal immaturity that could lead to insensitivity to issues and where one or both partners had been married before to address their personal contribution to the failure or success of their previous marriage. Patricia and Kuhlman (n.d) are of the view that, premarital counseling can also reduce the risk of divorce by up to 30% and ensure significantly happier marriages.

The topics covered in pre-marital sessions depend on the needs of the couples. However it should help them discover areas of differing opinions, traditions or areas where they may struggle in marriage. Identified topics include: financial management, husband wife roles, in-laws and relatives, marriage as a divine institution, children and parenting. Collins (2007) adds to the list; marital expectations, conflict resolutions, sexuality/intimacy, decision making and goal setting. Post marital counseling, six to twelve months of marriage is necessary. Weaver, Revilla, &Koeing (2002), observe that for couples who are re-marrying, those entering marriage across-cultures and interfaith marriages, need more help on how to form a blended family, manage step parenting demands, deal with cultural issues and with their different faiths.

CITAM (2011) in its *Pre-Marital Counseling Guide*, identifies the content of its premarital programme to include: biblical foundations for marriage, African traditions and marriage, communication and conflict resolution, sexual intimacy, financial stewardship, children in marriage, spiritual formation and planning of the wedding. MAC is not provided for and neither is post marital counseling

There is a wide range of policies, approaches and resources that are in use in premarital counseling. Some churches offer individual counseling, while there are others who offer group counseling or a combination of both. There are still others who offer post marital counseling sessions (Wright (1992). Couples who had a prior marriage or are planning for a marriage cross cultures are encouraged to take additional Bible study work and to attend pre-marital seminars that address their specific needs (Collins 2007). CITAM provides a combination of group and individual sessions but no post marital sessions (CITAM 2011)

According to Wright (1992), the individual approach of counselling is the most effective because individual concerns and needs can be addressed without the fear of what others think. However, individual approach should be supplemented with group approach, which is about 30% effective by itself. It tends to be general in nature, does not address in detail individual needs and concerns, but is good for learning from others. For maximum effectiveness; Wright recommends a

combination of individual and group approach. In case of shortage of time individual approach should take priority.

### **Research Methodology**

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population comprised of 742 couples, 9 senior pastors and 9 pastors' in-charge of FACE and 4 couple for Focus Group Discussion. Simple random sampling was used in the selection of couples. A 20 % (Kombo & Tromp 2009) of the couples in each assembly were sampled giving a sample of 147 couples. While they were sampled as couples, they however filled the questionnaires individually. This was to ensure views of both genders were captured. The senior pastors and FACE pastors were purposively sampled. The criteria was to have a senior pastor and a pastor in-charge of FACE from assemblies that had been in existence for more than five years, of which 7 assemblies met the criteria. They included: CITAM Valley Road, Woodley, Karen, Parklands, Kisumu, Ngong and Buruburu. Three couples were purposively selected to participate in Focus Group Discussion (Kombo & Tromp 2009).

The research instruments used were a restricted questionnaire (Orodho, 2008) for couples in MAC, a structured interview guide and a structured discussion guide for senior pastors and pastors in charge of FACE and for Focus Group Discussion respectively. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data analyses approaches were used. Quantitative data analyses techniques included: Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). They were used to present descriptive statistical data into frequencies distribution, charts, tables and percentages. Data from the open ended questions were categorized and thematically analyzed (Creswell 2008, 2010). Data from interviews and focus group discussions were recorded thematically, then presented in narratives form and where possible tabulated.

## **FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Demographic Information of Respondents**

Out of the 294 questionnaires administered 247 (82%) were returned, of which 126 (51.01%) were male and 120 (48.58%) female. One respondent (0.4%) did not state his/her gender. An acceptable response rate is between 60% and 70% (Kibagendi, 2009). This gave an almost equal representation of male and female.

Appendix 1, presents the age distribution of respondents, which established that those aged 20-25 years were 2.8%, 26-30 years 18.6%, 31-35 years 38.5%, 36-40 years 22.3%, 41-45 years 13.8%, 46-50 years 2.0% and 51-55 years 2.0%. Majority of respondents (38.5%) were in the 31-35 age bracket, while 22.3% fell within the 36-40 age bracket. 60.8% of respondents are therefore aged between 31 and 40 years. Those below 30 years were 21.5% and those over 40 years were 17.8%. 82.2% of respondents were therefore below 40 years.

Respondents' level of education is presented in appendix 2, which established that, 1.6% had primary education, 0.4% high school education, 27.1% were college diploma, 45.3% university graduates with a first degree, 20.6% with a master's degree and 1.2% with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The majority, 67.1% of respondents had a university education.

Appendix 3 presents respondents' employment status which revealed that 67.6% were employed, 24.3% were self-employed, 6.1% unemployed and 2% did not indicate their status. The respondents' duration in marriage is presented in appendix 4 which indicates that 58.7% had been married for 1 to 5 years, 21.5% for 6 to 10 years, 10.1% for 11 to 15 years, 4.5% for 16 to 20 years and 2% for 21 to 25 years. Majority (97.6%) were married during the last 20 years.

The respondents can therefore be described as middle aged, with majority having attained university level of education, are in gainful employment (employed or self-employed) and having been married between 1 and 10 years.

### **Performance of marriage**

The respondents' attitude towards their marriage is presented in appendix 5. Respondents rated their marriages as 32.4% very successful, 65.2% as successful, 1.2% were not sure, 0.8% as unsuccessful and 0.8% did not rate. The combined rating for successful and very successful was 97.6%. Those who rated their marriage as unsuccessful attributed it to problems with in-laws on ethnic expectations, unresolved conflicts cultural issues, poor communication, lack of marital commitment and irresponsibility in discharging roles. Other factors included infidelity, alcoholism, financial challenges, different views on husband/wife roles, different values and goals, lack of tolerance to a spouse's limitations and lack of Christian mentors in marriages across cultures such that couples lack necessary support.

### **Motivation to MAC**

The respondents views on what motivated them to MAC is presented in appendix 6 which showed that 95.1% were motivated by their love for one another, 77.3% by their common faith in Christ, 0.8% by rebellion to parents, 12.6% by demonstration of control over one's life, 1.6% to escape loneliness, 0.8% to escape an unhappy home environment, 1.6% by social pressure to get married and 1.2% as an act of compassion to a partner. Respondents identified other motivations to include: desire to prove that marriage across cultures can succeed, to experience other cultures, to contribute towards healing of ethnic wounds in the country due to recurrent ethnic tensions and violence during election years, an act of divine connection (met the right partner, at the right place and at the right time) and a desire to serve God together, in case of where the couple met while serving at the same or different ministry at the assembly or within CITAM.

From these responses, love for one another, common faith in Jesus Christ and a demonstration of control of one's life stood out as the three dominant factors that motivate young people to MAC in CITAM. Social pressure to get married, to escape loneliness, an act of compassion to a partner, rebellion to parents and to escape an unhappy home environment were not significant as motivations.

### **Choice Factors**

Respondents rated 9 variables on whether they have most contributed, contributed or not contributed to the success of their marriage. The variables included: knowledge of each other well before marriage, common interest and lifestyle, ability to work through cultural/ethnic differences, similar goals and expectations, learned each other's culture, high commitment to Christian faith, spend quality time together,

similar education background and a good knowledge of their culture of origin. The respondents' ranking are as presented in appendix 7. The rating shows that 76.5% thought it was high commitment to Christian faith, 57.9% spending quality time together, 57.5 knowledge of each other well before marriage, 44.9% common interest and life style, 42.9% ability to work through cultural differences, 40.9%, similar goals and expectations, 22.7% learned each other's culture, 20.2% similar educational background and 18.2% good knowledge of one's culture of origin.

When the rating for contributed and most contributed are combined the ranking generally remained the same as above but with slight changes as follows: high commitment to Christian faith 93.5%, spending quality time together 91.5%, knew each other well before marriage 90.4%, ability to work through cultural difference 87.4%, similar goals and expectations 84.2%, common interest and lifestyle 83.4%, learned each other culture 68%, similar education background 54.2% and good knowledge of one's culture of origin 48.8%.

Respondents rated the usefulness of counseling received as 1.2% very poor, 9.7% poor, 23.9% average, 32.8% good and 26.7% very good. It was also established that 5.7% of respondents had received counseling from other churches or individuals outside CITAM and 10.1% had received post marital counseling within the first year of marriage. The combined rating for good to very good was 59.5%. Those who considered it poor to very poor (10.9%), were of the view that the sessions were rushed, marriage across cultures was not covered, there was lack of attention to individual's needs, sessions were theoretical and not engaging enough and facilitators seemed not adequately prepared especially in African traditions and marriage. Despite these shortcomings, respondents were of the view that pre-marital counseling had contributed to the success of their marriage.

The respondents further identified other factors that have contributed to the success of their MAC to include: communication, prior knowledge and interaction with family members and friends from both sides, exposure to other cultures thereby diminishing prejudice and submission to each other as couples.

The interviews and focus group discussions also identified other factors that contribute to the success of MCA to include: acceptance and support by parents from both sides which enables the couple to endure any challenges that may arise from the community; residence away from their ethnic community which reduces exposure to what would affect the couple negatively and willingness of couples to resolve conflicts that arise due to cultural and ethnic differences. It was also pointed out that a strong spiritual commitment and maturity before marriage forms a strong foundation for marital success because it enables the couple to endure challenges.

## **DISCUSSION**

The couples in MCA in CITAM are on average at marriage 30 years for men and 27 years for women, with majority having attained a university level of education and either employed or self-employed. These are characteristics of an independent group, who are at liberty to make many life choices, including choosing a spouse from other ethnic groups. Because of this independence their parents, relatives and friends have no

option but to adapt to their choice of marriage partner. This will significantly contribute to increase in number of MAC in CITAM in future, a fact that parents must come to terms with. The couples being over 20 years at marriage reduces chances of divorce and enhances marital success (Goldscheider & Waite (1991) and Ono (1998) and Heaton (2002). With an education and employment both husband and wife are able to make economic contribution to their marriage thus enhancing marital stability and success. This was confirmed by the majority of couples rating their marriage as successful. With this independent group of young people the church and parents should brace for increased marriages across cultures among its congregation and respectively.

Most of those who look down upon MAC hold the view that, the couples are motivated by selfish interests. The study disapproves this notion among Christian couples with the majority being motivated by their love for one another, their common faith in Christ and demonstration of control over one's life. Selfish motivations like rebellion to parents, to escape loneliness and unhappy home environment, social pressure to get married and as an act of compassion to a partner were not significant. The majority of respondents seem to have genuine motives to enter into marriage across cultures, which have therefore contributed to their marital success.

The fact that love for one another as a motivation was rated highest affirms that agape love has no boundaries, not even ethnic or cultural ones. This is because of its characteristics as stated in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 "*Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. 8 Love never fails*" (NIV). With this kind of attitude to one another it is therefore not surprising that majority considered their marriage successful.

The leading choice factors that couples identified as having contributed to the success of their marriage being high commitment to Christian faith, spending quality time together and a good knowledge of each other before marriage are supported by Adesogan (2002). He is of the view that, a common faith in Christ gives marriage a sense of purpose and destiny. It enables couples to commit to live their marriage in submission to one another out of reverence for Christ. The wife has no problem submitting to her husband and recognizing him as her God ordained head. The husband loves his wife sacrificially as required of him and provides for her needs according to his ability (Ephesians 5:21-28). The couple acknowledges Christ as the foundation of their marriage, the head and final arbitrator in all matters. The common faith in Christ supersedes cultural differences and contributes to marital success. Both the couple and the church have a responsibility to this commitment to faith. The church has the responsibility to teach and ground its members and congregants in faith in Jesus Christ and in particular the importance of entering into a marriage only with those who they share this same faith (1 Corinthians 14:14-16). The couple has the responsibility for their growth in faith before marriage and to live in obedience to the word of God in marriage. The finding also agrees with Crawford, Houtes, Huston, & George (2000) who are of the view that spending quality time together

before marriage and in marriage is beneficial because leisure and marital satisfaction go hand in hand

These findings also support Marks (2005), who found that there is a correlation between religiosity and marital satisfaction, duration and quality. Marriage is positively influenced by the faith community (bible reading, worship and service), religious practices (prayers and sacred rituals) and spiritual beliefs (divorce, sexuality, family relationships and death). Through faith community the couple become aware of God's expectation of how their marriage should be lived (Ephesians 5:21-33), learn to give and to serve one another. In religious practices they learn to trust God and one another and to sacrifice for the sake of one another. Spiritual beliefs creates an awareness that divorce has no place in a Christian marriage, that sex finds its rightful place in marriage and adultery is a sin, and appreciates it is God who joins husband and wife and makes them one and they are stewards of God's gift of children. In their commitment to live their married life they have the support of the clergy to guide and counsel them.

The implications of these findings is for CITAM clergy and their support teams (FACE Teams, Pre-marital and marriage counselors and mentors) is to ground their young people in faith community, religious practices and spiritual beliefs. There is also need to adequately prepare couples for marriage through premarital counseling and support them in marriage. The mature an individual is spiritually the less ethnic or cultural one becomes and the more obedient they become to the word of God (Gal 3:28), thus enabling them to view other ethnic groups without prejudice and to overcome ethnic and cultural barriers.

**Appendixes**

**Appendix 1 Age Bracket of Respondents.**

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-25	7	2.8	2.8	2.8
26-30	46	18.6	18.6	21.5
31-35	95	38.5	38.5	59.9
36-40	55	22.3	22.3	82.2
41-45	34	13.8	13.8	96.0
46-50	5	2.0	2.0	98.0
51-55	5	2.0	2.0	100.00
TOTAL	247	100.00	100.00	

**Appendix 2 Respondents Level of Education.**

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Not stated	3	1.2	1.2	1.2
Primary	4	1.6	1.6	2.8
Secondary	1	0.4	0.4	3.2
College diploma	67	27.1	27.1	30.4
Under graduate	112	45.3	45.3	75.7
Master's degree	51	20.6	20.6	96.4
Ph.D.	3	1.2	1.2	97.6
Others	6	2.4	2.4	99.6
Total	247	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Appendix 3 Respondent's Employment Status**

Employment status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Not stated	5	2.0	2.0
Unemployed	15	6.1	8.1
Employed	167	67.6	75.7
Self-employed	60	24.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Appendix 4 Respondents' Duration in Marriage**

Years	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative
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				percent
Not stated	7	2.8	2.8	2.8
1-5	145	58.7	58.7	61.7
6-10	53	21.5	21.5	83.0
11-15	25	10.1	10.1	93.1
16-20	11	4.5	4.5	97.6
21-25	5	2.0	2.0	99.6
Over 30	1	0.4	0.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

**Appendix 5 Respondents Rating on Performance of their Marriage**

Rating	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Not stated	2	0.8	0.8
Unsuccessful	1	0.4	1.2
Not sure	3	1.2	2.4
Successful	161	65.2	67.6
Very successful	80	32.4	32.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Appendix 6 Motivation for marriage across cultures**

Motivation	Yes		No		Missing from system/ no response.	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Love for one another	235	95.1	6	2.4	6	2.4
Common faith in Christ	191	77.3	1	0.4	55	22.3
Rebellion to parents	2	0.8	-	-	245	99.2
Demonstration of control of one's life	31	12.6	-	-	216	87.4
To escape loneliness	4	1.6	-	-	243	98.4
To escape unhappy home environment	2	0.8	-	-	245	99.2
Social pressure to get married	4	1.6	-	-	243	98.4
Act of compassion to partner	3	1.2	-	-	244	98.8
Others	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

**Appendix 7 Rating of factors contributing to success of marriages across Cultures**

Factors	Not stated %		Not contributed %		Contributed %		Most contributed		Combined contributed and most contribute
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Knew each other well before marriage	4	1.6	19	7.7	82	33.2	142	57.5	90.4
Common interest and lifestyle	8	3.2	33	13.4	95	38.5	111	44.9	83.4
Ability to work through cultural difference	8	3.2	23	9.3	110	44.5	106	42.9	87.4
Similar goals and expectations	8	3.2	31	12.6	107	43.3	101	40.9	84.2
Learned each other's culture	10	4.0	69	27.9	112	45.3	56	22.7	68
High commitment to Christian faith	7	2.8	9	3.6	42	17.0	189	76.5	93.5
Spend quality time together	6	2.4	15	6.1	83	33.6	143	57.9	91.5
Similar educational background	11	4.5	102	41.3	84	34.0	50	20.2	54.2
Good knowledge of our culture of origin	8	3.2	119	48.2	75	30.3	45	18.2	48.8

**CONCLUSION**

MAC have for long been shunned and looked upon with a lot of suspicion right from the motives of those who enter into them and their ability to succeed. Many have also held the belief that these marriages are doomed to fail. The findings of this study is therefore very important and should be an encouragement to Christian couples in marriage across cultures and those contemplating such marriages in future. However, for those contemplating to enter into marriage across cultures, their motivation must be genuine, driven by their love for one another, their common faith in Christ and the choice being their individual decisions for such a marriage. Couples should ensure they receive intensive premarital counseling that includes marriage across cultures and receive post marital counseling within the first year of marriage. A good

knowledge of each other, their families and friends will enhance their marital adjustments, thus facilitating success. While in marriage, couples should be prepared to inculcate attitudes that will foster success of their marriage, which includes a high commitment to their Christian faith, spending regular quality time together as couples and families, common interests and life styles, a commitment to work through their cultural differences and to seek counseling help when issues arise that they are not able to settle by themselves. With majority evaluating their marriages as successful, CITAM and the church in general should brace itself for an increase in MAC among its members and congregants and among Christians in general in the days ahead.

### Recommendations

In the process of bringing up its youth and congregation in general, CITAM should ensure that they are grounded in faith community, religious practices and spiritual beliefs. This will deter them from developing selfish motivations for MAC and also ensure that they have a firm foundation on which to build their marriage.

Couples should be made aware of the need to have a good knowledge of each other, their families and friends, before marriage. This will enhance acceptance by family, relatives and friend, adjusting to each other's culture and dealing with cultural stereotypes. This is especially necessary for those who have grown up in rural areas and they and their families are deeply rooted in their cultures of origin and have little or no exposure to other cultures.

There is need for CITAM to establish why some its members and congregants go for premarital counseling to other churches, ministries or individuals and provide a solution to meet this need.

CITAM should regularly provide pulpit ministry that addresses ethnicity issues. Some of the suggested areas of concern include: biblical foundations of marriage, ethnic stereotyping, traditions and beliefs from a Christian perspective, marriage across cultures, and gospel and culture. CITAM should take advantage of its radio station and television stations to impact the whole nation with positive ethnicity.

To ensure that couples entering into MAC are taken care of, CITAM should include a chapter on marriage across cultures in its Pre-marital Counseling Guide. This will enable the church to provide additional counseling sessions for couples entering MAC that addresses their unique needs. The sessions should be facilitated by couples in MAC whose marriages are considered successful.

CITAM should be deliberate in providing post marital counseling to all couples within the first year of marriage. To actualize this, the church should develop a post marital guide for its members and congregants.

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