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# The Psychosocial and Spiritual Dynamics of the Christian Family

Samuel Siong-Kung Fung

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS OF THE  
CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
Western Evangelical Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Samuel Siong-Kong Fung

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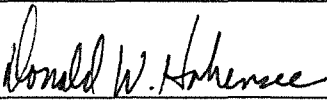


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Submitted by SAMUEL SIONG-KONG FUNG

Approved by DR. DONALD W. HOHENSEE   
(Faculty Advisor)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. THE PROBLEM

#### 1. Statement of the Problem

The family is the basic institution of a society (Horton, 1976:168-177). In the contemporary society, the study and field of the family system has gained popularity. Greater emphasis and extensive study concerning marriage and family evolve, such as the premarital and marital counseling, positive reinforcement and contract therapy, family enrichment and family encounter programs, family therapy, and so on. However, this emphasis also reveal that the marriage and family in contemporary world will encounter the most complicated and confused theories, troubles, and crises. Any problem of a family member is no longer regarded as an individual problem. It is regarded as a problem and dysfunction emanating from the family system (Okun, 1980:31-37). The importance and the function of family are questioned!

Today, the Christian marriage and family also face and struggle with difficulty. The idealized Christian marriage and family full of love, peace, order, concern, morality, and harmony does not exist. They encounter the problem of homosexuality; divorce; interpersonal tension between husband and wife, parents and children, nuclear and extended families; fidelity; and many other crises. Maintaining a good routine, the habits of family worship, and daily devotions does not

seem to solve the problem. Biblical teaching and principles concerning Christian marriage and family seems obscure or contradicting. The hoping for miracles that will make a bad marriage and family better does not occur! In the world of today with the vicissitudes of society, the Christian family is under attack. The world seeks to make its witness to be even less effective (Feucht, 1970:239).

The purpose of this paper is not to deal or to solve the problems which a Christian marriage and family face. Nevertheless, it is the intention to explore and disclose the dynamics of a Christian marriage and family. It is a positive approach to call for full awareness, understanding, and utilizing these dynamics to face, to deal with, and to overcome any emerging problem.

## 2. Justification of the Problem

A family is commonly defined as a complex social system (Kantor, 1975:10). Nevertheless, in this paper a family is defined as a holistic complex social system, which originated with God, and is regulated in a dynamic way. According to this definition, many characteristics can be mentioned. However, the four most significant will be emphasized. They are, a. Holistic, b. Complexity, c. Originated by God, and d. Dynamic.

### a. Holistic

A family, either Christian or non-Christian, consists of

four dimensions. These dimensions are, Physical, Psychological, Sociological and Spiritual. Each dimension has its distinctive emphasis and function but they are not discrete entities. In actuality, none of the dimension is purely or totally objective. They often overlap with one another. These dimensions are interrelated and interdependent to produce the most effective and satisfactory result. There is no sequence or order of importance among these dimensions. The emphasis of these dimensions is on the specific functions and characteristics which each of them encompasses.

#### b. Complexity

A family is a complex social system which is made up of individuals related to each other. These members enter the family through birth, adoption, or marriage, and leave only by death. As a complex social system, its interaction is not limited to the family members but also across the family boundary with the outer environment. In addition, this complex social system also indicates that it is a culture-governed system. Cultural influence and impact, either implicit or explicit, can be notified in the formation and operation of the family system.

#### c. Originated by God

Human beings were created by God. God originated the family in the beginning when He created the human race. Hence, family institution, no matter whether one believes in God or

not, was first established by God. He determined its inner structure as well as its purpose and goal. Certain criteria have been given by God for the building of a happy and successful marriage and family.

#### d. Dynamic

The family is not static but dynamic. Dynamic encompasses the characteristics of potential, strength, power, and motion. Hence a family is always in a dynamic process, in operation continuously, and never fixed or static. Every member of the family is with the potential to interact and grow.

With this definition of family, which applies both to Christian and non-Christian, the purpose of this paper is to explore the dynamic of a Christian family from two perspectives.

First of all, the dynamic of Christian marriage and family is revealed in the holistic model. This holistic model consists of four important dimensions. They are: Physical, Psychological, Sociological, and Spiritual dimensions. The significance of this model lies on the distinctive and specific functions which each dimension encompasses, rather than the order or sequence of importance. These dimensions are equally important. For instance, the Spiritual Dimension is the core and the most fundamental dimension, however, it does not imply that following and adopting this dimension will automatically fulfill the needs of other dimensions. In reality, the dynamic is shown when the criteria of Spiritual Dimension are fully applied and functioned in the other

dimensions. No dimension can be completely fulfilled. A family is not static but dynamic. As the family grows and develops, the motion is neither in a linear or cyclinical position. The dynamic reveals that the family will and can continuously be dealing and/or redealing with either the same or different dimension, however, each time from a entirely different perspective and each time in greater depth. No family can permanetly graduate from one dimension. The dynamic of Christian marriage and family is from the fully awareness, acceptance, and homeostatic maintenance of these different dimensions. The crisis in Christian marriage and family is mainly due to the denial, neglection or disintegration of the dimensions.

Secondly, the purpose of this paper will explore and reveal the dynamics of cultural influence and impact on Christian marriage and family. God allows Christians from different cultural backgrounds to use their unique culture to establish their Christian family system. No culture is better or superior than another. Under the criterion that the culture will not violvate the biblical theology of marriage and family, every Christian can build his unique cultural based Christian family life-style.

Chinese, American, and Hebrew cultures will be used to show the characteristics and dynamic of each culture and the way that each can establish a Christian family system. Chinese culture is used to represent the Eastern culture

because it is one of the oldest cultures in the East. In addition, the writer is more familiar with it. American culture is chosen as an example of Western culture because America is a country of immigrants. These early immigrants came from different Western countries with different culture. For instances, some of them came from England, others from Germany, Holland, France, Scotland, Ireland and other countries. Hebrew culture is mentioned because it has been popularly considered to be the true biblical culture and therefore all other cultures should conform to it. This is a wrong assumption. The paper will show that Hebrew culture is only an ordinary human culture. It does not represent or embody the only acceptable form. Making any culture; Chinese-Eastern, American-Western, or Hebrew, the only representation of the biblical theology of marriage and family is a common and serious crisis. It will hinder the cultural dynamic of Christian marriage and family.

### 3. Limitation of the Problem

This paper does not intend to solve any particular problem which will arise from the dimensions of cultural influence. It will present a holistic model and explore the dynamic of culture in establishing a Christian marriage and family. The discussion of the holistic model will revolve around the four basic dimensions: Physical, Psychological, Sociological, and Spiritual. The issue of cultural dynamics will focus on the discussion of Chinese, American, and

Hebrew cultures. Chinese culture will be used to represent the Western culture. Hebrew culture is illustrated to show the different between the culture and biblical principles. The paper will only explore those characteristics of the three cultures that are basically related to their family system.

## B. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

In this paper, certain specific or technical terms used are defined as follows in alphabetical order:

1. Big or Large Family System: A family system which has at least five generations living together as a social economic unit (Lai, 1982:22).
2. Crisis: It indicates the crucial situation and turning point, as well as, problem and troubles (Davies, 1977:170).
3. Culture: It is the human pattern of life by which people learn to respond, interact, and control their environment (Stott, 1980:19-20; Mbiti, 1977:6). Culture embraces many different characteristics.
4. Doctrine Of "Five Relationship": This doctrine was originated by Confucius. The principle idea is status which defines one's relationship with others. The five relationships are between ruler and subject, father and son, elder brothers and younger brothers, husband and wife, and between friends (Schurmann, 1967:39-40).
5. Dynamic: In this paper, dynamics refer to the

visible or invisible strength, power, potential and motion.

6. Endogamy: Marriage in which the partners must be members of the same group. For instance, they are the members of the same extended family lineage (Broom, 1973:317).

7. Exogamy: Marriage in which the partner must be chosen from outside a defined group (Broom, 1973:317).

8. Extended Family: The nuclear family plus any other kin with whom important relationships are maintained (Horton, 1976:536).

9. Family: In this paper, a family is defined as a holistic complex social system which originated with God and which He regulates in a dynamic way.

10. General Criteria: The biblical theology of marriage and family which is given by God to all the human race, this includes both Christians and non-Christians. The General Criteria includes the principles of Divine Institution, Monogamy, Heterosexual Relationship. Permanent Bond, Companionship, A New Relationship, Mutual Subservience, Procreation, Maturity, Fidelity, Family Is A Teaching Place, and Honor Among All.

11. Holistic Model: It consists of four interdependent and interrelated dimensions: Physical, Psychological, Sociological, and Spiritual. The significance of this holistic model lies on the distinctive and specific functions which each dimension encompasses, rather than the order or sequence of importance. These dimensions are equally



important and they derive their fulfillment from the context of the holistic model.

12. Institution: It is an organized system of social relationships which embodies certain common values and procedures and meets certain basic needs of the society (Horton, 1976:168).

13. Lineal Family: A direct line of descent from an ancestor (Davies, 1976:410).

14. Monogamy: Marriage of one man to one woman (Broom, 1973:317).

15. Nuclear Family: A married couple and their unmarried children live together. It is also called the elementary family (Radcliffe-Brown, 1950:4-5).

16. Patriarchal: Father dominant or male-headed family (Broom, 1973:317).

17. Patrilineal System: Descent is traced through males only (Radcliffe-Brown, 1950:5).

18. Patrilocal: Residence of husband and wife with the husband's parents, or in their community (Broom, 1973:317-318).

19. Polyandry: Marriage of one woman to two or more men (Broom, 1973:317).

20. Polygamy: Marriage involving two or more partners (Broom, 1973:317).

21. Polygyny: A form of polygamy in which one husband has two or more wives (Horton, 1976:195).

22. Stem Family: Only one child continues to live with the parents after marriage. His or her siblings must leave the family after they marry. This family, therefore, consists of the parents, a son or daughter, and his or her spouse and children. The core dyad is the father and son or father and son-in-law (Broom, 1973:317-318).

23. Structure: It refers to the family organization and the patterns of relationships among family members. It is defined as a combination of interrelated parts forming a whole. A family structure is, therefore, an invisible set of functional demands that organized the ways in which family members interact (Minuchin, 1974:51-52).

24. Specific Criteria: The biblical theology of marriage and family which is given by God to Christian only. It mainly deals with the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, as well as, the issue of divorce and celibacy.

#### C. SOURCES OF DATA

The materials and information of this paper include books, magazines, periodicals, archives and class lectures. These resources come from different places and persons. The places include the libraries of Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland State University, and Temple University. My advisor, Dr. Hohensee, and my friend Y.S. Lai in Western Evangelical Seminary, my reflection group, and my friends Rebecca Wang and Jin Mao-Sung in Taiwan, have all provide useful resources

to me. In addition, some resources are from my wife and my personal collection.

#### D. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of this paper is to reveal and explore the dynamic of Christian marriage and family. The emphasis lies on the holistic model of marriage and family, and the cultural dynamic in establishing an effective and successful family model. It is in this context that the following discussion, exploration, and explanation of the dynamic of Christian marriage and family is set.

The paper will first present the biblical theology of Christian marriage and family. The emphasis will be on the two Criteria, the General and the Specific. The General Criteria which consists of twelve biblical principles is given by God to all mankind. These biblical principles include: Divine Institution, Monogamy, Heterosexual Relationship, Permanent Bond, Companionship, A New Relationship, Mutual Subservience, Procreation, Maturity, Fidelity, Family Is A Teaching Place, and Honor Among All. The Specific Criteria is the biblical principles which is given to the Christian only. It consists of the Husband And Wife Relationship, Parents And Children Relationship, Divorce, and Celibacy. These are specific instructions for the Christian family. The General and Specific Criteria comprise the foundation for all Christian marriage and family. These

criteria are the basic content of the Spiritual Dimension in the holistic model.

In chapter 3, the postulation of the holistic model of Christian marriage and family will be delineated. This holistic model consists of four dimensions: Physical, Psychological, Sociological, and Spiritual. The distinctive function and emphasis of each dimension will be explored. In addition, the interdependence and interrelationship of these dimensions will be described. A discussion of the denial, neglect or disintegration of these dimensions which will cause family crisis is included.

In chapter 4, the focus will be on the cultural dynamic in the Christian family. This section will show that God allows our unique culture to have a part in our establishment of the Christian family. Chinese and American cultures will be used to represent the Eastern and Western cultures respectively. Hebrew culture will also be included in order to distinguish from biblical principle. The emphasis will lie on the dynamic of culture wherein this does not violate biblical principles, one will be able to see its influence on our understanding of the Christian family. Discussion and exploration of the crisis in misinterpretation and misrepresentation of any culture to biblical principles will also be included.

The final chapter will bring all the summaries of each chapter together and then conclude the exploration of this

paper. The dynamic of Christian marriage and family will be seen in the full acceptance and integration of the holistic model, as well as, properly exercise the unique dynamic of each culture to build a cultural based Christian family. Suggestions for further study will be included.

## II. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

In the Bible, twelve general yet fundamental criteria concerning the biblical theology of marriage and family are stated. They are: 1. Divine Institution; 2. Monogamy; 3. Heterosexual Relationship; 4. Permanent Bond; 5. Companionship; 6. A New Relationship; 7. Mutual Subservience; 8. Procreation; 9. Maturity; 10. Fidelity; 11. Family Is A Teaching Place; and 12. Honor Among All.

These general criteria do not only apply to Christian marriages and families. It is a universal criteria and thus it is called the General Criteria. This is God's original will and intention when He established the marriage and family institution.

However, there are four specific criteria which are also mentioned in the Bible. These specific criteria are exhortation and injunction for the context of Christian marriage and family. They are: 1. Husband And Wife Relationship; 2. Parents and Children Relationship; 3. Divorce; and 4. Celibacy. The content and principles of these criteria do not necessarily apply to the non-Christian family.

The sequence of either the general or specific criteria does not necessarily imply their level of importance. This paper does not intend to quote all the related biblical verses but only those which contain fundamental and relevant principles related to marriage and the family.

This chapter will begin with the discussssion of the twelve contents and characteristics of the General Criteria. In the second part of this chapter, Specific Criteria concerning only with the Christian will be scrutinized.

# BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

## A. GENERAL CRITERIA

## B. SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1  
DIVINE  
INSTITUTION

2  
MONOGAMY

3  
HETEROSEXUAL  
RELATIONSHIP

4  
PERMANENT  
BOND

5  
COMPANIONSHIP

6  
A NEW  
RELATIONSHIP

7  
MUTUAL  
SUBSERVIENCE

8  
PROCREATION

9  
MATURITY

10  
FIDELITY

11  
FAMILY IS A  
TEACHING  
PLACE

12  
HONOR AMONG  
ALL

1  
HUSBAND  
AND  
WIFE  
RELATIONSHIP

a. WIFE'S  
RESPONSIBILITY

b. HUSBAND'S  
RESPONSIBILITY

2  
PARENTS  
AND  
CHILDREN  
RELATIONSHIP

a. PARENTS'  
RESPONSIBILITY

b. CHILDREN'S  
RESPONSIBILITY

3  
DIVORCE

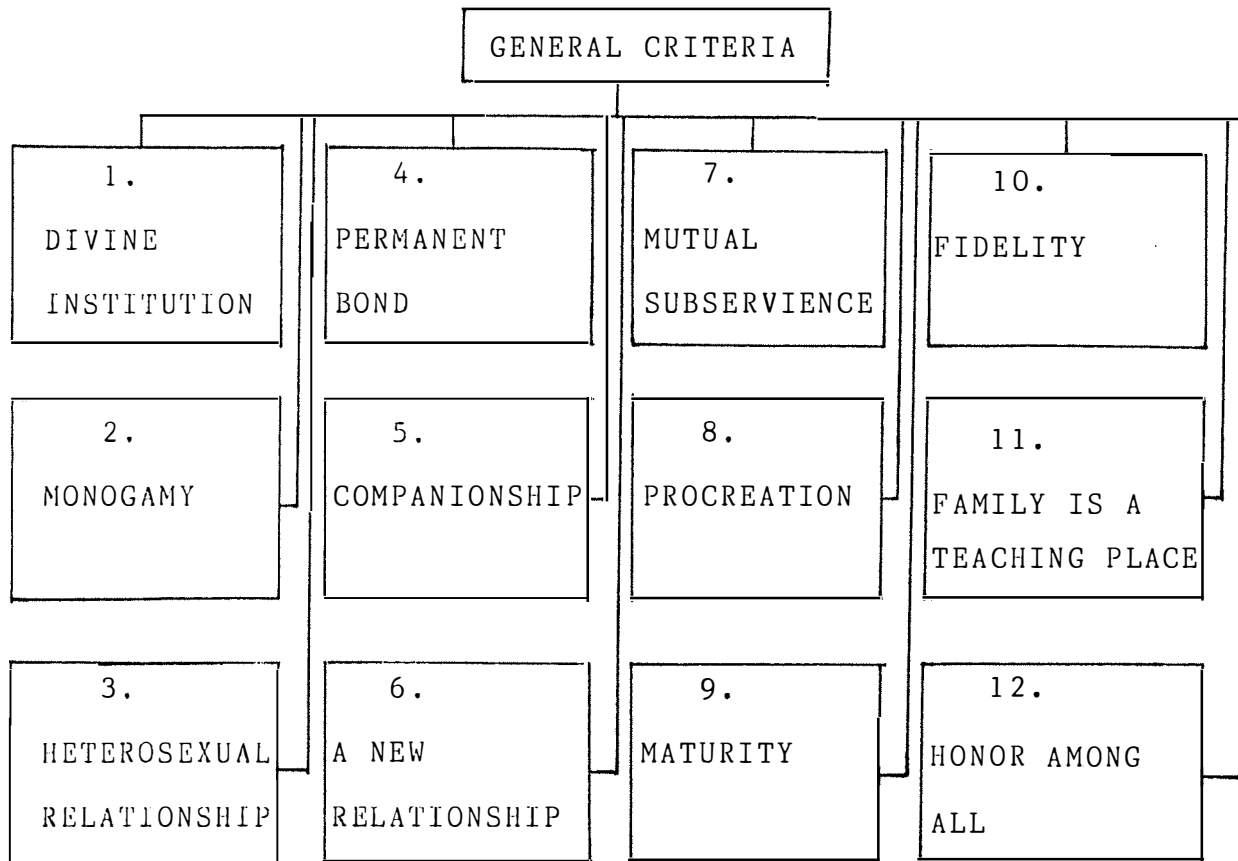
4  
CELIBACY



## A. GENERAL CRITERIA

General Criteria is the basic biblical theology of marriage and family which God gives to all human race, both Christian and non-Christian. They are the most basic principles that need to be considered when one consider to get married. This Criteria manifests God's original will and plan for establishing the institution of marriage and family. It is the foundation for developing a happy, effective, and successful family life. The General Criteria includes, 1. Divine Institution, 2. Monogamy, 3. Heterosexual Relationship, 4. Permanent Bond, 5. Companionship, 6. A New Relationship, 7. Mutual Subservience, 8. Procreation, 9. Maturity, 10. Fidelity, 11. Family Is A Teaching Place, and 12. Honor Among All.

A chart and an outline of the basic biblical verses and themes of the General Criteria are included to provide a better and clearer picture of the General Criteria.

CHART OF GENERAL CRITERIA

OUTLINE OF BASIC BIBLICAL VERSES AND THEMES OF GENERAL CRITERIA

## 1. DIVINE INSTITUTION

Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18-24.

"God creates and establishes the marriage and family system. He determines its inner structure and appoint for it its purpose and goal."

## 2. MONOGAMY

Genesis 1:27; 2:22-24; I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6.

"Monogamy, a family with one husband and one wife pattern, is biblical principle."

## 3. HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

Genesis 1:27; 2:22-24.

"Marriage and family relationship is built upon a heterosexual and not a homosexual relationship."

## 4. PERMANENT BOND

Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:7-9.

"The married couple is joined to become 'One Flesh'.  
What God then has joined, let no man put asunder."

## 5. COMPANIONSHIP

Genesis 1:3, 10, 12, 18, 24, 31; 2:18.

"Marriage is a new and true companionship to human life."

## 6. A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Genesis 2:24.

"Marriage is a new relationship, its central foundation is based upon the husband-wife relationship."

## 7. MUTUAL SUBSERVIENCE

Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 22; I Peter 3:7.

"They are created equal but different for mutual subservience and to complement one another."

## 8. PROCREATION

Genesis 1:28; Psalm 127:3; 128:3.

"The marriage partnership is God's plan for the conceiving of children."

## 9. MATURITY

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:22.

"Adam and Even were 'man' and 'woman'--in their mature stage when they were married."

## 10. FIDELITY

Exodus 20:14, 17; I Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4b; Hosea.

## 11. FAMILY IS A TEACHING PLACE

Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6.

"The family is the basic and yet the fundamental place for the education of the children."

## 12. HONOR AMONG ALL

Hebrews 13:4a.

"Everyone must honor and respect marriage."

## 1. Divine Institution

In the book of Genesis, it records the mighty work of God in creation. The climax of His work comes when He establishes the marriage and family system.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.... So God created man....' The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.... Then the Lord God made a woman.... and He brought her to the man.... For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.'" (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18-24).

God originated the family in the beginning when He created the human race. A family is more than a social institution but a divine institution (McDonald 1975:19). God creates and establishes the marriage and family system and determines its inner structure. He appoints for it its purpose and goal.

## 2. Monogamy

In the origin of marriage, it is God's intention for one man to live with one woman for life. In Genesis it is written, "God created man.... Then the Lord God made a Woman.... For this reason a man will... be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Genesis 1:27; 2:22-24).

Paul in his letters also emphasizes the important biblical theology of monogamy in Christian marriage and family. It is written, "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife.... A deacon must be the husband of but one wife...." (I Timothy 3:2, 12), and "An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife...." (Titus 1:6).

In the Old Testament, monogamy is a challenge to polygamy in the nation of Israel and her neighbors.

### 3. Heterosexual Relationship

God's intention and will for human marriage is a heterosexual rather than a homosexual relationship. He created man and woman to establish the system. It is the biblical principle and teaching that "... in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them... the Lord God made a woman... and He brought her to the man.... For this reason a man will... be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Genesis 1:27, 2:22-24).

### 4. Permanent Bond

The Bible teaches that marriage is basically a total commitment between a man and a woman for life. In Genesis 2:24, "... a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." The expression "one flesh" reveals and stresses the permanent relationship.

Jesus also reaffirms this permanent bond. He says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matthew, 19:5-6). The same emphasis is also recorded in Mark 10:7-9.

The biblical theology of marriage is, therefore, not

basically either a legal or a social contract. It is a commitment that is made before God. This commitment does not endure because of the force of law or the threat of social sanctions but because it is made before God. It is God's will and teaching that marriage is a permanent bond. Divorce is not His will (Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:7-9).

### 5. Companionship

In God's mighty work of creation, positive expressions always occur. For instance, after each work "God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:3, 10, 12, 18, 24, 31). However the first negative expression appears in the second chapter of Genesis when God sees the loneliness of Adam. "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18). Hence, one of the primary purpose of God in the institution of marriage is to provide companionship.

Eve was created to be a companion for Adam and not just a bearer of children. God notes the inadequacy of the solitary life. He brings a new and true companionship to human life. God makes man a sociological being and He sees that man needs the companionship of others of his kind. Marriage provides man and woman with lifetime companionship (Grunlan, 1979:166). This is the supreme human relationship which becomes the path out of loneliness and aloneness into fellowship and companionship.

## 6. A New Relationship

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."  
(Genesis 2:24).

Marriage is a new relationship. The central foundation is built upon the husband-wife relationship. The elements for building this new relationship are by "leaving" the parents. They must be mature and should not depend physically and emotionally on the parents. This relationship is further based of the "uniting" or "cleaving" of the husband and wife. The intimacy is by the fusion of the two into "one flesh".

## 7. Mutual Subservience

"... in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.... I will make a helper suitable for him... the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man...." (Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 22).

In the beginning, God created man and woman, male and female. The essential differences between the two sexes do not mean that one is inferior to the other. However they are created equal but different for mutual subservience and to complement one another.

The apostle Peter also affirms this coequality and complementariness when he speaks of male and female, husband and wife, as joint-heirs of the grace of life (I Peter 3:7).

Saint Augustine remarks that God does not take a bone



from Adam's head from which to create Eve that she may be above him. He also does not take a bone from his foot that she may be beneath him. Nevertheless He takes a rib from his side that she may be beside him (McDonald, 1975:19).

Hence, the husband and wife relationship is intended to be at its best one of mutual subservience with love and respect. Neither one shall dominate the other. They must adjust to the other and to assert oneself. They need to support one another and to pursue perfect union of mind and full communion of life. This is why when expressing the mutual subservience and the closeness of their union, Adam declared, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh...." (Genesis 2:23).

#### 8. Procreation

God created man and woman and endowed them with complementary sexual drives. In this sexual relationship they fully express their love for one another. Meanwhile children are conceived during the act of love in sexual relationship. God blessed this relationship and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28).

In Psalm, the psalmists expressed this divine blessing by saying, "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him." (Psalm 127:3), "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table." (Psalm 128:3).

The marriage partnership is God's plan for the conceiving and nurturing of children.

#### 9. Maturity

"Let us make man in our image.... God created man in His own image.... Then the Lord God made a woman...." (Genesis 1:26, 27, 2:22).

The Bible stated that when God joined Adam and Eve in the married life, they were "man" and "woman". Physically and emotionally they were in a mature stage and they were able to handle the responsibility and work that God gave to them. That is, ".... Ruled over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:28b).

The biblical theology of marriage is that the couple must reach a mature stage in order to get married.

#### 10. Fidelity

Sex is given by God. God intends for the husband and wife to express their love and sex within the marriage relationship. Husband and wife can only receive legitimate sexual satisfaction from the marriage partner.

Sexual sins are very disruptive to family life. In the Old Testament two of the Ten Commandments are prohibitions against such sins. In the seventh commandment it is written, "You shall not commit adultery." In part of the tenth commandment, it is the warning, "You shall not covet your neighbor's

wife." (Exodus 20:14, 17).

In the book of Hosea, the prophet Hosea used the relationship between God and Israel to stress the fidelity to one's partner in marriage. God will have no other wife but Israel, just as Israel is to have no other husband but Jehovah.

Paul in his letter to Corinthians also emphasized the importance of fidelity.

"The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife." (Corinthians 7:3-5).

In Hebrews we are instructed to keep the marriage bed pure, "... for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." (Hebrews 13:4b).

Premarital, extramarital, and postmarital sex is not permitted. Sexual relation can only occur within the marriage partners.

## II. Family Is A Teaching Place

The married couple is not only to conceive but also to nurture and teach their children. The family unit is the first and basic teaching place. It is the major responsibility for the family to teach their children to know God and to guide them in the proper and right way. In Deuteronomy, it is stated, "... the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children...."

(Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

Again, it is stressed in Proverbs, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6).

The family is the basic and important place for the education of the children.

## 12. Honor Among All

"Marriage should be honored by all...." (Hebrews 13:4a).

Marriage originated by God and has His divine approval and blessing. It is an important human relationship. Everyone must honor and respect marriage.

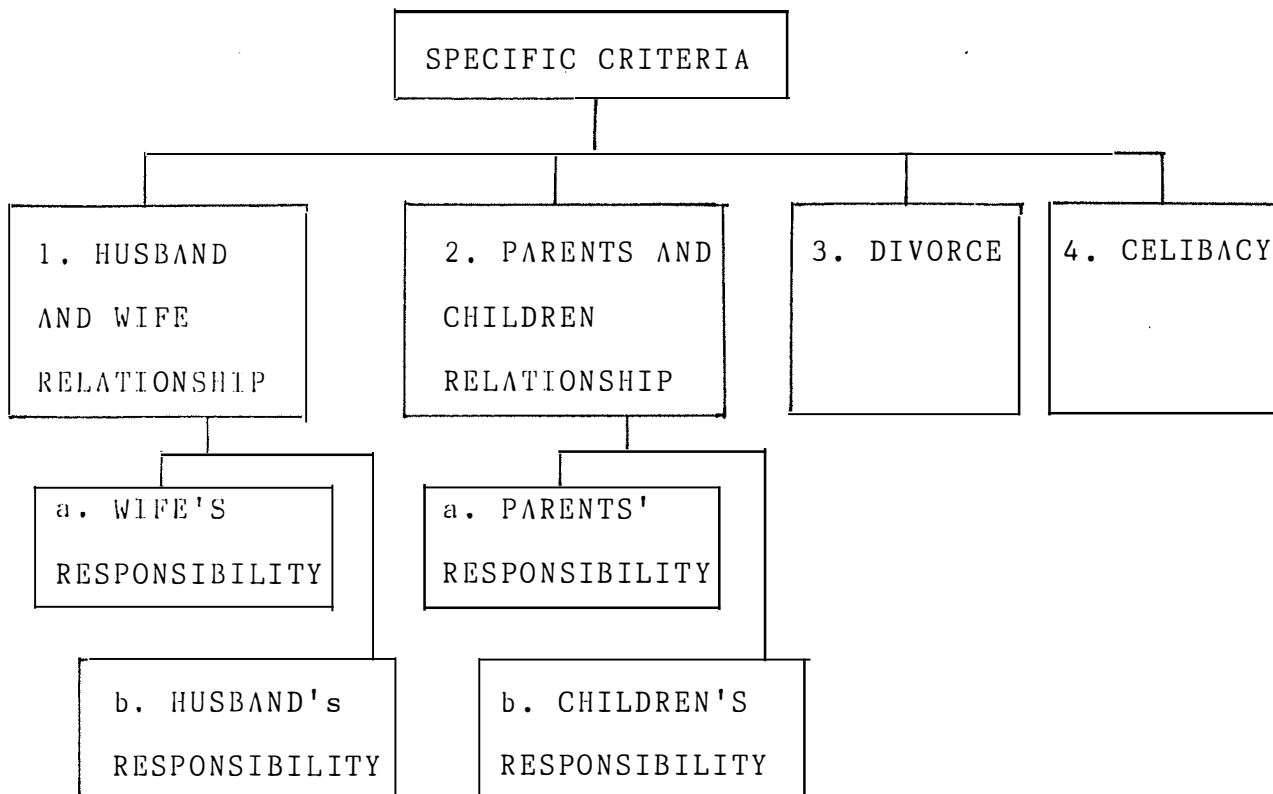
In the General Criteria, each of the twelve elements has its own distinctive emphasis and characteristics. Although each of these criteria has its unique function, they group together to form the foundation of marriage and family for all human being. A Christian who believe in God and His Words must even hold deeper and stronger in trusting and depending on this General Criteria for building his or her family life.

## B. SPECIFIC CRITERIA

Specific Criteria is the basic biblical theology of marriage and family which God gives to Christian only. This Criteria is the exhortation and guideline dealing with a particular issue and question of family life. The Specific Criteria includes, 1. Husband and Wife Relationship, 2. Parents and Children Relationship, 3. Divorce, and 4. Celibacy.

This Criteria does not depend mainly on the way or method in resolving any difficulty or problem in family relationship. It emphasizes the essence of criteria, for instance, the responsibility of husband, wife, parents, and children. In the General Criteria, it is stressed that marriage is a permanent bond. However, the issue of divorce is discussed because more specific guideline and teaching are stated for the Christian only. The trouble and question of celibacy concerning the Christian will also be explored. The Bible states the condition and criteria for making the decision of celibacy.

A chart and an outline of the basic biblical verses of the Specific Criteria are included here in order to provide a clearer picture of the Specific Criteria.

CHART OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA

OUTLINE OF BASIC BIBLICAL VERSES OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA

## 1. HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP

I Corinthians 7:3, 10; 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-30; Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 2:4; I Peter 3:2, 7.

## a. WIFE RESPONSIBILITIES

I Corinthians 7:3, 10; Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18-21; Titus 2:4; I Peter 3:2, 4.

## b. HUSBAND RESPONSIBILITY

I Corinthians 7:3; 11:3; Ephesians 5:25-30; Colossians 3:19; I Peter 3:7.

## 2. PARENTS AND CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP

Exodus 20:12; 21:17; Deuteronomy 5:16; 6:1-7; 21:18-20; Psalm 78:3-7; Proverbs 13:24; 17:6; 23:13, 14, 22; 29:15, 17; 22:6; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21; Titus 2:4; Hebrews 12:7-10.

## a. PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY

Deuteronomy 6:1-7; Psalm 78:3-7; Proverbs 13:24; 23:13, 14; 29:15, 17; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21; Titus 2:4; Hebrews 12:7-10.

## b. CHILDREN RESPONSIBILITY

Exodus 20:12; 21:17; Deuteronomy 21:18-20; Proverbs 23:22; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20.

## 3. DIVORCE

Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 7:15.

#### 4. CELIBACY

Genesis 1:28; Leviticus 21:16-21; Matthew 19:10-12.



## 1. Husband and Wife Relationship

According to the General Criteria, the most profound and fundamental biblical theology of the husband/wife relationship are mutual subservience (Genesis 1:27; 2:18; 22) and fidelity (Exodus 20:14, 17; Hebrews 13:4b). However, in the New Testament epistles there are Special Criteria given concerning this relationship between a husband and wife.

### a. Wife Responsibility

Paul in his letters mentioned, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." (Ephesians 5:22-24). The same message also appeared in his letter to Colossians (Colossians 3:18-21). The verb "submit" in Ephesians 5:22 is assumed from the previous verse because no verb appears in this verse in the original text. It should be noted that Paul's exhortation is to the Christian wife. In Greek, the word submission, *ὑποτάσσεσθε*, (Marshall, 1970:773, 798) is in middle voice. It shows that the submission is to be voluntary. In submission, the wives are not inferior to her husbands or that all wives should be subject to husbands. The wives's submission is never to be forced on her by demanding husbands. It is

the result of their husbands' unselfish love. Hence they are willing and gladly to defer and recognize their husbands leadership position in the family. In Paul's words, this submission is said to be "fitting in the Lord" which indicates that it is a proper Christian order (Vaughan, 1979:218). In his letter to Titus, the admonition to the Christian wife is to be a loving wife to her husband and a caring mother to her children (Titus 2:4).

In the apostle Peter's letter, he exhorts the Christian wife to have the characteristics of purity and reverence. These reflect the inner quality and behavior. They will even win over the non-Christian husband (I Peter 3:2).

Hence a Christian wife must show respect and reverence to her husband through voluntary submission and also give him all that is his right as a married man (I Corinthians 7:3). She must not separate from or divorce her husband (I Corinthians 7:10).

#### b. Husband Responsibility

In the Greco-Roman society and even among the Jews it is recognized that wives have obligations to their husbands, but not vice versa. They are treated as property! However Paul in his letters introduces a revolutionary Christian approach to marriage.

In Ephesians 5:25-30 and Colossians 3:19, Paul emphasizes a reciprocal duty of Christian husbands. They must love their

wives. Paul chooses the Greek word, ἀγαπᾶτε , to reveal the highest and distinctively Christian word for loving. It is more than a affection or romantic attachment but rather a caring love. It is a deliberate attitude of mind that concerns itself with the well-being of the one loved. Self-devotion, not self-satisfaction, is this dominant trait (Vaughan, 1979:218). This love is a sacrificial and unconditioned love just as Christ loved and died for the church (Ephesians 5:25b).

Paul further illustrates the intimate relationship between a husband and wife in that they are fused into a single entity. Hence a husband loving his wife is in effect loving himself. She must not be treated as a piece of property, but to be regarded as an extension of a man's own personality and so part of himself (Wood, 1979:77). As a head of the family (I Corinthians 11:3), the husband must not merely lead and provide but shows concern and love to his wife. In Colossians 3:19, Paul points out the practical implication of such love, "do not be harsh with them." It is the same principle that Peter exhorts the husband to be thoughtful, considerate, and understanding. He must honor his wife (I Peter 3:7). Paul also urges the husband to respect and give the wife all that are her rights as a married woman (I Corinthians 7:3) and must not divorce her (I Corinthians 7:11).

## 2. Parents and Children Relationship

Under the General Criteria of the parents and children relationship, children are the product of a parents' act of love in sexual relationship. Children are the blessing (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 127:3-5; 128:3; Proverbs 17:6; 23:22). However, parents are not only to conceive children but they also have the responsibility to nurture them (Proverbs 22:6). Children are taught to respect and obey their parents (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16), and the family is the basic and fundamental teaching place for the education of the children (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6).

More precise criteria have been given to the Christian family concerning this relationship. Both the parents' and children's responsibility are stated in the Old and New Testaments.

### a. Parents Responsibility

Parents are not only providers of material needs to their children, they must also give and provide teaching, guidances and discipline. According to the Bible, the teaching, training, and discipline responsibilities of Christian parents are based on God's Words.

"These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe... so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands... be careful to obey so that it may go well with you.... Hear... The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that

I give you today are to be upon your hearts.  
Impress them on your children...." (Deuteronomy  
6:1-7).

Jesus confirms this criterion of using God's Words as the foundation of teaching in New Testament time when He says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).

In Psalm 78, it is also written,

"... things we have heard and known, things our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done... which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands." (Psalm 78:3-7).

Teaching, training and discipline are the responsibilities of the parents (Proverbs 13:24; 23:13, 14; 29:15, 17; Hebrews 12:7-10). Nevertheless the parents must use love and understanding to fulfill this responsibility. Paul in his letters exhorts Christian parents that wife is to be loving mother (Titus 2:4) and husband is to be an understanding father to their children (Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21).

Christian parents must heed the admonition that to train up their children in the way they should go and according to their needs in different developmental stages (Proverbs 22:6). Family discipline and home training are required but must be through loving attitude. Teaching children the parents'

faith is the chief obligations. God's Words must be the standard and purpose of instruction so that the children will know, obey and love the Lord their God.

#### b. Children's Responsibility

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'--which is the first commandment with a promise--that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3).

"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." (Colossians 3:20).

In these letters, Paul's injunction to children consists of two things: obedience and honor. However, it is important to recognize that Paul sets this exhortation in a Christian family context. He is dealing with the Christian home and presupposes Christian attitudes on the part of parents, thus his injunction "in the Lord" and "pleases the Lord." It is only in the Christian family that both the parents and children are under the authority of the living Christ and "in the Lord."

Basically, the verb "obey" ὑπακούετε (Marshall, 1970: 798) means "to listen to," hence, "to follow, obey, be subject to, or to hear." (Carter, 1965:504). Therefore, it implies a readiness to hear and carry out the instructions of the parents. In addition, the verb is in the present tense, indicating that such action is to be habituated.

(Gaebelein, 1979:218).

The obedience of children to their parents is in the Lord. It is not based upon arbitrary power and unjust and cruel requirements of the Roman "Patria Potestas" (Carter, 1965:429-430). It is based upon a higher law to which the parents themselves are subjected to. This requirement is "in the Lord."

This obedience is "right" (Colossians 3:20) because it is of moral obligation and "Pleases the Lord" (Colossians 3:20) for it is a part of the divine law. Paul, therefore, quotes the fifth commandment to show that the specific "righteousness" required of children is obedience to their parents.

Honor means high respect, as for worth, merit, or rank, credit or reputation for behavior that is becoming or worthy (Carter, 1965:430). Honor the parents is the teaching of the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12). It is also accompanied by severe sanctions on those who do not honor and obey their parents (Exodus 21:17; Deuteronomy 21:18-20). Paul reveals that the basis of parental obedience is parental respect. However, the honor which the children give to their parents is usually to be in proportion to that which is due the parents, by reason of the respect they have earned by their lives.

Parental honor is the necessary foundation for filial obedience. It is the virtue of the children and the basic

responsibility of Children in the Christian family.

Obedience and honoring include the responsibility of caring and respecting the parents. The children must obey and honor them in their whole life. They must not despise their parents even when they are old (Proverbs 23:22).

### 3. DIVORCE

According to the general biblical criteria of marriage, God's original plan for marriage is a permanent bond (Genesis 2:24). It is a permanent relationship between husband and wife.

In the synoptic Gospels of Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:1-12, and Luke 16:18, Jesus reaffirms the permanent bond of marriage institution. He reveals that God's primary purpose is to establish a stable family life and divorce is no part of that purpose.

The incidence which occurred in Matthew 19:3-6, and Mark 10:1-12, and Luke 16:18 is mainly due to the New Testament background. Mark reveals the situation in the Gentile society where a Roman wife can divorce her husband (Buttrick, 1951:481). Matthew, who is thinking of the Jewish background, reveals the two famous divinity and philosophical schools among the Jews concerning the issue of divorce. According to the school of Shammai, a man cannot legally divorce his wife except for whoredom. However, the school of Hillel teaches that a man may put away his wife for a multitude of other causes, when she is no longer



favorable in his eyes, for instance when he sees any other woman that pleases him better (Clarke, n.d. :188). All the Jewish groups agree that the male is dominant. The common practice allows a man to give his wife a certificate of divorce and so to divorce her. The content of Matthew and Mark, together with Luke is closely related to Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes which is recorded in Matthew 5:31 concerning the topic of divorce. There is evidence showing that the early Christians, like Jews, assume that a divorce implies the right to contract a new marriage (Buttrick, 1951:481).

Jesus' answer to the question of divorce is that God had made marriage a sacred unity which must not be broken. The unity of man and woman in marriage is a permanent bond. It is a life long and holy bond of marriage. Jesus refuses to accomodate his teaching to any civil law, school, custom and culture which are against God's purpose in this permanent bond. His answer to the question that Moses commanded that a man could divorce his wife with a certificate of divorce is simply that Moses had not commanded it and ought not to be regarded as patron of the practice. Moses had only suffered it, as an unwilling concession because the people were too hard of heart to obey God's law and intent (Matthew 19:8; Mark 10:5). Moses perceived that if divorce were not permitted, in many cases, the women would be exposed to great hardships through the cruelty of their husbands (Clarke, n.d.:

188).

The only exception and permissibility which Jesus stated is "except for marital unfaithfulness" (Matthew 5:31; 19:8). Unfaithfulness and lack of fidelity is the main cause and tragedy which leads to divorce. It is because the general biblical criteria of Fidelity between the couple is violated. Other than this reason, whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery and whoever marries a divorced woman also commits adultery (Matthew 5:31; 19:8; Mark 10:10, 11; Luke 16:18).

Paul in his letter to Corinthians reveals another situation which permits divorce. It applies to the family in which only one of the partners is Christian. Paul's exhortation is, "But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace." (I Corinthians 7:15). However, it is important to realize that Paul's emphasis is on the establishment of a peaceful and loving family which is according to God's original purpose, rather than to divorce. God created man and woman to be complementary. They form a unity of self more marvelous than the separate unity of either man or woman. It is from that unity that come the joy, peace, love and duty of a Christian family. Divorce is therefore not His original plan for marriage and family and it is even applied more to a Christian marriage and family which accepts Him as the Lord and God and obeys

His command.

#### 4. CELIBACY

According to the main stream of Judaism, celibacy is regarded as an abnormal state, marriage is not merely permitted but commanded by God (Genesis 1:28). The Old Testament forbids eunuchs to act as priests (Leviticus 21:16-21). Religious celibacy is known only among minority groups such as the Essenes.

In Matthew 19:10-12, Jesus distinguishes between three groups of celibates. In verse 12, "For some are eunuchs because they were born that way...." This first group is disabled by birth. The second group is "made that way by men...." For instance the male guardians of harems, are cruelly made eunuchs by the act of rulers (Buttrick, 1951: 481-482). There is a third group "... renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." This last group mortifies the flesh by self-discipline for the kingdom of God. In the early disciples, because they fear the distractions of the flesh and the world, or because they do not wish to involve a wife and children in persecutions that they themselves are ready to face, they choose this life of self-denial (Buttrick, 1951:482). However Jesus does not imply that this is the norm for all believers or Christian workers. Christians are not obligated to forego marriage in order to do the will of God.

In order to establish a happy and successful marriage and family, a Christian should concern both the General and Specific Criteria. The Specific Criteria provides additional detail information and principles for dealing and resolving with specific issue and problem in family life. In addition, biblical exhortation and guideline for deciding not to marry and establishing a family is revealed and discussed.

### III. THE HOLISTIC MODEL OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Marriage and family can be either the most happy, mediocre or unhappy experience of all life. No relationship is more personal and intimate than marriage and family; and at the same time, no other relationship is so complicated as these. In a Christian marriage and family, the attainment, happiness and satisfactory results are depended on the comprehension and awareness of the holistic model.

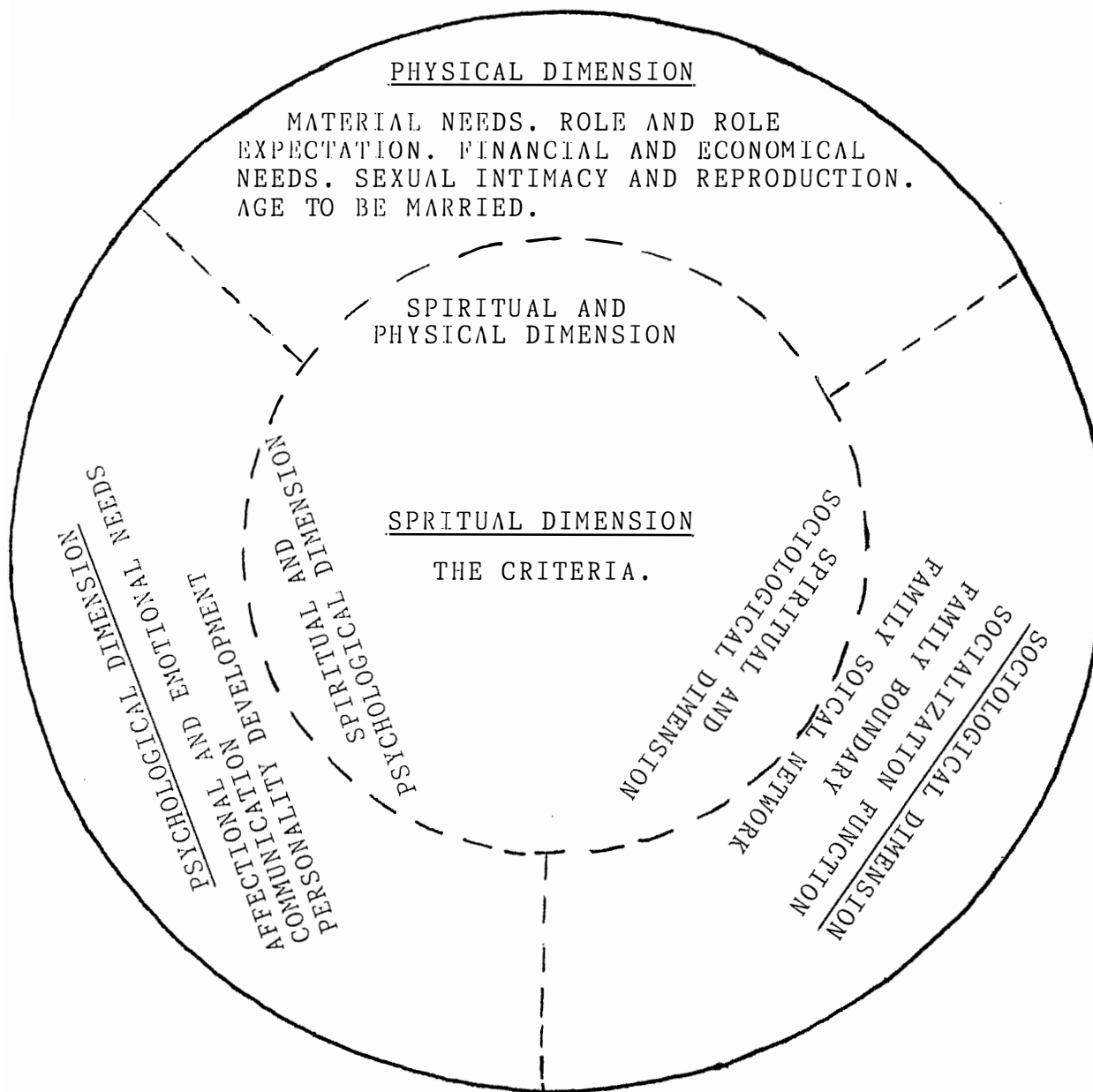
The holistic model of Christian marriage and family consists of four dimensions, Physical, Psychological, Sociological, and Spiritual. It is important to acknowledge that this holistic model does not imply and suggest any sequence or level of importance among the dimensions. Instead, it reveals the distinctive and specific characteristics and emphasis of each dimension. In addition the uniqueness of the holistic model transcends the sum of the dimensions. The meaning and function of each dimension is never complete except in relation to the whole model. That is, the dimensions have no independent existence outside the holistic model in which they function. They derive their meaning and significance from the context of this holistic model in which they operate. The Spiritual Dimension is the core and the most fundamental dimension but its dynamic is manifested and interrelated with the other dimensions. In essence, the holistic model warns that it is inappropriate

to segregate its dimensions. However, this position does not infer that analysis of the dimensions is unimportant. It implies that the best approach is to analyze in terms of their emphasis and functions, and their interaction, interrelation and overlapping of dimensions in the family system. Hence a Christian marriage and family is an integrated and coherent entity that is more than the mere composite of dimensions. The interaction and interdependence among the dimensions is an prominent function of homeostatis. It is the dynamic balance of the Christian family. Homeostatic maintenance will regulate the family transactions and development.

In the Physical Dimension, the specific emphasis and function are the material needs, the role and role expectations, the financial and economical needs, the sexual intimacy and reproduction, and the age to be married. Psychological Dimension stresses the significance of affectional and emotional needs, communication, and the personality development. In the Sociological Dimension, the prominent characteristics include the socialization function, the family boundary, and the family social network. The Spiritual Dimension encompasses the two important Criteria, the General and the Specific, of the biblical theology of marriage and family. In addition, this dimension discloses the important relation of these two Criteria in the physical, psychological, and sociological dimension.

In the final section, the discussion and exploration will concentrate on the crisis facing Christian marriage and family. Many Christian marriages and families in trouble refuse to face the fact or seek help. The usual behavior is to keep hoping for miracles that will make a bad marriage better. The emphasis of the emergence of the crisis is mainly due to the denying and neglecting, as well as, the disintegrating, fragmentating, and disorganizing of these dimensions.

THE HOLISTIC MODEL OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY



----- The dotted lines show that each dimension is not totally isolated or segregated from the others. These dimensions are interdependent and interrelated to one another.



## A. PHYSICAL DIMENSION

A family is sometimes characterized as an organism (Ackerman, 1958:17). The connotations of the term "organism" instantaneously suggest the physical or biological needs of a family. The physical dimension of a family includes the material needs; the role and role expectations; the financial and economical needs; the sexual intimacy and reproduction; and the consideration of the age to be married. It is the most basic and obvious dimension for the survival of a family. It must not be ignored, despised, or neglected.

### 1. Material Needs

The material needs of a family include the provision of food, shelter, clothing, and protection. The list of material needs depend on how specific one wants to get. However, a basic fulfillment and satisfaction of these needs must be maintained. The members of a family are bound by mutual interdependency for the provision of their material needs. The gratification of these needs is essential for the family to be established and to survive.

### 2. Role and Role Expectations

Marriage and family roles interpretations and expectations of the married couples are directly related to their success in finding, maintaining, and progressing their happy family. In entering a family, everyone inherits and ascribes several statuses, for instances, age, sex, birth order, racial-ethnic group, social class, and so on (Horton,

1976:198). It is important for the couples to first understand, accept, and fulfill their new roles and expectations in their marriage and family. They should decide the division of labor, authority, and responsibility in the family. For instance, who should take the role of breadwinner, the responsibility of taking care and discipline of the children, and the role of a working wife. They must decide the pattern of marriage which they want to establish, for instance, the consideration of having either the monogamy-marriage of one man to one woman; the polygamy-marriage involving two or more partners; the polygyny-marriage of one man to two or more women; the polyandry-marriage of one woman to two or more men (Broom, 1973:317-318); the "alternative family forms" of nonmarital cohabitation, the group marriage, the open-which extramarital affairs are permitted to each; or the swinging-marriage which emphasize on mutual temporary sex exchanges without emotional commitment (Horton, 1976:210-211). In addition, bisexual, homosexual or heterosexual cohabitation is also part of the consideration in the decision of the pattern of marriage and family.

The roles and role expectations will be further influenced by the type of family the couple selects. The different types of family include the extended family, patrilineal extended family, matrilineal extended family, the stem family, and the nuclear family. They should also be aware of the kind of family authority they are willing to adopt,

such as the patriarchal-male headed family; the matriarchal-female headed family; or neither of them.

### 3. Financial and Economical Needs

In an agricultural society, a family is the basic economic unit. The members of a family work together as a team and share jointly in their produce. Today, the economic functions of a family have changed greatly in an industrial society. A family is no longer united by shared work, instead its members work separately. However, it is still an important and major task for the couple to know how to prepare, work out, decide and handle their budget and money together. Financial management is an essential responsibility in a family. Successful financial management will help to increase the efficiency and benefit of the family.

### 4. Sexual Intimacy and Reproduction

The family is the principal institution through which societies organize and regulate the satisfaction of sexual desires. Every society expects that sexual intercourse will only occur between persons whom their institutional norms define as legitimately accessible to each other. Although some societies provide some alternative sexual outlets, yet no society is entirely promiscuous (Horton, 1976:196). The acknowledgement of a proper attitude toward sexual intimacy is necessary.

During the act of sexual intercourse between a couple, a child is conceived. Although the reproduction function

of a family has declined in importance, nevertheless, every society still depends primarily upon the family for the business of producing children. Other arrangements are theoretically possible but no society has established a set of norms for providing children except as part of a family (Horton, 1976:197-203). Reproduction, family planning, and child rearing attitudes, capacities, and responsibility are important consideration in building a family. Every family perpetuates itself through the procreation and the protection of the young.

#### 5. Age To Be Married

In order to achieve and reach the material needs, the marriage and family roles and expectations, the ability and responsibility to manage financial and economical needs, and to have sexual intimacy and reproduction, the basic requirement and consideration is that the married couple must first arrive at a mature stage of development. The mature stage includes both physical and psychological development. At this stage they should be responsible and independent enough to support their newly constructed and established marriage and family.

The age to be married is not easily defined and classified. However, the emphasis is on the mature stage of development. For instance, according to Erik Erikson, the couples should have achieved the stage of Identity vs. Role Confusion and be ready to move toward the selection of a mate, the stage

of Intimacy vs. Isolation. It is the age that moves one from adolescence to young adulthood. Otherwise, marrying, forming a family, and having a child can delay and complicate the movement toward one's adult development (Cirese, 1977:51-54; Varon, 1977:154-155).

The physical dimension reveals the basic needs have been achieved in order for a couple to begin their family. However, it must be acknowledged that although the physical dimension is the most basic dimension, it does not imply that it can be totally and completely achieved once for all. As the family grows and develops, different levels and perspectives of the physical needs will emerge.

## B. PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

In the psychological dimension, the members of a family are bound together and concerned with mutual interdependence, companionship, family interaction and adjustment. These factors can be vividly seen and revealed in three categories.

### 1. Affectional and Emotional Needs

Economically, the members of a family are bound by mutual interdependence for the provision of their material needs. However, psychologically, they are bound by mutual interdependence for the satisfaction of their respective emotional and affectional needs (Ackerman, 1958:16).

A family can help its members to recognize and develop their capacity for sensitivity to each other's needs. It will nurture the members to give and receive affection, warmth, care, love, and understanding to and from each other, as well as, the relatives, friends, and those outside the immediate family circle. It can also help the members to cope and adjust to crisis and stress, such as, the death of a loved one, sickness, and unemployment. It gives the members a feeling of security, the sense that the family is behind them with moral and other support, and providing them with encouragement in their various endeavors. This includes the giving of sufficient encouragement, genuine and realistic commendation, praise, and recognition between the husband and wife, parents and children, as well as, to each other (Otto, 1972:89).

Hence, the family is an important place and haven in which the members can give each other mutual emotional support and accomodation, and receive the affectional and emotional needs.

## 2. Communication

Family interaction is the process of communication. When difficulties occur in a marriage and family, communication is usually involved. In a family, the establishment of commitment is a road to intimacy. This intimacy is approached by communicating, interacting and disclosing oneself to others. When a partner reveals himself to another, it has subtle effects on the way each of them defined the relationship (Rubin, 1973:180). The ability of the members to communicate in depth with each other, to express both a wide range of emotions and feelings, as well as, communicate ideas, concepts, beliefs, and values is a family dynamic. Communication is expected to be deep and extensive. Husband and wife are companions who confide in each other on the basis of mutual trust and openness. The same ideal applies to the relations between parents and children (Broom, 1973: 317).

Closely related to in-depth communication is the openness of communication, or the freedom to share and talk about any and all matters of concern to family members. It includes self-disclosure, verbal expressions, and sensitive listening. It must be acknowledged that self-disclosure rarely moves

ahead in great leaps. It is often gradual and hardly noticed. A social psychologist has called attention to the fact that in the communication process the greater the self-disclosure, the greater the risk to the individual. Too much or too little of self-disclosure are inappropriate. To be a hallmark of psychological health or interpersonal competence, a person's disclosure must be appropriate to the particular situation and relationship in which it occurs. The appropriateness of disclosures are important in the development of intimate relationships over long periods of time (Rubin, 1973:162-180).

Norman Wright gives several types of communication patterns which are productive in the marital relationship. However, he also depicts several factors which hinder communication. For instance, the person who never learned to allow others to talk probably dominates the conversation with his spouse; the referent conditions where the quarreling will be about one area of the marriage while the conflict stems from another area altogether; and the structural deficits which involve the absence of conditions, such as, the lack of time, in creating positive communication (Wright, 1981:284-286).

The positive consequence and success of family interaction and communication are based on mutual respect, trust, caring and understanding. When family members recognize, respect, and treat each other as individuals rather than



stereotypes or categories, there you have a dynamic relationship. The intimate and committed relationship between the members of the family are grounded in interhuman interaction and communication (Stewart, 1977:280-292). Martin Buber exhorts this kind of interaction and communication in his "I-Thou" theory,

Love does not cling to an I, as if the Thou were merely its "content" or object; it is between I and Thou. Whoever does not know this... does not know love, even if he should ascribe to it the feelings that he lives through, experiences, enjoys, and expresses (Buber, 1970:66).

In contemporary society which provides few durable personal relationship for an individual (Bier, 1965:43-44), the individual will rely on and expect to have and receive his greatest satisfactions of interpersonal interaction and communication from his family life.

### 3. Personality Development

The word "personality" is derived from the Latin persona. Originally, It denotes the masks wore by theatrical players in ancient Greek dramas. Eventually, the term comes to encompass the actor's role as well. Thus, the initial conception of personality is that of a superficial social image that an individual adopts in playing life roles (Hjelle, 1976:3). Today, different theories in psychology define personality differently. However, the general definition which is accepted is "those enduring characteristics of the person that are significant for interpersonal behavior." (Hall, 1983:321).

According to personality theories, such as psychoanalytic, behavioristic, cognitive, traits, psychosocial, humanistic, and phenomenological, the family has been regarded as an important and earliest place for the development of personality (Hjelle, 1976:4-20). For instance, during infancy, personality development centers around attachment, the bond between an infant and her or his family. A family which provides positive and secure attachment will motivate the baby to interact freely with others and to explore the world (Hall, 1983:321-342, 409-453). The family provides motivation, model, reinforcement, punishment in helping the development of personality. The ability of family members to relate, interact and imitate each other, fosters an on-going growth and maturation, this is considered a psychological dynamic. Implicit is the concept that interpersonal relationships in a family are the major matrix of personality growth and that the apex of creativity in interpersonal relationships is to stimulate and encourage other persons to grow and make use of their potential (Otto, 1972:90). In short, it is in the psychological dynamic that the family becomes a growth matrix for depicting and fostering the development of the self-actualizing processes and integrating human personality in its members (Wolman, 1973:303).

Accordingly, in addition to love and companionship, marriage and family are expected to provide personality satisfactions for the individual. They are expected to

fulfill basic psychological needs for security, understanding, recognition, as well as, establishing and maintaining emotional and personality stability. It is from the members of the family that one should expect to receive support and encouragement when needed, to receive praise when required, and to confide any problem. In the impersonal society of today, it is in the marital and family relationship where one can achieve personal satisfaction (Hier, 1965:48-49).

Today, most of the family counseling, family therapy, family encounter programs, family enrichment programs, family seminars, retreats, magazines, assessment and inventory are dealing and concentrating of the psychological dimension of the family. Examples of these include: the Friends Marriage Encounter, the Family Enrichment by Nasarene Church, the Love Attitude Inventory (Knox, 1971), and the Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1978). Their emphasis and concern is to provide information, new technique and skill to deepen and to improve family, love, affection, communication, and personality growth. They believe that the psychological dimension contains the most important factors which affect the establishment, maintenance, and progression of a harmonious marriage and family.

### C. SOCIOLOGICAL DIMENSION

Every complex society encompasses five important institutions. They are the family, religion, government, education and business (or economic) institutions. Among these institutions, the family institution is the most basic to all social life. In fact, in the most primitive societies, the family is considered as the only institution (Horton, 1976:168-177, 191). Accordingly, the family is the basic social system by which the individuals relate to each other by reason of strong reciprocal affections and loyalties and comprising a permanent household. It is an important medium for the transmission of societal values (Minuchin, 1974:51-52).

In the sociological dimension of a family, the most prominent elements and characteristics are the family socialization function, the family boundary, and the family social network.

#### 1. Socialization Function

All societies depend primarily upon the family for the socialization of children into adults who can function successfully in the societies. It is in a family that one first inherits and ascribes social statuses, such as the racial-ethnic group, social and economical classes. Although school and peer group unquestionably fill important socializing functions, the family still remains the principal socializing agency. The family is the primary group and

determinant of child's socialization (Horton, 1976:197-205). It is here where the training toward integration into social roles and acceptance of social responsibility, as well as, the cultivation of learning and the support for individual creativity and initiative take place (Ackerman, 1958:19).

Many families continue to prepare children to retain the class status of the family. There are families which seek to prepare their children for social mobility by giving their children the kind of ambitions, attitudes, and habits which prompt them to struggle for a higher class status and to fill it successfully. This kind of socialization is known as "anticipatory socialization" for it is an effort to socialize children for a class status which it is hoped they will someday achieve. Studies reveal that it is the kind of home the parents provide, rather than the question such as a working or nonworking mother, which sets the important variables that influence the socialization of their children (Horton, 1976:205-206).

## 2. Family Boundary

In a family system, the chief characteristic of a family relationship and interaction is that it is a continuous interchange not only within the system but also across the family boundary between the inner environment and the outer environment (Kantor, 1975:222). Every family establishes boundaries for itself. According to Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark, the family boundaries refer to the boundaries

between the family and the larger world formed by "invisible loyalties" such as family values (Boszormeny-Nagy, 1973:84). Minuchin uses boundaries within family sub-systems in clinical assessment of family functioning. He stresses that for proper family functioning, the boundaries of subsystems must be clear (Minuchin, 1974:54). However, Kantor and Lehr view family boundary as a distance-regulation or space-bounding issue (Kantor, 1975:249). In general, a family boundary is a safety zone in which its members can feel safe when interacting with the exterior space, community and other institutions. It is more or less constraining and more or less permeable to relationships and experiences defined as extrafamilial (Handel, 1972:187-188).

Family boundary can be constructed as an actual physical boundary, for instance, backyard, driveway, sidewalk, courtyard, or even street. In addition, there is also a psychological boundary, such as the community's view of the family, the family's view of the world outside, and the family's means of regulating access to and from this outer environment and world. The family boundary reveals the family's relationship with its community, because within the safety zone, a regulation of the distances between the members and the outsiders take place. The community and other institutions learn how close they can come to a family without violating the family's sense of territory. The members of the family also learn how far they can go outside the perimeter into

the world and still feel safe and also being protected by the family (Kantor, 1975:41-42). Hence, the family boundary serves as a safety zone, the protection of property, privacy, and the relationships and interaction among family members and their environment.

Every family can adopt or create different boundaries in this interaction. Kantor and Lehr delineate three different boundaries according to three different family systems, that is, closed, open and random (Kantor, 1975:116-142). A family which adopts the closed-type system, the boundary and interaction is carried out by those designated as authorities by the family in such a way that the family's discrete space remains distinct and apart from the larger community space. The purposes of the boundary include the preservation of territoriality, self-protection, privacy and secretiveness. However, in the opened-type family, the members' bounding movements are regulated by a process of group consensus. They tend to extend the family boundary into the larger community space. The open bounding fosters the desire for beneficial interchange and interaction with members of the community. Nevertheless, in the random-type family, each member develops his own bounding patterns in establishing and defending his own and his family's territory. In general, the random family boundary is aterritorial. It deemphasize the boundary in its defense of the family. It extends entry and exist prerogatives broadly,

not only to members, but to guests and strangers as well.

The family's perception of who is inside or outside the family boundary is significantly related to the interaction within that system as well as between that system and the outside world. There is little similarity in family structures across time because family structures are constantly changing to facilitate the accomplishment of function while maintaining family boundaries (McCubbin, 1980: 17). In the creating and adopting family boundary, it is important to acknowledge that there is no absolute for the most successful form of boundary. Each boundary is beneficial and important according to the members of the family and the environment or community they encounter with or live in. Every family can even adopt more than one boundary in different situations of interaction.

### 3. Family Social Network

A social network consists of a person's relationships with relatives, friends, neighbours, co-workers, and other acquaintance who interact with the person. Every member of a family, including children, has a personal network. Collectively these networks comprise the family social network. A family's growth and development is a consequence of its interchange and interaction with its family social network. In the interaction with its social network, strain and tension are inevitable. However, the family is capable of making changes and responding productively by regulating,



shaping and manipulating its boundaries (Buckley, 1967:50).

In the study of family systems, it has been shown that some kinship systems stress the continuity of generations by subordinating the younger generation to the authority of elder and stress the preference of one lineage over the other. However, there are other kinships systems which emphasize the structurally isolated nuclear family and is bilateral. The emphasis on the isolated nuclear family means that there is discontinuity and relative independence of adjacent adult generations (Bell, 1972:189). Anyhow, the theory of family social network indicates that every family system, either nuclear, stem or other systems, is part of the larger "family field."

Family social network has an important role in mediating the effects of stress caused by everyday situations, crises, personal health, life transition and developmental change. Research evidence indicates that there is a strong and significant correlation between a family's response to stress and the aid received from its social network (McCubbin, 1980:134). Cobb's studies reveal that supportive interaction within the family social network is protective against health problems caused by stress and may facilitate recovery from illnesses (Cobb, 1976:300-314). Other researchers have shown that the family social network determines the family member's ability to cope with job loss (Gore, 1974:5330A-5331A); the stress impacting upon a marriage (Burke, 1977:

121-130); and life transitions (Hamburg, 1967:277-284; Hirsch, 1980:263-277). Evidences also disclose that extended families not only will not become drawn into and amplify the nuclear family conflicts, but will even act in benign ways to reduce conflicts and restore family functioning. Nevertheless, the extended families are mainly used by the nuclear families as screens for the projection of conflicts (Bell, 1972:198). In addition, research reveals that families who abuse their children are characterized by high levels of stress, social isolation and inadequate support systems (Garbarino, 1980:22-32).

Undoubtedly, family social network provides valuable support and resources available for effective family coping strategies. It is an essential factor underlying the family system's viability, its reproductive ability or continuity, and its ability to change.

#### D. SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

In a Christian marriage and family, Physical, Psychological, and Sociological needs are essential. Nevertheless, the foundation of a Christian marriage and family is relied on the Spiritual Dimension. The Spiritual Dimension is based on the biblical theology of marriage and family. Hence, this Dimension include the two important Criteria, the General and Specific. The criteria of the Spiritual Dimension are seen, served, and related to the Physical, Psychological, and Sociological Dimension.

##### 1. The Criteria

In the Spiritual Dimension, the General Criteria consist of the Divine Institution, Monogamy, Heterosexual Relationship, Permanent Bond, Companionship, A New Relationship, Mutual Subservience, Procreation, Maturity, Fidelity, Family Is A Teaching Place, and Honor Among All. These General Criteria are the foundation not only to Christian but also to non-Christian marriage and family. God originated the marriage and family institution when He first created the human race. It is a total life commitment when the couple establishes the new relationship. This new and permanent family life is based on mutual subservience, companionship and fidelity with love, respect and trust. God blesses this relationship and gives them descendants. However, they are not only to conceive but also to nurture and educate their children. Hence, it is also an important

and basic consideration that the married couple must first be mature enough in order that they are capable to take the responsibility to build and support their family. The marriage and family institution originated with and is blessed by God. Accordingly it should be highly respected, revered and honored by everyone.

According to the biblical theology of marriage and the family, the Specific Criteria are distinctive exhortations and teachings only for the Christian marriage and family. The emphasis is on the relationship between the married couples, the relationship between parents and children, the forbidden of divorce and the issue of celibacy. Love and submission are the essential responsibilities for husband and wife respectively. In the parents and children relationship and interaction, the parents's responsibilities are not only to provide physical and material needs, they must also concern themselves with the teaching, nurturing, and disciplining of their children. However, all these responsibilities must be done and based on love and understanding. The children's responsibilities are to obey and honor their parents in their whole life.

In contemporary theories and interpretations of marriage and family, many of them are very different, contradict and are against the biblical criteria. However, the General Criteria is God's original will and plan for all human marriage and family. It is His intention that this General Criteria be the fundamental theory and interpretation

for all Christian and non-Christian marriage and family. In addition, it is also God's will that the non-Christian marriage and family will become the Christian marriage and family which receives His blessing and guidance in both the General and Specific Criteria. Because all the human races, Christian or non-Christian, are created by Him and He loves all of them; He wants them all to receive His blessing in marriage and the family. The apostle Peter states His will in his letter, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise....not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9).

## 2. Spiritual and Physical Dimension

In the Physical Dimension, the emphasis is on the material needs, the role and role expectation, the financial and economical needs, the sexual intimacy and procreation, and the age to be married. The Spiritual Dimension furnishes the important criteria for fulfilling and satisfying these physical needs.

In order to attain and fulfill the material needs, the role and role expectation, and the management of financial needs; mutual subservience is necessary and essential. The difference between the two sexes provides a natural resource and potential for compensating and gratifying these needs. Role differences and expectation can be accepted and their potentials will be rendered and performed. Higher and greater satisfaction, suggestion, solution and decision will only be

reached in mutual subservience.

In contemporary society, when confronting with the decision of different types of family, such as the polygamy, polygyny, polyandry, and open marriage; as well as the different marriage relationship, such as homosexual; the Spiritual Dimension stresses the criteria of monogamy and heterosexual relationships. They challenge all these immoral theories. In sexual intimacy, the Spiritual Dimension emphasizes God's will of fidelity between the husband and wife. They can only express and receive sexual satisfaction within the marriage relationship. They must respect and love each other. Premarital, extramarital, and postmarital sex will only hurt and destroy the marriage and family life and divorce is forbidden as it is not His original will. In the proper and legitimate sexual relationship children are conceived. Procreation is under God's blessing.

In the consideration of the age of marry, the Spiritual Dimension also states the importance of the couple to first reach physical, emotional and mental maturity. Hence, they will be able to handle the responsibility and capable to supply and support the family needs.

### 3. Spiritual and Psychological Dimension

The Psychological Dimension is concerned with the affectional and emotional needs of the couples and their family members, the communication and interaction between the family members, and the personality development of each

members.

The Spiritual Dimension reveals that these psychological needs can be fulfilled in the criteria of A New Relationship, Mutual Subservience, Companionship, and the specific indications of husband's, wife's, parents' and children's responsibilities in interaction. Marriage is a new relationship in a life process. This new relationship is primarily based on the husband and wife, and later with their children. The affection and emotional needs, as well as, the communication and interaction in this new relationship are primarily based on the mutual subservience, companionship, and the responsibilities which the member must bear. Greater affectional and emotional satisfaction, as well as, deeper communication will be attained in these mutual trust, love, concern and complementation.

The family is the first and basic teaching place. It is in the family's motivation and reinforcement that the personality of each member is fully cultivated and development.

#### 4. Sociological and Spiritual Dimension

In the Spiritual Dimension, the General Criteria that the family is a teaching place also serves the sociolization function of the Sociological Dimension. All societies depend primarily upon the family for the socialization of children into adults who can function successfully in the societies. It is the principal responsibility for a family

to teach and educate the children and to guide them in the proper, the right way. In a Christian family, God's Word is the guideline.

Since marriage and family is a new relationship, a new family boundary will soon be established. The central foundation is built upon the husband-wife relationship. The elements for building this new relationship is by "leaving" the parents (Genesis 2:24). However, this new relationship does not imply an isolated relationship. A continuous interaction and interchange between the family and its community and extended family still exists. Every family has its social network for interaction. The family can establish different boundaries in its interaction. In the process of interaction, the community and extended families will have to respect and honor the family system. This is the emphasis of Spiritual Dimension that marriage and family should be honored and revered by all.



#### E. THE CRISIS IN CHRISTIAN FAMILY

In the past, Christian marriage and family have been idealised as a home with order and peace, love and service, daily devotions, loving parents and obedient children. However, many Christian families do not live up to this ideal. In the contemporary world and society with its hectic pace, the Christian is even less effective (Feucht, 1981:239). The crisis and problem in the Christian family is not due to the question of maintaining habits of worship and good routine. It deals mostly with two unrealistic thoughts.

One of the unrealistic thoughts is that most Christian families only emphasize and concern themselves with the Spiritual Dimension. They believe and hold that if they follow the Bible and build their marriage and family on the Spiritual Dimension, all the other dimensions, if they exist, will naturally , automatically, and finally be satisfied, reached or transpired. Nevertheless, the expected consequence does not occur, instead crisis and trouble eventuate. The main reason of this crisis lies on the denying, ignoring and neglecting the existence and the important function of these dimensions. These dimensions are easily being regarded as secular, unspiritual and secondary needs. The Christian family may even try to hide anysigns of these needs, conflicts and struggles in these dimensions. They not only refuse to accept and admit the importance of these Physical, Psycho-

logical and Sociological dimensions, but are unaware of their impact and effect in the family life. In the book, Marital Counseling; A Biblically Based Behavioral, Cognitive Approach, Dr. Norman Wright lists several common complaints and troubles in marital and family problems. These complaints and troubles include, the lack of communication, constant arguments, unfulfilled emotional needs, sexual dissatisfaction, financial disagreements, in-law trouble, infidelity, conflicts about children, domineering spouse-the basic role and expectation conflicts, unexpected circumstances or environment of interaction, and so on (Wright, 1981:3-5). These are the important factors and needs which can be found either in the Physical, Psychological, or Sociological dimensions. The unfulfillment and dissatisfaction in these dimensions will generate stress, frustration, pain, depresssion, fear and anger. The Christian family is based on the holistic model which includes the Spiritual, Physical, Psychological, and Sociological Dimensions. Each dimension has its distinctive emphasis and function and they are interrelated to one another. The acknowledgement and acceptance of this holistic model is essential to avoid unrealistic and unnecessary crisis.

The other reason for the existence of the crisis in Christian family is due to the disintegration, fragmentation and disorganization of the four dimensions. The consequence of this crisis will lead to the instability in the family life. Some Christian families will recognize the holistic

model, however, their emphasis and concern will be only on certain dimensions, for instance, they only stress the importance and need of Spiritual and Psychological Dimensions. Others may attempt to isolate and insulate the four dimensions and treating them independent of one another. In addition, there will be some Christian families who will try to organize and arrange the four dimensions according to the orders or levels of importance. For instance, the emphasis of the importance sequence starting from Spiritual Dimension, Psychological Dimension, Sociological Dimension, to Physical Dimension; or other stages of arrangement. Disintegration, fragmentation and disorganization will result in an inability and inflexibility to reinforce and support the dimensions in a balance and equilibrium way.

Christian family life is not static but dynamic. The dynamic is manifested when the family is capable and flexible to fully and appropriately operate and utilize the criteria of the Spiritual Dimension in gratifying the various needs in all dimensions. A Christian family must acknowledge the existence of the four dimensions and further determine the different perspective and depth of the various needs. The realistic needs have to be fulfilled in a balanced and equitable way for family development to occur.

#### IV. THE CULTURAL DYNAMIC OF A CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The word "culture" comes from the Latin "colere" meaning to cultivate (Stott, 1980:33). Among all God's creatures, only the human being is culture bearing (Grunlan, 1979:41).

Generally, culture means the entire way of human life. All human beings in all times and places have possessed cultures (Cell, 1967:25-27). However, it also refers variously to the particular ways in which people learn to control their environment, to develop intellectual and aesthetic values, and to produce an ideology which upholds these values (Stott, 1980:19-20). Hence Luzbetak defines culture as a design for living, a plan according to which society adapts itself to its social and ideational environment (Luzbetak, 1970:61). Another scholar defines culture as the human pattern of life in response to man's environment. For instances, in physical forms such as agriculture, arts, technology; in inter-human relations such as institutions, laws, customs, and in forms of reflection on the total reality of life such as language, philosophy, religion, spiritual values, and world view (Mbiti, 1977:6).

Different definition exist mainly due to the reason the culture embraces different characteristics. Accordingly there are seven common and significant characteristics which are shared among different cultures.

1. Culture is shared by a human group.

Culture is the way of life of a social group and not of

an individual. Every individual habit is not a part of culture unless it is shared within a group. However, the habits can become part of culture when they are learned and adopted by others and become customary actions of the group. (Schusky, 1967:36).

## 2. Culture is learned.

Culture consists of the socially learned behavior norms (Horton, 1976:63). Among the many sources of learning, the most important is usually the family. Learning can derive from simple imitation. However, many important parts of culture are taught largely by precept (Schusky, 1967:36).

## 3. Culture is dynamic.

Culture is always changing. It is not static. Its dynamic is revealed in the different manner of change, for instance, in the process of acculturation, assimilation, reconstruction (Chow, 1972:77-79), substitution, replacement, incrementation, displacement, and fusion (Luzbetak, 1970:199-202). Some cultures tend to change more rapidly than others. Sometimes the change in others is so slow that can hardly be recognized (Chow, 1972:77).

## 4. Culture is diverse.

No one culture is totally like another. No culture is superior to others (Summer, 1906:13). Judgmental reactions to other cultures stem from ethnocentric misinterpretation of alien cultures. What is good in one culture may be bad in another and vice versa. All cultures are equally good

(Taylor, 1980:43-44). There is no absolute culture.

5. Culture is a universal phenomenon.

According to anthropologists, culture includes the beliefs and customs of all men, whether they are educated or uneducated (Schusky, 1967:35), the "civilized" or the "sages" (Chow, 1972:77). Whereever there is man, there is culture.

6. Each culture is a whole.

Culture is the result of the creative and adjusting activities of mankind. It includes the good as well as the bad things (Chow, 1972:77). Hence the study of a culture must take the whole into account. It is important to recognize the relationship between the parts to the whole (Schusky, 1967:37).

7. Culture has value.

There is no culture without a value system. Value is an important element which affects human's behavior. It is the product of actual life and at the same time controls actual life (Chow, 1972:78). Each culture may not have the same value system. Nevertheless, each has its own value system.

Linwood G Barney arranges these characteristics of culture into a model. According to him, each culture is a series of layers. The deepest layer consists of ideology, cosmology and world view. A second layer belongs to the value system. Stemming from both of these layers is a third

layer of institutions such as marriage, law, education. These institutions are a bridge to the fourth and surface layer of material artifacts and observable behavior and customs. This layer is easily described and more easily changed. Each layer is more complex and abstract. These layers are inter-related and therefore culture is a common integrative functional systematic whole of common knowledge (Nicholls, 1979:11-12). Another scholar simply divides culture into three basic layers of physical, biological and cultural (Cirese, 1977:45-49).

The following characteristics of Chinese, American and Hebrew cultures will show the dynamics of each culture. It is important to recognize the uniqueness, the similarity and the difference of each culture. No culture is better and superior than others. It is also to distinguish and acknowledge that Hebrew culture does not mean and equal the "Christian culture". In fact the Bible does not offer a "Christian culture". Hebrew culture does not represent Christian culture.

In the exploration of the Chinese, American, and Hebrew cultures, the emphasis is to reveal how each culture can be used within the biblical theology of establishing a Christian marriage and family. Undoubtedly God allows cultural variation of the Christian family. The paper will discuss and show the crisis of culture and the realm of biblical theology which every culture should base and lie within.

## A. CHINESE CULTURE

Chinese culture is believed to have a history of more than five thousand years (錢穆, 1979:1). In the exploration of the impact of the Chinese culture to the Chinese family system, the focus will be on, 1. Confucianism and Chinese Culture; 2. Family System; and 3. The Transition.

### 1. Confucianism and Chinese Culture

Confucianism has undoubtedly been the foremost formative power in Chinese history. The teaching is composed of complicated elements and permeates all of Chinese society. It is the postulate of Chinese social culture and the central value system upon which the main Chinese ethnical norms and disciplines are based. Therefore, when exploring the Chinese family culture, system and ethics, it is important first to understand the basic history and concept of Confucius.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was born in an age of disorder and civil strife during the Chou dynasty. The socio-politico-economic system at that time was feudal. The ruler of Chou had become but a titular head of the many feudal states; and these states were constantly fighting with one another. There was no authority but might, and the existing system was collapsing (Wu, 1969:5).

Confucius had great ideas on how to improve the contemporary situation and the lot of the common people. He wandered from state to state in search of ruler who was ready to carry out his principles. It was not easy to bring his lofty



message across because the rulers were interested only in power politics (Wu, 1969:5). Often he must have felt an acute sense of loneliness but there was little of the ascetic in him. He did not withdraw from the world (Lee, 1967:8).

Confucius died without much notice; but his influence gradually increased after his death. During the reign of Shih Huang Ti (221-210 B.C.), all Confucian writings in private hands, with a few exceptions, were burned by this totalitarian emperor (Wu, 1969:6). However, at the beginning of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), Confucianism began to recovered. During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty 西漢武帝 (140-88 B.C.), Confucius was revered as the "Teacher Of All Generations" 萬世師表, and the "Uncrowned King" 素王 (Shih, 1968:22-23). Since then, for more than two thousand years, Confucius and his teachings have been respected and honored by all successive generations of China, regardless of the dynastic changes after the Han Dynasty.

During the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), Confucian works and writings were canonized into the famous text, the Four Books and the Five Classics 四書五經. The Four Books consisted of The Analects Of Confucius 論語, Great Learning 大學, Doctrine Of The Mean 中庸, and Mencius 孟子. The Five Classics were Book Of Changes 易經, Book Of History 史記, Book Of Poetry 詩經, Book Of Rites 禮記, and Spring And Autumn Annals 春秋 (Pye, 1972:45).

These Four Books and Five Classics later became the basis of all education and of the examination system in China.

The Analects Of Confucius discuss the problems of good goverance. Originally it includes Chyiluen 齊論, Luu Luen 魯論, and Guu Luen 古論. Nevertheless, the Analects of today are only the twelve chapters of the Luu Luen 魯論 (何容編, 1981:1703). It includes statements about Confucius's views as well as his sayings. The style of Mencius 孟子, is much the same. It contains the dialogue of the Master and his disciples (Pye, 1972:45).

The Great Learning 大學 and the Doctrine Of The Mean 中庸 are parts of the Book Of Rites 禮記 in the Five Classics. The Great Learning concisely states the Confucian moral and political ideas (Bush, 1982:223). It is a rather brief text filled with Chinese aphorisms and sequential reasoning. It also contains a classic example of Confucian logic. The Doctrine Of The Mean emphasizes the great Confucian and traditional Chinese value of harmony. It is the central doctrine of Confucianism (徐松石, 1962:117-134). It advocates the moderaton and neutrality of philosophy in all spheres of life and knowledge (朱岑樓, 1973:106-107).

The Book Of Rites includes the Great Learning and the Doctrine Of The Mean. It gives instructions about ceremonial behavior. The traditional marriage rite of "Three Documents" and "Six Rites" are here recorded (Berkowitz, 1969:110).

The Book Of History is supposedly edited by Confucius. It is infact and odd collection of speeches, oaths, rituals and observations of how rituals are more precisely performed in earlier ages (Pye, 1972:47).

Spring And Autumn Annals deals with the affairs of about two hundred and forty two years during the East Chou Dynasty (770 B.C.-476 B.C.) (吳自旌, 1981:181). It makes observations about how rites and rituals are performed, the conduct of officials and sacrifices they offer, as well as, their manners in various relationships. It also includes historical events (Pye, 1972:48).

The Book Of Poetry consists of three hundred and five poems and early folk verses which were popularly sung during the Chou Dynasty (何容編, 1981:3938). They describe boys and girls frolicking and playing in spring and at the harvest time.

The Book Of Changes is a mystical text dealing with divination and the forces of destiny. It depicts the relationship between heaven, earth, and human beings. Its key feature is the "Pa Kua" or eight trigrams (徐松石, 1962:166-167). The authorship of the feature is credited to four peopl. Fu Hsi, a legendary emperor (2900-2800 B.C.), is credited with invention of the original eight trigrams. King Wan (1100 B.C.) is credited with the creation of the sixty-four hexagrams that constitute the core of the concept. King Wan's son, the Duke of Chou, is the author of the texts

which accompany the individual lines of the hexagrams. Confucius writes the first commentaries, On The Decision And The Image. The commentaries interpretate and explain the structural nature of the hexagrams. Since the time of Confucius, the Book Of Changes has been used by scholars, statesmen, and private individuals. It is important in the formation of Chinese thought and philosophy (Matson, 1977:252-254).

China has always prided herself in being a nation of "Jen" and "Yi" 仁義之邦 or "Li" and "Yi" 禮義之邦 . Much of this discussion is found in the teaching of Confucius. He focuses on the five basic principles in human nature. They are "Jen" 仁 , "Yi" 義 , "Li" 禮 , "Chih" 智 (徐松石 , 1962:155-164) and "Hsiao" 孝 (Shih, 1968:22).

"Jen" 仁 is the central concept of Confucianism. In the Analects, 58 of the 499 chapters are devoted to the discussion of this word and it appears 105 times (Chan, 1963:16). It has been translated as "humanity", "goodness", "perfect virtue", "love" and "kindness". In most cases, it is used by Confucius as an inclusive virtue which includes all moral virtues, such as filial piety, wisdom, propriety, courage, and loyalty (Lin, 1972:162-163).

"Yi" 義 is "justice" (Shih, 1968:22), "rectitude" (Gluer, 1970:29), and "righteousness" (徐松石 , 1962:155). Together with "Jen", it is a new discovery of Confucius. The content of this new discovery is the true sentiment of a man

towards society as a whole, after he has overcome the self-fish and egoistic desires springing from his emotion. It is a spiritual consciousness which harmonizes the normally self-centered feelings of human beings into a whole. This spiritual consciousness is the only way by which the borderline between the individual and society as a whole can be eliminated and the boundary between heaven and man overcome (Shih, 1968:22).

"Li" 禮 is "propriety" and "rites". It embodies the heritage of ancient Chinese relation as it has been developed into a grade system (Shih, 1968:22). It also applies to the "Five Relations" between "father and son", "ruler and subject", "husband and wife", "older and younger brothers", and "friends" (Lin, 1972:163). It has been used to promote the concepts of cultivating the self, regulating the family, governing the nation, and pacifying the world 修身、齊家、治國、平天下, (吳自甦, 1981:193).

"Chih" 智 is "wisdom" and "reason". In the Great Learning, it is written that in order that one can cultivate himself, he must first have a honest heart. An honest heart is from the rightful thinking and it is derived from reasonable, sensible and rational judgement. Wisdom and reason are the basis of judgement (徐松石, 1962:163).

"Hsiao" 孝, filial piety, is the basis of virtue and the origin of culture (Lin, 1938:179). The Chinese children are raised and taught according to the content and

concept of the Book Of Filial Piety or "Hsiao Ching" 孝經 (Pye, 1972:47). Filial piety is the foundation of Chinese family system and interpersonal relationship.

For more than two thousand years, Confucian Classics and thought has greatly influenced the Chinese culture and life-style. Although Confucianism has been discredited from time to time in Chinese history, especially during the May Fourth Movement of 1917-1921 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1968 (Wu, 1969:10); his teaching has been imbued so deeply in the Chinese and the scholars' mind that they cannot but take for granted many Confucian ideas and conceptions. The continual influence of Confucianism upon the Chinese people will not cease. It will still be one of the most important components influencing the life and actions of the Chinese people either in Mainland China, Taiwan, or oversea.

## 2. Family System

In a Chinese family system, the nature and essence of the system is based on the family structure, the marital rite, filial piety, and ancestor worship. These elements are greatly influence by Confucianism.

### a. Family Structure

During the Chou Dynasty (1100-256 B.C.), tribe was the basic foundation of the society. However, from Ch'in Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) to Ching Dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.), the family system became the foundation of the society. The "Big Family"

structure was commonly found among the aristocracy. The "Stem Family" and the "Lineal Family" were commonly practiced among the people. "Stem Family" structure is common from Ch'in Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) to Sui Dynasty (581-618 A.D.), while the "Lineal Family" existed during the T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.) to Ching Dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.). After the Ching Dynasty, Western culture has greatly influenced the Chinese family structure (朱岑樓, 1981:262-280).

Traditionally, a big family is considered a blessing. The Confucian ideal considered family to be a model of harmony and enjoyed the bliss of having five generations living together as a social and economic unit (Lai, 1982:22). The Chinese family had been a microcosm, the state in miniature. It had been the social unit and the responsible element in the political life of its locality (林治平, 1977:28). It was a closely-knit structure headed by the father who was the main source of discipline and authority. Grandparents, in-law, godparents, aunts, and neighbours were all nourishing figures and made up the extended family unit which provided a broad background of family love and security (Bier, 1965:15-16). However, a Chinese family is far more than a group of related individuals. It is also a complex organization of family members, family property, domestic animals, family reputations, family traditions, and family gods. It can be said that the family extends to the as yet unborn generations and to the long-deceased ones (Yang, 1945:45).

Authority of the aged is deeply rooted in Chinese tradition. Filial piety as taught by Confucianism is very strong. The elders enjoy special position, privilege and respect. The father-image not only finds its source in this authority but in return it contributes to the strengthening and nourishing of this authority. The idea of filial piety is not only in family relationship. It also extends to the society at large. Filial piety is the soul of the family structure (Chow, 1972: 91).

The traditional Chinese kinship system is patrilineal. The family headship passes along the male line from father to eldest son. Hence a son is more valuable than daughter because he will carry on for the father and provide care for him in his old age. Thus the man stays in the family while the girl marries outside of it into other family households (Schurmann, 1967:40).

Status within the family is codified in the famous doctrine of "Five Relationships" by Confucius. These five relationships are those between ruler and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brothers, husband and wife, and friends. Within a family, every child from birth is involved in a highly ordered system of kinship relations (Schurmann, 1967:39-40). In the family, an individual also has unquestioning obligations and relationship to look after his relatives and to share with them whatever good fortune might befall him. Traditionally, a family with its kinship



units (clans), the extended partilineal families, forms a village.

In the old agricultural society, land was an another important unit in the family structure. A family's status depends very much on the amount of lands they own. Wealth and fame are built on the lands one possesses. In addition, land means much more than a piece of earth on which crops are cultivated. It is the very foundation of the famil. It belongs to all generations. Without land a family can never be settled and the family members will never have a sense of security. A family may have enough houses for all its members to live in but the parents will keep on buying land and building houses for the future generations. In the Chinese custom, to say a family is broken means that the family's land is gone. Land becomes a part of the family life. Land ownership gives the family independent personality, spiritual inspiration, and a feeling of freedom (Yang, 1945: 45-46). This concept is also maintained among the contemporary Chinese who either live in mainland China or in other countries. In mainland China, the people are trying to claim back their ancestor's lands from the communist government while the oversea Chinese will first try to own a house or land when they immigrated to other countries. People and land are the two pillars of the Chinese family.

#### b. Marriage Rite

According to the traditional custom, marriage is based on

parents' command, consent, and arrangement. The parents have no idea who their future daughter-in-law or son-in-law will be. The couple must not meet one another until the day of the wedding. Hence the parents will try to get information through the matchmaker prior to the wedding. The matchmaker's work is based on the marriage rite which is canonized in the Book Of Rites 禮記.

The marriage rite includes the "Three Documents" 三書 and the "Six Rites" 六禮. It shows the ritual treatment of the fixed bonds of agnatic kinship, the family's social status, and the contractual ties of marriage. The "Three Documents" are, "Pin Shu" 聘書, which is the letter of willingness to fix the agreement to marry the girl signed by the boy's parents; "Yun Shu" 允書, which is the reply of the girl's parents that they are willing to give her to the young man; and "Hun Shu" 婚書, which is the contract of marriage, the form of agreement (Berkowitz, 1969:110).

The "Six Rites" are "Na Ts'ai" 納采; "Wen Ming" 問名; "Na Chi" 納吉; "Na Ch'en" 納徵; "Ch'ing Chi" 請期; and "ch'in Ying" .

"Na Ts'ai" 納采 is the inquiry into a girl's family by a matchmaker sent by the family seeking a bride. "Wen Ming" 問名 is the asking of names of both families. Data on the two families are required for the proper matching of families of like social status and for the determining the position of the boy and girl in their respective families.

"Na Chi" 納吉 is the acceptance of each other.

The genealogical and horoscopic data are sought by the matchmaker and the girl's horoscope is matched with the boy's. Traditional Chinese custom holds that marriages are made in Heaven, and the horoscopes are examined to discover who has been prematched with whom. The acceptance of each other is based on the matching of the horoscopic details (尹蘊華, 1980:25).

"Na Ch'en" 納徵 is betrothal. It is clinched by the transfer of gifts (尹蘊華, 1980:25-26), for instances geese and silks (易家鈺, 1978:55).

"Ch'ing Chi" 請期 is the deciding on the date of the wedding (尹蘊華, 1980:26). The Chinese almanac provides the necessary information for choosing an auspicious date for the wedding (Berkowitz, 1969:111).

"Ch'in Ying" 親迎, the last rite, is the wedding day. The bride is received and feasts are held (尹蘊華, 1980:26).

Accordingly, marriage begins with the tentative investigations preceding marriage and emphasize the exchange of genealogical and horoscopic details and the role of the matchmaker. The betrothal is in reality the first step in the marriage itself. It establishes the bond of affinity between two families. After betrothal, a marriage in fact exists. It can be broken only by death or a negotiated rupture. However, if one of the two parties dies, the

marriage may still be carried out by the surviving girl proceeding as a widow to take her place in the boy's house or the surviving boy going through the final rites of marriage with the dead girl (Freedman, 1970:181). The system of child-brides and the system of arrangement even before the children are born are based on this rite (易家金, 1978: 53-54).

The chastity of woman is strongly emphasized. She must follow whoever she married. She is only allowed to marry once. She has to obey her husband after marriage and her sons after her husband's death (Berkowitz, 1969:108). She must also respect her husband's ancestors. This is an important ceremony during the wedding festivity. Divorce and remarriage are exceedingly rare and are never to be initiated by the wife (謝和耐, 1982:139).

Feasts, dowry, betrothal money and gifts are important to the reputation and social status of the parents. For instances, the elaborateness of the feast, the gifts and the size of the dowry all signify wealth. The result of such a display of wealth is that the family reinforces its social status in the eyes of the community (Veblen, 1934:108). Relatives and friends who are invited to the feast are expected to bring a gift, usually money, to the feast. Closeness of relationship determines the amount. The closer the relationship, the more is expected (Berkowitz, 1969:116)!

## c. Filial Piety

Filial piety is the soul of the Chinese family system and the heart of Chinese ethics. Traditionally regarded as the origin and foundation of Chinese culture (林治平, 1977: 29) and also known as the "first of all virtues" (徐松石, 1962:332). The teaching of filial piety is found in the Book Of Filial Piety, "Hisao Ching" 孝經, which countless generations of Chinese children were taught (Pye, 1972:47). According to archaeologists, it was long ago emphasized and recorded, the Culture Of Yand Shao 仰韶文化 and the Culture Of Long San 龍山文化 (吳自甦, 1981: 179). These cultures are from ten thousand to four thousand years ago (中國歷史大系表, 1977).

In the Confucian idea of the "five cardinal human relationships", the principle idea is status. Status defines one's relationships with others. The Confucian idea is that if every man knows his place and acts in accordance with his position, social order will be ensured. Out of the five relationships, four of them are related with family. They are the relationship between father and son, between husband and wife, between siblings, and between friends. The relationship between friends is identified with the family because friends are those who can be included in the family circle (林語堂, 1938:178). According to the concept of filial piety, these relationships are governed by principle of "Ching" 親, love and intimacy; "Yi" 義, justice and

righteousness; "Pieh" 別 , different responsibility;  
 "Hsu" 序 , regularity and order; and "Hsing" 信 , honesty  
 and trustworthiness. The philosophy of these relationship  
 is that there is "love and intimacy between father and son,"  
 "justice and righteousness between ruler and subject,"  
 "different responsibility between husband and wife," "regularity  
 and order between brothers," and "honesty and trustworthiness  
 between friends." ( 朱岑樓 , 1973:110). Instead of  
 postulating a one way hierarchical relationship, according to  
 the Book Of Rites, it is rather a mutual relationship and  
 responsibility. For instance, it is written in the Book Of  
Rites that a father must first show and teach his children  
 with love then they will respect and honor him. A ruler must  
 first shows virtuous character and justice then the subjects  
 will show their loyalty to him 君賢臣忠,國之盛也。父慈  
 子孝,家之盛也。( 徐松石 , 1965:21-22). Confucius once said,  
 "A young man should be treated with the utmost respect. How  
 do you know he will not, one day, be fully equal of what you  
 are now?" (Lee, 1967:15-16). Thus, one who has the supreme  
 authority, must also shoulder the supreme responsibility.

According to the Confucian ideal, in the husband-wife  
 relationship the "husband leads and wife follows." However,  
 in practice the wife may play the leading part while the  
 husband follows, depending upon which is the more capable  
 in this matter or that. This does not mean that her respect  
 for her husband diminishes, or that she does not acknowledge

him as head of the family (Yang, 1945:56-57). Philosophically, ancient China has seen the world as the product of two interacting complementary elements, "Yin" 陰 and "Yang" 陽. Confucian teaching emphasizes the "Yang", the masculine symbol of bright, strong, active, assertiveness, and domination. However, another great Chinese philosopher, Laozi 老子, stresses the feminine symbol of "Yin" (Schurmann, 1967:39). In Laozi's work, Tao Te Ching 道德經, which is like the Great learning of Confucius, it describes the beauty of "Yin" as gentleness, tenderness, compassion, receptiveness, intuition, humility, forbearance, and long-suffering (Needham, 1980:59-68). For instance, in the locus classicus in the Tao Te Ching it is written,

"The valley spirit never dies; It is the woman, primal mother. Her gateway is the root of heaven and earth. It is like a veil barely seen. Use it; it will never fail." (Feng, 1972:12).

"Yin" and "Yang", female and male, are both necessary and complimentary. It is the Chinese philosophy which emphasizes both masculine and feminine qualities in balanced measure. As the Book Of Changes says, "The Tao is made up equally of Yin and Yang." (Needham, 1980:68).

Parents and children relationships are strongly emphasized. The importance of filial piety is recorded in the Four Books and Five Classics. In a traditional big family system where four to five generations live together, the head of the family is oldest one. He is responsible to nourish the

family and give discipline and teaching. The younger ones are taught to respect, obey, and honor the older ones in daily life. Parents are to be supported by their grown-up children. Confucius divides filial piety into three stages, (1) It is most important to serve the parents with propriety when they are still alive; (2) Children must bury the parents with propriety when they die; and (3) Children must bring sacrifice with propriety (吳自 魁, 1981:183). In the Book Of Rites, three dimensions of filial piety are mentioned. First, the children must respect and honor their parents; second, they must not despise them; and third, they must look after and take care of their physical needs (林 治平, 1977:30). It is also written that the body, hair and skin are received from the parents, and may not be injured. This is the beginning of filial piety. The culmination of filial piety is to do the right thing, and walk according to the right morals, thus leaving a good name in posterity. In this way one glorifies the ancestors. Filial piety begins with serving one's parents, leads to serving one's king and ends in establishing one's character (林 語堂, 1980:165). Hence, children are important in the Chinese family system, especially the son because he carries on for the father and provides care for him in his old age. It is written in Mencius that a couple without children are without filial piety 不孝有三, 無後為大. It brings disgrace to the family. This concept introduces the practice of polygamy



( 林 治 平 , 1977:31). More of the teaching of filial piety can be found in the book, Twenty-Four Stories Of Filial Piety. It describes the twenty-four incidents of filial piety which happen in different dynasties. It delineates the intimate relationship between parents and children in traditional Chinese family system ( 徐 靜 , 1973:203-204).

The idea of filial piety is not limited in family relationship. It also extends to the society and the nation at large. In the Book Of Filial Piety, Confucius has said that the reason the gentleman teaches filial piety is in order that man may respect all those who are fathers in the world. He teaches brotherliness in the younger brother, in order that man may respect all those who are elder brothers in the world. He teaches the duty of the subject, in order that man may respect all who are rulers in the world. Those who love their parents dare not show hatred to others. Those who respect their parents, dare not show rudeness to others ( 林 語 堂 , 1980:164-165). Surrounding the Confucian idea of "Jen" 仁 , is the meaning of "kindness". One can show filiality to those who are older than himself and compassion or care to those of one's own age or younger than himself. All these concepts are no doubt understood primarily within the context of the family. What is applicable to the family can also be applied to society as a whole. The ethical goal of Confucianism is that through the concept of "Jen", which is embedded in the different social relation-

ships, harmony in the world may be achieved (Ng, 1971:31-32).

Confucius believed that the moral training of the family was the basis for general training. He plans that from this general moral training a society shall emerge which will live happily and harmoniously together. Harmony in the family and in the nation is brought about by filial piety and loyalty. Filial piety develops the rules of conduct such as filiality towards parents, brotherly love towards siblings, mutual commitment in marriage, loyalty towards rules, and honesty in word. The family relationship is close and important. The concept of filial piety is presumed to translate itself into an unbroken line of relationship, strength, and dynamic. An ancient Chinese fable of "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed The Mountains" can best describe this unbroken relationship and dynamic in Chinese family structure and value system.

The story tells of an old man who lived in northern China. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wanghu, obstructing the way. One day, he called his sons and they began to dig up these mountains with great determination. Later a man passed by seeing them at work. After learning of their intention, he said derisively that it was a silly work because it was impossible for them to dig up these two huge mountains. However, the old man replied with great confidence,

"When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every

bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" (Vera, 1968:494).

#### d. Ancestor Worship

Ancestor worship existed prior to the time of Confucius. It has been found in the culture of Long San 龍山文化 in 1700 B.C. (林汾平, 1977:31). Originally, the word ancestor is made up of two words in Chinese, "Tsu" 祖 and "Tsung" 宗. They are names for a kind of sacrifice. There is a saying that there is merit in the "Tsu" and virtue in the "Tsung". Virtue is respected in the imperial sacrifices to ancestors. Sacrifices are simply made to virtuous men (Chau, 1967:28). Thus, in the early sacrifices to ancestors, the people did follow the standard of blood relationships but took the standard of virtue and merit. The people respected merit and virtue rather than blood ties. However, from the time of the Hsia Dynasty (21 B.C. to 16 B.C.) (中國歷史大系表, 1976) on down, the Chinese began to follow the order of precedence according to clan names. In the Book Of Rites, it is written, "Sacrifice to your ancestors so that you may show gratitude to that from which you came.... The sage goes back to his origin and returns to his beginnings." (Chau, 1967:29).

Ancestor worship consists of many different purpose and functions. However, the two most significances which related to family system are solidarity and filial piety.

The function of solidarity in ancestor worship is one of the earliest significant findings in the Culture of Long San.

Ancestor worship reinforces group solidarity when all the clansmen come back to pay respect to their common ancestors (Yang, 1967:43). It increases the unity among the relatives for the function of social organization. In addition, traditionally the Chinese believe that their ancestors' spirits, whether in the ancestral graves or in Heaven, are with them and are keeping watchful eyes upon them at all times. A family's fortune or misfortune is largely controlled by their ancestors' spirits. They must be invited to participate in all special occasions, such as festivals, weddings, births. Homage must be paid to them at their graves, in the ancestral halls, or before the ceremonial tables of the family. All the members of the family must participate. This sense of kinship reveals the feeling of the living ancestors to be actually present with them. The belief in the unbroken continuity of the family is manifest in the behavior of the descendants and the bond between the generations is never broken (Yang, 1945:45).

The solidarity of the family is especially vivid during the four clearly recognized times for practising ancestor worship. All the members and relatives of the family must come back to pay respect to their common ancestors. The times are Chinese New Year, Ch'ing Ming Festival, Field Festival and Chong Yang Festival.

The Chinese New Year comes on the first day of the second new moon following the winter solstice. According

to the Chinese calendar, Ch'ing Ming Festival is the beginning of the fifth of the twenty-four annual solar divisions. It comes exactly three and one half months after the winter solastice and consequently, just half a month after the spring equinox. Field Festival is celebrated on the fourteen day of the seventh month (Berkowitz, 1969:46-126), while the Chong Yang Festival falls on the ninth day of the ninth month in the Chinese calendar. Therefore it is also known as the Double Ninth festival (徐松石, 1965:75-76).

Ancestor worship has shown its significance in uniting and harmonizing the family. Thus the dynamics of the Chinese family system is revealed in its solidarity through ancestor worship.

During Confucian time, he added the concept of moral consciousness and ethical interpretation in ancestor worship. In his purest form, the emphasis of ancestor worship is on paying respect to the values of the departed. Hence, the Chinese have viewed offering sacrifices to the ancestors as of the utmost importance. In the "Chi T'un" 祭統, it is written that out of the five proper causes in propriety, the most importance is toworship and make offerings (林治平, 1977:31-33). According to Confucius, a filial son serves his parents in three ways. He cares for them when they are still living; mourns for them when they die; and when the mourning is doen, he sacrifices to them. By caring for them one can see his obedience. By mourning for them one

can see his sorrow and by sacrificing to them one can see his respect and how timely it is (吳自甦, 1981:183). Therefore Chinese lays stress on attending carefully to the funeral rites of parents and following them when gone with due sacrifices. The ceremonies require prostrations. Filial sons are virtuous grandchildren regard the observation of the Ch'ing Ming Festival and the Chong Yang Festival as and important sign of veneration.

The ancestral tablet in the ancestral hall portrays the expression of filial piety. The main sentiment in ancestor worship is the commemoration of one's origin. In addition, it contains educational significance. In the "Chi T'un" section of the Book Of Rites, it is recorded,

"Worship and serve your ancestral temple and your altar of land and grain. Thus as children and grandchildren you will follow the way of filial piety, you will fulfill your moral duty, you will do what is right, and you will teach those who are living. Thus it is said that sacrifice is the origin of education." (Lee, 1967:29).

Again, it is described in the "Chi Yi" 祭儀 section of the same book,

"Before you sacrifice, fast for three days. During your fast, think of (how) your ancestors lived, think of their laughter and words, think of the things they were fond of. On the day you sacrifice, enter the room as if you expect to meet them. After you move around and then go out, be respectful as if you will hear them speak. When you have gone out and listen, sigh as if you are sighing together with them. This is the teaching of the former kings on filial piety. Always keep their countenance before your eyes. Always keep the sound of their voices in your ears. In your mind never forget their thoughts, ambitions, likes and desires. As for love, retain

it. As for affection, show it." (Chau, 1967:28-29).

Traditionally, ancestor worship has shown another of its significance of filial piety in expressing a genuine respect and affection for the departed. As filial piety is the soul of the Chinese family system, ancestor worship which includes this significant function has also been regarded as an important basis in Chinese family system.

### 3. The Transition

Confucian thought and philosophy has permeated, diffused, and influenced Chinese culture, custom and habits for more than two thousand years. Although it is not the central value system in Chinese social culture, it nevertheless occupies a key position. Hence any changes in Chinese culture is closely related to the impact on Confucianism. In Chinese history, there are three particular movements which directly criticize and discredit Confucianism. They are, during the reign of Shi Huang Ti in Ch'in Dynasty (221-210 B.C.); then the May Fourth Movement (1917-1921); and finally the Cultural Revolution (1966-1968). However, except the May Fourth Movement, the other two movements are using the attack and assault on Confucianism for consolidating personal political position. For instances, Shi Huang Ti burned all Confucian writings in order that no one would learn and attack his emperor position. Mao Tse-Tung used the criticism of Confucianism against his political opponent,

the former premier Chou En-Lai. This paper will not concern itself with these two movements because they have no profound impact on the Chinese culture. The real challenge and conflict with Confucianism, so as the Chinese culture, derives from the May Fourth Movement.

The May Fourth Movement extends from 1917 to 1921. The main course of the impact and influence is the introduction and intrusion of Western culture. The Chinese were not aware of the impact of the Western culture until the shock of the Opium War, the Taiping Revolution in 1848-1865 (Shen, 1972:69), the unfair Twenty-One Demands on China due to the Opium War (Chow, 1972:89), and the deep disappointment about the treatment in the Versailles Peace Conference (Gluer, 1970:22).

After China became a Republic, contacts with the West were frequent. Many Chinese studied abroad in Europe, Japan, and in the United States. They returned with new ideas and concern for building a strong and new Chinese nation to deal with foreign oppression and civil disorder. This need led to a mass demonstration by the young intellectuals on May Fourth of 1919. This movement especially fought against the traditional Confucian values because they believed that it had hindered the progress of China.

Strictly speaking, the May Fourth Movement is not a uniform or well-organized movement. It is rather a coalescence of a number of activities, such as the "new thought tide", the literary revolution, the student movement, the merchants'



and workers' strikes, the boycott against Japan, and other social and political activities of the new intellectuals. Nevertheless they are all inspired by the patriotic sentiments and the contact with the Western culture and value system in the light of science and democracy in order to build a new China (Chow, 1972:89-91). The main trend of this movement in the progress of society is found in the French Revolution and the American democracy (Gluer, 1970:22). It is during this time that the phonetic signs of Mandarin are adopted. The contact with the West opened the eyes of many scholars to see that outside of China there are many things interesting and different. The people begin to highly esteem the new and reject the old. The encounter is now on the level of values and ideals.

The impact which takes place in the Chinese family system is heightened by the changes in marriage practices and family relation. For instance, the young people do not accept marriages arranged by their parents but select their own mates. They begin to rebel against the old and no longer believe in filial piety (Pye, 1972:94-95). A Manifesto which was published in the New Youth Magazine during this period expressed the following ideas,

"We believe that, in the traditional ideas of politics, ethics and economics in all countries of the world, there are many illogical and inhuman elements which thwart the progress of society. In order to seek social progress it is necessary to break up the prejudices that are upheld as 'unalterable principles'... or as 'established form old' .... Consequently we are determined to get rid

of these antiquated ideas, and, by synthesizing conclusions reached by ancient and modern thinkers and ourselves, to create new ideas in politics, ethics and economics and to establish the spirit of the new era, in order to adapt ourselves to the special circumstances of the new society." (Gluer, 1970:22)

In the midst of continuous and extensive impact and changes, this movement brought the people to another extreme of thinking that whatever is new is good and they see the future of China resting with the identification with the Western value. The concern then arises that there must be some value of permanent worth which needs to be preserved and defended. There must be a stable base, an essential structure of values and ideals, in the multidimensional transformation of Chinese family life and thought. In the conflicts between the traditional or conservative value system and the new or progressive value system, it is important to realize that the prominence of traditional or conservative value system is that it enable the stability of a culture and society. Stability does not mean keeping stiff and static. It means keeping the dynamic equilibrium by all kinds of forces in a culture and society. It needs the rich treasure of the past for the new creation. The emphasis is on the statement of using Chinese culture and value system as the fundamental structure, Western culture and value system for practical use, or reconstruction of civilization on a Chinese base (Chow, 1972:104). For instance, in the family structure, the traditional big family system with five generations living together is not

popular practical. It has been replaced either by the nuclear family system which consists of husband-wife and children, or what is known as the "Compromise family system" which consists of parents (even with grandparents), husband-wife and children. The significance of the later system is that it does not include the siblings and other relatives such as in the big family system (朱岑樓, 1981:282). In the most recent statistical report from Taiwan, there is about 80% of the elderly persons living with their children in such a family system (王家鳳, 1983:98).

According to the most recent marriage law published by Mainland China, it is stated that marriage shall be based on free choice of partners, on monogamy, and on equal rights of the sexes. It is prohibited to be arranged by a third party and the marriage contract shall be based on the willingness of the two parties. It is the parents' duty to rear and educate the children and the children's duty to support and assist the parents. Parents have the right and responsibility to discipline and protect minor children. When children cause damage, parents must compensate others for any economic loss. Elder brothers or sisters who have the capacity to bear relevant costs have the duty to rear minor younger brothers and sisters whose parents are deceased or have no capacity to rear them (Hare-Mustin, 1982:478-480). The overseas Chinese are concerned to transmit the value of filial piety to their younger generations.

In the understanding of the dynamic of Chinese culture, Confucianism is still an important philosophy which should be greatly recognized and focused on. Family structure, marital rite, filial piety, and ancestor worship are still the main and important elements in constructing a Chinese family system. Although transition of family system is inevitable, it is important to acknowledge the cause and consequence of such transition.

## B. AMERICAN CULTURE

United States is a country of immigrants. The early immigrants came with different reasons. They brought with them many of their cultures, customs and traditions to this new country (Baber, 1939:91). Because the country was not all settled during one period, there were historical causes differentiating the family system in different regions (Cavan, 1942:9). This section will reveal the cultural differences in the early American family system and its later transition.

### 1. The Early American Family System

The New England colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Maine were founded by the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans (Feucht, 1970:120). Most of them were of pure English stock, with the exception of Scotch-Irish in New Hampshire and the Huguenots of Massachusetts and Rhode Island (Baber, 1939:91-92). In general, the eastern family was influenced by the English family pattern of the patriarchal and large family system (Cavan, 1965:53). Husband and father was the head of the family. He was responsible for the entire household and had considerable authority over both his wife and his children. This authority was supported by the mores and to some extent by the law. There was a clear division of labor and responsibility by sex both in the home and in the occupational world outside the home (Bowman, 1960:21-22). Home discipline of children

was stern and arbitrary, compelling obedience, and submission. The parents had the right to choose mates for their children. Divorce was not allowed (Feucht, 1970:120-121). The entire social life of the family members was concentrated in the family and in wider kinship circle. In fact, the will of each individual was subordinate to the family interests (Cavan, 1965:54).

In the middle colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, the immigrants were a more heterogenous population with a strong mixture of Dutch, German, and Scotch-Irish. Among the Germans in Pennsylvania home, discipline was rigid. Children received diligent home training. Compare with the eastern family, the family life in this region was a bit more independent and free. Women and children were more fully educated. Greater freedom was given to the older children and they had the right to seek their own life's partners (Feucht, 1970:121-122).

In the Southern colonies of Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, family life was influenced by French and English traditions. The larger plantations tended to develop the patriarchal family clan and a degree of aristocracy. The education of the women was in some cases excellent, and their role in society was strong (Calhoun, 1932:7-12). Children were educated in catechism. Marriages were usually solemnized by civil magistrates. In some regions, such as in Carolina, marriages were preceded by financial

and property settlements properly drawn up and by the publishing of banns. Divorces or legal separations were not be granted in these colonies (Feucht, 1970:122-123).

## 2. The Transition

American Revolution, the Independence fo the nation, Industrial Revolution, urbanizatin and modernization change the American family life-style. The transition of American family system is most vividly seen in the family structure, courtship, marital role, and divorce.

### a. Family Structure

The transition in early American family system first came from the impact of the American Revolution. During this time, a greater responsibility in farm and business management was upon women because men were absent from home for military campaigns. A democratic spirit was developed by the struggle for Independence of the new Nation and by the new freedom set forth in the Declaration of Independence. After the war, there was a growing disposition to grant individuals their rights. It was a new challenge toward the people and their families to build a distinctive American society out of the old traditions from Europe and out of the new insights from colonial experiences (Feucht, 1970:123).

After the Revolution came the westward movement of colonists. The families moved west of the Mississippi, to the Rocky Mountains, California and Oregon coasts (Feucht, 1970:124). The frontier life again influenced the family

life style. The whole weight of the frontier freedom conspired with the modernist individualism imported from Europe. On the frontier, woman could scarcely get along without a partner. At this period, a wife was valuable for her labor and companionship. Early marriages was the rule and grandmothers in their thirties were common (Calhoun, 1960:11-15). Due to the greater participation of the women in the new frontier life, a greater democratization also developed in the family life. Both women and children enjoyed higher social status (Feucht, 1970:124).

When the West was settled, the conditions of the country rather than English tradition set the pattern for the hardly pioneer families. Patriarchal family pattern, which was still taught by the church as God's ordinance, was undermined (Goodsell, 1934:457-458). The equality of woman with men was in the laws of western states. Divorce laws had been much less stringent than in the East. The Frontier conditions had nurtured individualism and democracy and the family life reflected these trends (Cavan, 1942:9-10).

The greater transition of American family system came during the Industrial Revolution. The advancement of science and the rapid social and economic changes moved the family from an agrarian to an urban society. The result of industrialization, urbanization and modernization demanded a new kind of family structure to be compatible with it (Burgess, 1945:26-29). As people moved from farm to the city, the



extended family and elaborate kinship ties gradually gave way to new values in family living. The large family system had been replaced by the nuclear family system consisting of husband, wife and children. Family members were all involved in work. Women became emancipated. The authority pattern in the family became less dogmatic and more pragmatic (Satir, 1976:19).

By the mid-20th century, the nuclear family life had become strongly wife-centered and child-centered. Today's grandparents and great grandparents who held high status and were respected in the old colonial time, often find themselves alienated both from their own families and from society at large. The pediatrician, the psychiatrist, and the child-guidance clinic have replaced their advice to the young parents on child-rearing practices (Satire, 1976:19-21). Many value systems, such as premarital sexual relations and divorce, which previously were regarded with awe as inviolate are now thought of critically and skeptically (Peterson 1964:8-9). The structure, the value system and the function of the contemporary American family will still undergo change based on the philosophy of democracy, independent, liberalism and individualism.

#### b. Courtship

In the traditional view of courtship, a young man must first be economically independent and must be able to support a wife and children before he contracted a marriage. Parents had either the right to select mates for their children

or had a veto power over their selection (Grunebaum, 1976: 5-6). Sometimes parents in seeking a rich match for their daughters had haggled and bargained over the dowries they were to allow (Baber, 1939:97). Personal contact between the different sex was restricted both by the mores and the rules. The attitude of choosing a marriage partner was relatively easy because the criteria of choice were readily observable and did not depend largely on personal taste. Many couples considered their marriage to be successful in the absence of love (Bowman, 1960:21-22).

One of the oldest forms of courting in rural eighteenth-century America was bundling. It flourished in New England and the mid-Atlantic States and was later encouraged by the frontier. Bundling was most common in Connecticut and was prevalent in New York and Pennsylvania (Baber, 1939:94). This custom was practiced only during the rugged and harsh condition of the New England winter. It was a way to accommodate the young man's need for lodging and to afford the couple time to talk to each other. The young lovers were allowed to share a common bed and continue their whisperings. Usually, the parents or other members of the family were asleep in the same room. Bundling was supposed to operate on an honor system where no intimate sexual embraces and certainly no sexual intercourse were to be allowed. However, in actuality this honor system seemed to break down. In New England there was a high percentage of pregnant brides testified

to the violation of the system. By the nineteenth century, the conditions supporting the custom diminished (Reiss, 1980: 90-91).

In the Southern states, the young people enjoyed more freedom in their courtship. They mingled quite freely at social gatherings and dances. The young men were permitted to accompany the girls home afterward without the elders' chaperonage. Most of the girls were married before they were twenty, and most of the young men by the time they were twenty-two. A determined young man in search a bride might approach a young woman previously unknown to him, propose, be accepted, and arrange for the banns to be published, all within the same day! Kidnapping of a bride-to-be by a former lover was common (Baber, 1939:92-94).

In the modern American cultural expectation, the individualistic ethic encourages the growth of a relatively free courtship system. The young couple mingles freely with each others, they choose their own partners, and set up a separate household, the nuclear family, without the help of their relatives or in-laws. The American value of freedom is most clearly manifested in the system of courtship and the institution of marriage (Goode, 1959:38-47).

In the courtship and marriage, the free mutual choice of the couple is emphasized and based upon love. Love is regarded as the element which gives the greatest prominence. Marrying for love implies a primary emphasis upon emotion, upon how

the two individuals feel about one another, upon their personal satisfaction, and the responsibility they have in making the free choice (Bowman, 1960:24-25).

### c. Marital Role

During the colonial days, the role and responsibility between the married couples were clear. The husband was the head and the breadwinner of the household while the wife was the housewife and responsible for the bearing and care of children (Bier, 1965:46). However these traditional roles and expectations have undergone impact and challenge by industrialization and modernization.

As a result of industrial development, family members are all encouraged to be involve in work. The economic assumptions underlying marriage are changing as women attain increased earning power. In the new society, women become emancipated. The authority pattern in the family has been re-evaluated. It becomes less dogmatic and more pragmatic. Marriage has moved from partners with fixed roles to partners with fluid roles (Grunebaum, 1976:6). The whole concept of the role and expectation changes are based on the theory of equalitarianism. According to this principle, the traditional roles and expectations are being replaced with the principle of the most efficient and equitable assignment of tasks under the given circumstances. For instance, if the wie works outside the home, the husband will be expected to handle more of the household tasks (Bier, 1965:46).

In the equalitarian type of family life, the husband is still expected to be the primary provider for the family, but not the only provider. The role is shared by both spouses. According to the census definition, he is head of the family. Nevertheless, functionally he is not the head of the family in the traditional, authoritarian and patriarchal sense. The major decision will not be made by the husband but by the couple together. As the role of father, he is more than a provider and a disciplinarian, but also shares the lives of his children. As the role of husband, he is expected to be a companion to his wife, to share leisure time with her and to engage with her in social activities and recreational pursuits (Bowman, 1960:25-30).

Women who were honored as housewives and mothers and were admired for their virtues and domestic accomplishment in the colonial days (Baber, 1964:104-105) have changed their roles and expectations. They work not only in the home but also outside the home. They have received increasing economic equality in their job market, in business, and in their professions. Although as working mothers, they have been blamed for the problems in the stability and happiness of the marriage and for the function of the family (Bier, 1965: 36). However, studies also show that the correlation is not significant (Nye, 1963:190-191). They enjoy more independence and more freedom of choice. Although some of them seek employment to escape homemaking duties, care of children, or

boredom, nevertheless, they are others who seek employment for self-expression, to prevent stagnation of personal development, to work with husband in his business or profession, or to render service to mankind and public. They are making increasingly better use of their training, education, and resources (Bowman, 1960:38).

#### d. Divorce

In the contemporary American family life-style, divorce is an important and popular phenomenon. During the colonial days, the Puritans considered marriages as a civil contract. Husband and wife could not live apart, for it was looked upon as an affront to family life (Baber, 1964:99-101). In the modern days, marriage has become in interesting paradox. There is a high approval of marriage as a way of life and it is felt to be the most important relationship for an individual in the society. It is the relationship which provides greatest satisfaction. Meanwhile, the marriage in United States is characterized by a high divorce rate. In 1965, studies showed that about one in four marriages ended in divorce (Bier, 1965:39-40). However, the World Almanac in 1976 stated that one out of every three marriages came apart (Cirese, 1977:254). In 1978, the U.S. Department of HEW revealed that there were about 1.1 million divorces and 2.2 million marriages. The annual number of couples divorced during that year was about 1,122,000 (Reiss, 1980:316). The phenomenon of divorce will still increase because a large proportion of the popula-

tion in America approves of divorce as a way out of unsuccessful marriages.

Blame has been placed on various reasons, for instances, urbanization, unemployment, underemployment, generation gap, and women's liberation. Many mothers leave their young families as they hope and believe that they still have a chance to make a different life for themselves. Americans believe that from the mistakes made in their first marriage, women and men learn how to do it better the second time around. However, a large proportion of those who have resorted to divorce once choose this method as the easier solution again and again. Not only the couple but their children also suffer. Some of them will grow up as step-children. Others will be moved from foster family to foster family. They are uprooted from the only security they have known and no longer dare to trust fully of the love they receive in other homes (Henslin, 1980:535-538).

Historical and cultural differences of the immigrants from different countries influence the establishment of the early American family system. In addition, the historical development of America such as the American Revolution, the westward movement, the Industrial Revolution, and the modernization have cultivated and nurtured the philosophy of individualism and democracy in the American family system.

### C. HEBREW CULTURE

The word "Hebrew" is derived from the name of the ancestor Eber in Genesis 11:14-17 and 'Apiru or Hapiru (Bright, n.d.:92-94). Among the Hapiru or 'Apiru was Abraham (Alexander, 1973:14). Originally, the term 'Apiru or Hapiru did not refer to an ethnic unit but to a stratum in society. It apparently denoted a class of people without citizenship, who lived on the fringes of the existing social structure, without roots or fixed place in it. They pursued a semi-nomadic existence. In Genesis 14:13, "Then one who had escaped came, and told Abram the Hebrew...." it was here alone is Abraham called a "Hebrew." It is customary to refer to the Israelites and the Jews today as Hebrews (Bright, n.d.: 92-94).

The origin of Israel began o the first half of th second millennium B.C., about 2000 to 1550 B.C. These were disturbed centuries with movements, migrations, and invasions (Bright, n.d.:47). Abraham was born in lower Mesopotamia (Richards, 1982:42). He was a Semite. His ancestors were pagan worshipers of the moon god. Although they were predominantly of Northwest-Semitic stock, they were doubtless a mixture of many strains, such as the kinship of Moab, Ammon, Edom and the Arabian tribes of Midian (Genesis 19:30-38; 25:1-5, 12-18; 36). The Hebrew had, however, an especially strong feeling of kinship to the Arameans (Bright, n.d.:89). It was during this second millennium B.C. that Abraham's father Terah migrated to Haran



from Ur of the Chaldees. After Terah died, Abraham was called by God to leave and migrated into Canaan, the earlier name of Palestine (Anderson, 1975:24-25).

It is important to realize that Palestine was marked by its amazing cultural flowering and complication. There a number of mature cultures and civilizations touched, influenced and impacted the land. Among these were the early and advanced Sumerian culture of Mesopotamia (Kramer, 1965:332-333), the culture of Assyria and other countries of the Fertile Crescent (Trawick, 1970:4), and the culture and civilization of the Nile (Bright, n.d.:27-32). Hence, the myths, culture, customs and civilizations of all these countries had a great impact of the new Hebrew nation--in fact the Hebrews probably did not become a nation until the Exodus from Egypt (Trawick, 1970:9).

In the early time, the Hebrew revealed no talent for science nor artistic skill but excelled in law, literature, and philosophy. All of these subjects were closely allied with religion. The influence of the Hebrews had been chiefly religious and ethical (Burns, 1974:88-92).

The patriarchal history of the Hebrew began in Ur of the Chaldeans (Genesis 11:31). It was represented by Abraham, Issac, Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 12-50). The Hebrew patriarchal system was characterized by a strong clan or family solidarity (Anderson, 1975:37). The father had absolute power and authority over his wife and children. Polygamy had

been customary in this patriarchal era and persisted into the Divided Kingdom in 922 B.C. After the eighth century B.C., polygamy became less and less common, it was not officially declared illegal for the Hebrews until several centuries later (Trawick, 1970:14).

Under the Jewish law, woman was vastly inferior to man. In fact, she was regarded as a thing by the law and was part of the property of her husband over which he had complete rights of disposal. According to the Jewish law and custom it was unthinkable that women should claim any kind of equality with men (Barclay, 1965:108-111).

In Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-18, the incidence that Abraham tried to pass off Sarah as his sister and Issac did the same with Rebekah (Genesis 26:7-11) revealed that Hebrew society was matrilineal. In this matrilineal society, a man's wife was not of the same lineage as he, but his sister was. Property and wealth were passed down the female descent line but usually controlled by the males. The males controlled the property and wealth but the females established the line of inheritance. Hence brother-sister relationship was more important than the husband-wife relationship (Grunlan, 1979: 273).

The Hebrew kinship system was patrilineal in descent, patrilocal in residence and clan-endogamous in marriage. The preferred marriage arrangement was parallel cousin marriage. The ideal match for a man was the daughter of his father's

brother or the daughter of the brother's son of his father's father. It is to this kinsman in the Haran area that Abraham sent to find a wife for his son Issac (Genesis 24) (Grunlan, 1979:185).

Divorce was not common in the traditional Hebrew culture. However, from the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisee in the New Testament is revealed that the Mosaic law which permitted divorce was a concesssion to the people who had hardness of heart (Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:1-12). It was the Greek culture and Roman law which permitted either the husband or the wife to institute divorce, but not a Jewish custom (Eiselen, 1929:983).

In the Levirate marriage, the custom stated that if a man died childless, his brother or his next of kin could marry his widow in order to perpetuate the dead man's family and save his name from extinction. The son born of a Levirate marriage was considered to be the dead man's son (Deen, 1963:14). This custom is shown in the story of Ruth and in the question which the Sadducees asked Jesus in the New Testament (Mark 12:18-27).

The Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21-23) was Israelite case law. It had close parallels with the Mesopotamian legal tradition, especially in the Codes of Eshnunna and of Hammurabi. It reflected Israelite legal practice in the earliest period of her life as a people (Bright, n.d.:87). However, the finest example of Jewish law was the Deuteronomic

Code, which formed the core of the Book of Deuteronomy. It was based in part upon the Code of the Covenant. Generally its provisions were more enlightened than those of Hammurabi's code (Burns, 1974:88).

God called and chose Abraham, the Hebrew. He gave laws to the Israelites for their direction and protection as they developed a new life in the land of God's promise. It was also His intention to choose this nation to reveal His salvation.

When God sought to communicate with the Hebrews, He did not demand them to learn a language and culture that allowed them to better understand His will and lovingness. In the Old Testament time, He employed the existing Hebrew linguistic and cultural forms in spite of their inadequacy and imperfections. He did not reject human culture as either too evil, inadequate or imperfect to serve as the vehicle for His will. He used this imperfectible, finite, and limited culture to communicate His supreme revelation. The same truth is also found in the New Testament time when He chose to use the Greek culture (Kraft, 1979:114-115).

Hebrew culture is just an ordinary human culture. However God has used it to reveal His will. The Hebrews could either choose or refuse His principles and guidelines in their cultural life.

#### D. THE CRISIS IN CHRISTIAN FAMILY

From the study and exploration of Chinese, American and Hebrew cultures, the dynamic of each culture is derived from its significant characteristics. Culture itself is not static. Each culture has its uniqueness but also allows interaction with others. There are differences between cultures due to different emphasis, for instance, the Western culture puts its emphasis on religion and science but the Eastern culture puts its stress on ethic and art (錢穆, 1979:100). The differences do not mean that one is better or superior to the other.

The crisis in establishing a Christian marriage and family is mainly due to the misinterpretation and confusion of the culture dynamic and impact in the system. In the Bible, especially the Old Testament, there is a thorough description of the Jewish nation. Hence Hebrew culture has sometimes been misregarded as the biblical theology. In addition, from the viewpoint of oriental Christian, Western culture symbolizes with the biblical principle because missionaries are mainly come from the Western world. Their teachings from either the biblical perspective or western cultural perspective are sometimes amalgamated. However, this misunderstanding and confusion should be clarified.

The cultural dynamic of the Christian family is based on the general characteristics of each culture. God allows each Christian family from different cultures to establish his

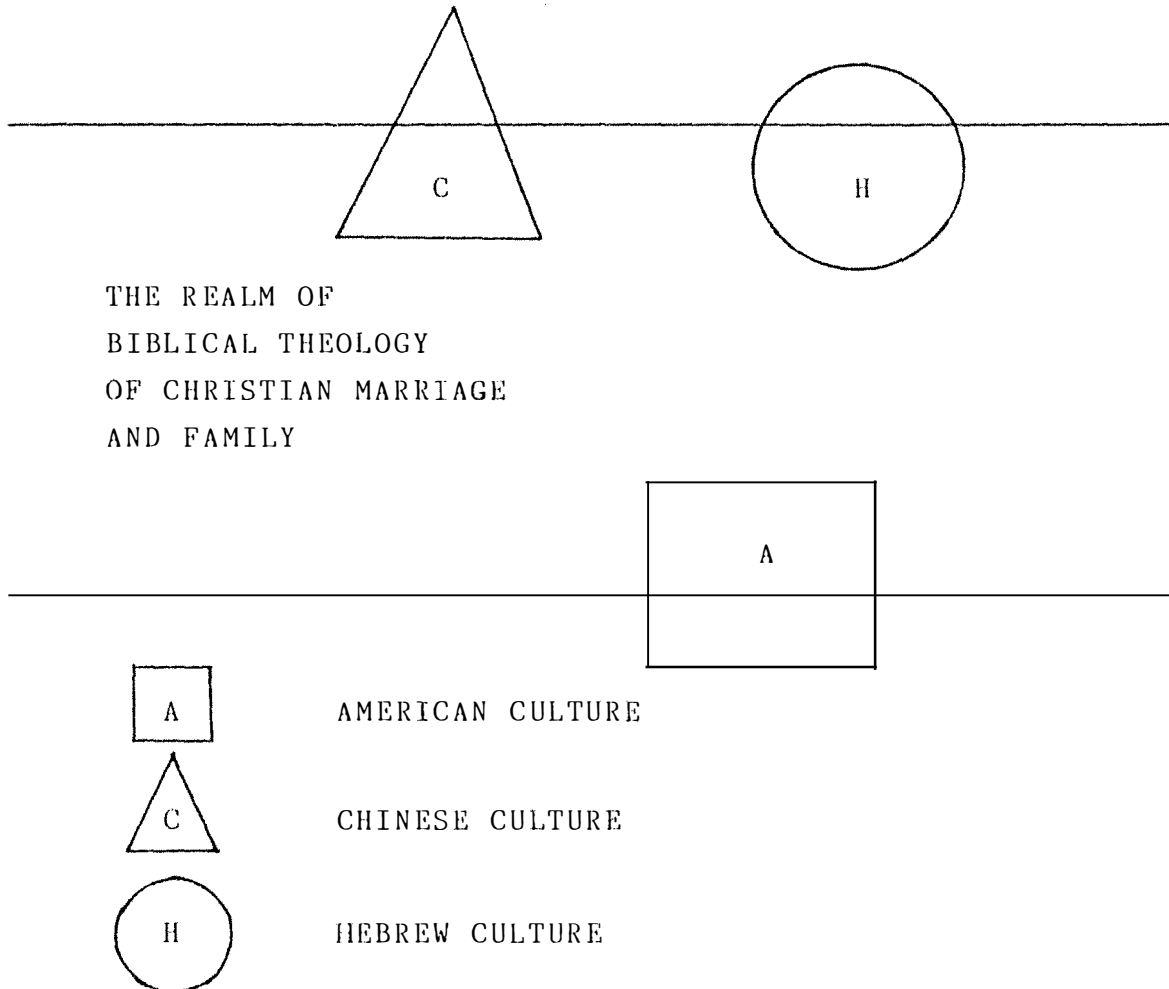
family system according to his unique culture. He also permits each Christian family to build his family system under mutual cultural influence and integration. Nevertheless each culture does not represent the biblical criteria. The criteria of biblical theology include the General and Specific Criteria. These criteria form the realm of biblical principles. It is important to aware and acknowledge that the Bible does not present a Christian culture but a theology of a Christian marriage and family. God allows cultural variation of the Christian family within the realm of the biblical theology of Christian family. No culture fits perfectly and completely in the realm. However, when a culture violates the theological criteria, it does not mean that the whole culture is in violation but only certain aspects. For instance, premarital sex in American culture and polygamy in traditional Chinese and Hebrew cultures are violations. It is these parts which violate the biblical theolgoy of a Christian family that need to be changed, corrected or eliminated. It is also true that there are certain aspects of each culture which fall within the realm of the biblical theology. It is God's will and the christian's responsibility to discern, underline and establish the family on the parts of his culture which is according to the biblical theology of Christian family. Each culture which lies within the realm of the biblical criteria can establish its family system either under its uniqueness or mutual influence and interaction.

It also can further apply the theological principles to develop new aspects of culture in its Christian family system.

The cultural dynamic of a Christian family is, therefore, first based on the biblical theology, both General and Specific, of a Christian marriage and family. In addition, it is important to distinguish the general characteristics and the parts of the culture which lie within the realm of biblical theology of Christian family.

THE REALM OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY  
OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

FIGURE 1



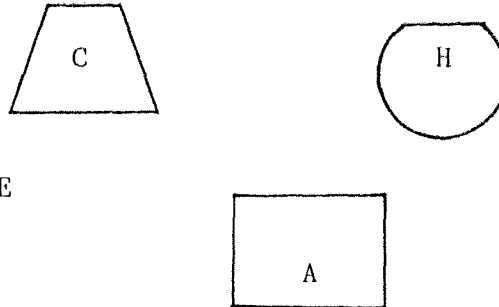
The diagram indicates that there are certain aspects of every culture which violate the biblical theology of a Christian marriage and family. However, it is also true that there are certain aspects of each culture that fall within the realm of the biblical theology.



FIGURE 2

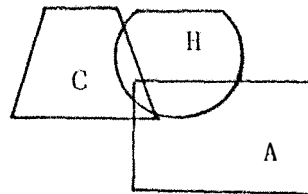

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THE REALM OF  
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY  
OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE  
AND FAMILY

FIGURE 3


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THE REALM OF  
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY  
OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE  
AND FAMILY




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The above diagrams show the models which a Christian family should establish. It can either be built according to its culture which falls within the realm of biblical theology or according to mutual culture interaction in the same realm. The parts of each culture which violate the biblical theology should be eliminated. Each culture can further use the theological principles to develop new aspects of culture in its Christian family system.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter will begin by briefly reviewing the summaries of the preceding exploration and postulation. A final conclusion of this paper will then be elicited. Suggestions for further study will also be proposed.

### A. SUMMARY

Chapter I presents the purpose and the limitation of the paper. The dynamic of Christian marriage and family is proposed from two perspectives. First of all, the dynamic is derived from the full acknowledgement and integration of the holistic model, which encompasses the four dimensions: Physical, Psychological, Sociological, and Spiritual. In addition, the dynamic is revealed from the pertinent construction of a cultural based Christian family.

In the consideration of building a Christian marriage and family, undoubtedly, the focus will lie on the biblical principles. Chapter II explores and discusses the basic biblical theology of Christian marriage and family. Two important Criteria, the General and the Specific, are advocated. The biblical principles of the General Criteria are given to all the human race. This Criteria embraces the most fundamental biblical principles for establishing a family. The Specific Criteria is distinctive biblical principles which are given to Christian only. It elucidates the biblical position and determination in dealing with specific issue concerning Christian's relationship and view-

point in marriage and family. The emphasis of family relationship is based upon the responsibilities of familymembers. Divorce is forbidden, because God sees marriage as a permanent bond between two committed couples. Hence the decision of getting marry should be seriously considered. Celibacy is not a demand but a personal self-discipline ambition for the ministry of God.

In Chapter III, the holistic model is presented and analyzed. The dynamic of Christian marriage and family rests in the acknowledgment and homeostatic interaction of the four dimensions of the holistic model. These dimensions are equally important and interdependent. Each of them has distinctive functions. Many of the problems and crisis in the Christian family are due to the disowning or disintegration of these dimensions.

Chapter IV expounds the cultural dynamic of a Christian family on the basis of establishing an unique cultural based Christian family. Every culture has its characteristics and God allows cultural variation in the Christian marriage and family. The dynamic is to establish the cultural based Christian family within the realm of biblical principles, which includes both General and Specific Criteria. Each culture should eliminate its parts which violate the biblical theology of marriage and family. In addition, each culture can use the theological principles to develop new aspects of culture, either under its uniqueness or interact with other cultures,

in its Christian family system.

## B. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to point out new perspectives for viewing the Christian marriage and family. The focus points to the dynamic of Christian marriage and family lie in the holistic model and the cultural dynamic of establishing this model. The definition of family in this paper is the holistic complex social system which was originated by God and which He regulates in a dynamic way. Hence, the exercise of the dynamics depends upon the acknowledgment, acceptance, and the maintenance of homeostatic integration of the four dimensions which play equal and interdependent roles in the holistic model. The function and interaction of the four dimensions will equip the married couples and other members with a sound understanding of the dynamics of marriage and family in their search for rewarding, happy, and successful family life. It also provides specific guidelines for diagnosing marital problems. The crisis and problem in the Christian family is mainly due to the fact of either disowning the responsibility of fulfilling or homeostatic maintaining the four dimensional needs and functions.

In the emphasis of cultural dynamic of establishing the holistic model, it is important to recognize that all cultures have historically manifested some capacity to be expressive in sensitive and creative ways; but there are marked variations

among them, and in some instances the range of variation is vast indeed. It follows that no culture deserves to be neglected in search for a full grasp of establishing a cultural based Christian family. For each culture exemplifies the concrete nature of God's working within the range of its available structures. It is His will and the Christian's responsibility to discern and establish his family on the parts of his culture following the biblical theology of a Christian family.

In establishing a Chinese Christian family the biblical criteria which the culture must not directly violate include the Divine Institution, Monogamy, Heterosexual Relationship, Permanent Bond, Companionship, Procreation, Maturity, Family Is A Teaching Place, and Honor Among All. Items also found in Specific Criteris include the Wife's Responsibility, Parent and Children Relationship, Divorce, and Celibacy. However, the biblical criteria which need to be strengthened and improved are A New Relationship, Mutual Subservience, and Fidelity in General Criteria, as well as, the Husband's Responsibility in the Specific Criteria.

For instance, the complexity of the Chinese marriage rite reveals the honoring of marriage. The concept of marriage as a Divine Institution and Honor Among All will be easily accepted and underlined in a Chinese Christian family. In addition, the criteria of Permanent Bond can be vividly observed because divorce is regarded as a disgrace to the

society. A homosexual relationship is never practiced in the marriage.

In the book of Mencius, children are highly underscored. Hence, the emphasis of procreation can be easily adopted. Confucius further indicates that the family is the basic teaching place for moral training. In a Chinese Christian family, the Word of God can be used as the principle and content of moral training. Hence the emphasis of conceiving and nurturing of children are harmonized with the biblical criteria of Procreation and Family Is A Teaching Place.

According to Confucian idea of husband-wife relationship, the "husband leads and wife follows." Submission is the virtue of wife. The value and beauty of submission is further described and confirmed in Tao Te Ching, the teaching of Laozi. The parent and child relationship is clearly stated in the Book Of Rites, Book Of Filial Piety, Twenty-Four Stories Of Filial Piety, and the original meaning and practice of ancestor worship.

However, the traditional image of authority which views the grandfather/father as the head and main source of discipline still remains in many Chinese family life-styles. Nevertheless the biblical criteria of marriage and family is a New Relationship where the central foundation is built upon the husband-wife relationship. The elements for building this new family is aby "leaving" the parents. This is the affirmation of the maturity and independent of the married couple to establish a

new family system. Hence in a Chinese Christian family, the parents should be aware and allow their children to build their own independent family. However it must be acknowledged that building a new and independent family system does not imply establishing a totally separated or isolated system. Showing respect, honor, filial piety and interaction with the parents still needs to be maintained and strengthened. Yet the central core and authority now belongs to the husband and wife.

Providing and taking care of family daily needs is the husband's responsibility in Chinese culture. The emphasis of husband and wife relationship seems to be "Husband-domination and wife-submission". The biblical criteria of Mutual Subservience with love and respect from the husband should be greatly improved. In addition, the dominant figure of the husband and the emphasis of children, especially a son, will easily be an excuse for having extramarital sexual relationships which will jeopardize the stability of the family.

In the American or Hebrew Christian family the areas of concern might be different or similar. For instance the areas of concern in building the American Christian family are to against the cultural approval and acceptance of homosexual marriage relationship and divorce. They are contradicted with the biblical principles of Heterosexual Relationship, Permanent Bond, and Honor Among All. In addition, because of the emphasis

of equalitarian type of family life where both husband and wife are working, the family can hardly be a teaching place for the children. The responsibility seems to rely on the school and other professional institutions for educating the children. In fact, not having any children is widely postulated and accepted.

Because of the emphasis of individualistic philosophy in American culture, the parent and child relationship seems not only independent but isolated. The freedom and romantic courtship and the acceptance of divorce will easily be an excuse for premarital and extramarital sexual relationships.

In the Hebrew Christian family, the major areas of concern and improvement are Monogamy, A New Relationship, Mutual Subservience, Fidelity, and the Husband's Responsibility. The practice of polygamy is a challenge to monogamy. The successful establishment of a new marriage and family relationship under the strong kinship and patrilineal system is a prior concern. The customary inferiority of woman under the Jewish law violates the biblical criterial of Mutual Subservience and Husband's loving responsibility. The practice of polygamy and the superiority of the husband threatens the fidelity in the family.

Hence, in establishing a cultural based Christian family, the difference or similarity between the Chinese, American, or Hebrew family model is mainly on the areas of the culture which harmonize or violate the Biblical criteria. Special marital



problems and crisis will be precipitated in the holistic model if the areas of violation are not improved.

### C. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In the study of the dynamics of Christian marriage and family, it is the writer's prayer that the purpose of the paper will sensitize and motivate Christians to be concerned more with the needs of every area of family life. For the further exploration of the dynamics of Christian family, the suggestions will be on three perspectives.

1. A more detail exploration of the possible problems and solutions which will arise from each dimension of the holistic model when the dimension(s) is not fulfilled or being denied.

2. It is the hope that the dynamics of Christian family can be further examined through empirical studies.

3. A more detail distinction of the parts of the Hebrew culture which are according to biblical principles and the parts of the culture which are not conforming to the Bible.

## CHINESE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MODEL

CULTURE			
B I B L I C A L  C R I T E R I A	GENERAL          CRITERIA	AREA OF HARMONY	AREA OF IMPROVEMENT
		DIVINE INSTITUTION	A NEW RELATIONSHIP
		MONOGAMY	MUTUAL SUBSERVIENCE
		HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP	FIDELITY
		PERMANENT BOND	
		COMPANIONSHIP	
		PROCREATION	
		MATURITY	
		FAMILY IS A TEACHING PLACE	
		HONOR AMONG ALL	
SPECIFIC   CRITERIA		WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY	HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY
		PARENTS AND CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP	
		DIVORCE	
		CELIBACY	

AMERICAN CHRISTIAN FAMILY MODEL

CULTURE			
B I B L I C A L  C R I T E R I A	GENERAL	AREA OF HARMONY	AREA OF IMPROVEMENT
		DIVINE INSTITUTION	HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP
	CRITERIA	MONOGAMY COMPANIONSHIP MATURITY A NEW RELATIONSHIP MUTUAL SUBSERVIENCE	PERMANENT BOND FIDELITY PROCREATION FAMILY IS A TEACHING PLACE HONOR AMONG ALL
	SPECIFIC CRITERIA	HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP CELIBACY	PARENTS AND CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP DIVORCE

HEBREW CHRISTIAN FAMILY MODEL

CULTURE			
B I B L I C A L           C R I T E R I A	GENERAL       CRITERIA	AREA OF HARMONY	AREA OF IMPROVEMENT
		DIVINE INSTITUTION	A NEW RELATIONSHIP
		COMPANIONSHIP	MUTUAL SUBSERVIENCE
		PROCREATION	FIDELITY
		MATURITY	
		HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP	
		PERMANENT BOND	
		FAMILY IS A TEACHING PLACE	
	HONOR AMONG ALL		
	SPECIFIC    CRITERIA	WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY	HUSBAND'S RESPONSIBILITY
PARENTS AND CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP			
DIVORCE			
CELIBACY			

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