

**THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON ABAGUSII TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE  
CUSTOMS WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE PAYMENT OF DOWRY**

**A CASE OF GUCHA DISTRICT, KISII COUNTY**

**BY**

**DAMARIS OKENO**

**MAR-3-2706-1/2012**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE CONFERMENT OF A DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES OF THE KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY**



**MARCH, 2014**

### **Abstract**

The research assessed the influence of Christianity on Kisii traditional marriage with particular reference to bride wealth in Gucha District, Kisii county Kenya. The researcher looked at the influence of Christianity on the Kisii traditional view of bride wealth. The researcher also looked at the importance of dowry in the Kisii traditional society. At the same time the study found out the differences between the Kisii traditional and Christian view of bride wealth. The research further established aspects in the Kisii traditional view of dowry that can be used to enrich Christian view of bride wealth so as to sustain the primary aim of marriage. The study is justified because it will be relevant to the youths in the Kisii community to establish a need to embrace the payment of bride wealth in their Christianity. The church on the same note will be able to adopt important aspects from the traditional view of bride wealth of the Abagusii purposely to enrich the payment of dowry in the Christian church. The study employed a descriptive research design with an aim of providing accurate and valid representation of the variables related to the research questions. Processing the data was collected by the use of codes that were easy to analyze the data using the Krejcie and Morgan table in determining the sample size. The target of the study was the elderly people in the district of age between 60 years and 90 years. Their estimated population was 50 and the sample size was 44 people. Another target group was the church members who were estimated to be 110 and the sample size was 86 members. Lastly it targeted youths in the church that estimated to 100 and the sample size was 80 of them who were to give their view on the same. The study carried out a purposive sampling technique in order to identify the respondents easily and quickly. The validity and reliability of the instruments was tested when they were applied in the field by use of content validity and the split-half method. The ethical considerations taken into account were keeping the information given confidential and observe the rules of the people by maintaining their respect by using an acceptable language within the community. The study found out that both Christian and traditional marriages interact in one way or another. Both share a system of bride wealth negotiation, the ceremonies binding the payment of bride wealth, which assists in preventing divorce. Further, the respondents on variables conformed that both dowry systems are interlinked. However, a few respondents felt that the traditional marriage system of bride wealth seem that families were selling and it is not a price given for upkeep. The study therefore, recommended that there should be a uniform system of bride wealth in both Christian and traditional marriages. In addition to that, there should be a uniform form of bride wealth negotiation and terms of payment among all groups.