

COALITION AND ACTION TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD AND THE FAMILY

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Marriage is the unity of man and woman which is highly recommended by God in Genesis 2:24 “That is why a man leaves his father mother and in united with his wife and they became one”. That means that the coupled has joined an institution of marriage of two complete strangers.

Gender Violence:

In the marriage institution gender violence is caused by Bride Price. Bride Price is what the man pays to the parents of the bride before the lady is given out to him. The couple begins experiencing bitterness, aggressiveness, anger, temper and bullying in the family.

It is natural to disagree with people you interact with (at times) but bride price makes the violence very frequent. The tendency of parents sitting around a table and deciding on how much a boy should pay as Bride price should be stopped. Bride price is a degrading practice and takes us back to the slave trade era. It makes parents of the boy to exploit the parents of the girl. A wife is taken for granted as property because it was bargained and a compromise reached, bride price paid and an agreement signed by the two parties

Family relationships can improve if bride price is abolished. Marriage will be based on organic love not on material gains each person will have to sow love in the marriage institution since no one has exploited the other.

Men who treat their wives as their properties will replace violence with empathy. Discarding bride price will bring harmony in homes. Parents will not point fingers at each other, issues will be discussed and the whole family will be happy and confident.

Since Bride price incites violence in a family, there will not be happiness as in II Samuel 3:13-14. That aggressive authority that a man uses like David did will stop according to God’s words in:-

Genesis 31:14-15 Rachael and Leah complained about their father Laban for having sold them (Bride Price)
2nd Samuel 3:13-14 David with bitterness and aggressiveness claims back his wife Mikali (Michael) for he had bought her with 100 of the Philistines foreskins.

In Deuteronomy 22:28-29 Exodus 22:6-17 spells out punishment for a man who commits defilement or rape (violence of the girls virginity).

For a better relationship the marriage institution should be entered into with gifts rather than bride price whereby bargaining and agreement signing is out.

♦ Participation of the youth.

Youths are the future leaders. The elders have to see to it that they grow up well. The earlier bride price is discarded the better for they will learn that women are not to be taken as a property. They will stop involving themselves with losers’ pretences for the sake of material gains so as to take wealth to the girls parents.

Many youth have had many different problems because of bride price like

- (a) HIV infection because of looking for wealth.
- (b) Conception at an early age and no way of maintaining the child – comes out as a street child.
- (c) Death when delivering

And the youth before deciding on marriage should bear in mind that a woman is a helper so before marriage should base their relationship on organic love. Not materials or witchcraft love. They should not put emphasis on wealth but on quality. They should know that this marriage institution is not a bed of roses all the time. They should expect ups and downs and know that in marriage one has got to work 24hrs.