

The Christian View of Levirate Marriage in a Changing South Africa

M. E. Baloyi

*Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology,
University of South Africa, South Africa*

KEYWORDS Marriage. African. Culture. Bride Wealth. Tradition. Women's Rights

ABSTRACT African people respected marriage to an extent of trying to protect it at all costs. One of the protective measures was the introduction of levirate, in which the deceased's brother was expected to marry the widow. Similarly, a man who lost his wife would marry her sister to replace her; the Tsonga people term a new wife, married to take the place of a deceased wife, *xipfula-yindlu*. Levirate marriage is practised in the African community, although currently economic and legal factors exert an influence on the situation. The aim of this article is to examine whether the practice of forced marriage, particularly in instances of the death of a husband, still occurs in light of the democratic changes that are taking place in South Africa. This study discusses levirate practices from ancient times to the present in South Africa to check whether levirate marriage remains relevant in the current context.