

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry  
Emphasis in Marriage and Family

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: A PROGRAM FOR MINIMIZING DIVORCE RATE AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS IN CENTRAL ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE**

Researcher: Dumisani Ncube

Faculty advisor: Leonard Masuku, DPTTh

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As a response to the alarming upward trend of the divorce rate in Central Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the researcher developed and implemented a comprehensive intervention strategy as a way of minimizing the divorce rate among couples in cognizance of the contributory factors. It was observed that divorce hinders the well-being of families and the missionary work of the church. Divorce was found to be a real problem—one that God did not command, but only permitted as a concession.

The intervention strategy was developed based on the survey involving 178 participants, who were both males and females. The quantitative methodology of research was used and questionnaires were administered. A total number of 80 people participated in the implementation of the program of which 70 were couples and 10 were female spouses.

The study involved males and females aged eighteen years and above. The marriage institution and the development of divorce were thoroughly investigated with reference to cultural diversity and significance. Data was collected using questionnaires, analysed and interpreted accordingly. The program was then evaluated in line with the responses.

The major findings revealed that unfaithfulness among couples was the chief cause of divorce which represents 67%. The other contributory factors were money issues and sexual deprivation among couples which represents 10% and 8%, respectively.

A comprehensive curriculum was designed in response to the findings and three seminars with 18 sessions were conducted. Five facilitators, including the researcher, took part in the program from start to finish. Almost all of the participants indicated that the intervention program benefited them and minimized divorce.

The whole program culminated with a couples outing held at a local primary school. During this time all couples who participated were certificated in marriage vows renewal. Finally, it was found that marriage is a God-oriented institution and divorce was born through the hard heartedness of the human race. The initial purpose of the research was to develop and implement a strategy aimed at minimizing divorce through seminars. The goal was realised, but there remains a lot to be researched in this area.

Based on the findings, recommendations are made to pastors that they be skilled in topics relating to sexuality in order to assist congregations in this area. It is recommended that educational institutions that offer church growth studies make family matters part of the curriculum since it has proved to be fruitful in terms of

evangelism. Further research on the subject is recommended since culture is dynamic and impacting factors may change.

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ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS IN CENTRAL  
ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE

A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Dumisani Ncube

February 2017

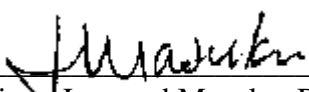


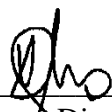
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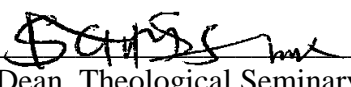
by  
Dumisani Ncube

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor: Leonard Masuku, DPTH

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Programme Director, DMin  
Kelvin Onongha, PhD, DMin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader: Arna Galeniece, DMin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, Theological Seminary  
Sampson Nwaomah, PhD

Extension Site: Solusi University

Date: July 2017

Dedicated to Gweru South District of the Seventh-day  
Adventist Church and the Central Zimbabwe  
Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists

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## CHAPTER 1

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Chapter one gives a short introduction of the research and a brief background of the researcher. It gives the context of the study in relation to the problem to be studied. Again in this chapter the researcher provides a statement of the problem and the purpose of research as well as the justification of carrying out the study, the rationale for the research is also given. The method used in doing the study for collecting and analysing data is also given. In addition the methodology for evaluating the project is indicated. The research limitations and the expected results of the research are outlined. The contributions of the research to the existing knowledge is shown accordingly.

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

The Ministry Context of this research is in Central Zimbabwe Conference (CZC) of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. The researcher has served in this Conference as a pastor for 28 years. Has also worked as the stewardship director for three years, as a ministerial secretary for two years and as the executive secretary for eight years. In addition, the researcher works as a church appointed and government certified marriage officer in the same Conference.

Furthermore, the researcher functions as the vice chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Conference and the vice chairperson of all Conference run schools and all the medical institutions. The Conference is situated in the Midlands and Masvingo provinces. A portion of the Midlands province bounded on by a line

following roads, rivers and the railway line, as drawn on a map of Zimbabwe, annexed hereto, from Sango. It goes to points west of Rutenga, Ingezi, Zvishavane, Adams and Shangani and to Msilahove west of Lower Gweru, Sogwala excluding Kwekwe and Kadoma to Lalapansi, Mavisi and between Mvuma and Chivhu and between Gutu and Buhera, between Bikita and Chipinge on the border of Mozambique.

Zimbabwe is found in southern Africa and is a landlocked country between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers. It is bordered by the country of South Africa to the south, Botswana to the west and southwest. It is bordered as well by Zambia to the Northwest and Mozambique to the east and northeast.<sup>1</sup>

It obtained its independence in 1980 on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April. It has 16 official languages, among those languages, English, Shona and Ndebele are the most commonly spoken in the country as a whole. It has ten provinces of which each has a resident minister who governs the province politically.

The territory is subject to realignment by the Executive Committee through Zimbabwe Union Conference with the approval of the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division. The Conference has 24 schools of which 14 are primary schools and ten are secondary schools. Among the secondary schools three are high schools and three are boarding schools for both primary and secondary students. Furthermore, the Conference has five clinics of which three are operational and two are yet to function according to expectation. There are 28 church districts with resident pastors therein. The Conference has 414 organized churches and 352 companies. The church membership of the Conference is taking an upward trend in terms of growth, currently

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<sup>1</sup> Zimbabwe, accessed 26 September 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=zimbabweans&form=PRUSEN&mkt=en-us&httpsmsn=1&refig=a53e20977d2d4a2>.

the official church membership is at 144 483<sup>2</sup> which is mainly composed of the young generation, many of whom are married couples.

In terms of religion there are very few unchurched people, there are many different churches, the African traditional based churches as well as the conventional ones. The eastern part of the conference is predominantly Catholic, followed by the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. These two denominations have primary and secondary schools as well as colleges for higher education. The third one in terms of membership in the area is the Original Methodist Church in Zimbabwe which also has some mission schools. The main languages spoken in Central Zimbabwe Conference are English which is spoken throughout the conference, the Shona which is also widely spoken especially in the eastern part of the conference and the central part. The Sindebele which is widely spoken in the central and the western parts of the conference.

The far eastern part of the conference is predominately occupied by the Shangaan people and the language spoken there is also Shangaan. However, there is a handful of Shona and Ndebele speaking people in the area. The conference is headquartered in the Midlands province, in Gweru which is the capital city of the province. The territory is also facing a big challenge of divorce, a considerable number of families has become dysfunctional. From 2013 to 2015, 3800 divorces were recorded which is a cause of concern.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Zimbabwe, accessed 26 September 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=zimbabweans&form=PRUSEN&mkt=enus&httpsmsn=1&refig=a53e20977d2d4a2>, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that a number of married SDA Church members end up divorcing in CZC. This causes a challenge in the welfare of the families concerned. It is generally observed that in Zimbabwe marriages are facing challenges to a level that they end up in divorce and dysfunctional families. Consequently, strong church family values have been compromised and reconciliation has become difficult among church members. The erosion of these social and family values finally lead to divorce.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop, implement and evaluate a strategy aimed at minimizing the divorce rate among SDA Church members in Central Zimbabwe Conference. The researcher sought reasons through the research instruments which assisted in the development and implementation of the strategy.

### **Justification**

Church members have been affected spiritually and socially due to the erosion of social norms. Juvenile delinquency is at its height in CZC<sup>4</sup> and this has become a cause of concern. The social life of the church is at stake and the mission of the church is seriously affected. Therefore, the dissertation is intended to restore the marriage institution to its original state. Divorce will be minimized and families become stable. When families are stable, the Conference will carry out its mission without any difficulties. The successful completion of this dissertation assisted many pastors, social workers in sociology studies and lay members to have spiritually uplifting programs in CZC. God commands that those who are married are to love one

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<sup>4</sup> Itayi Musengi, "Extended Family Breaking up Fast in Zimbabwe," accessed 20 September 2016, [www.pangaea.org/streetchildren/Africa/zimba2.htm](http://www.pangaea.org/streetchildren/Africa/zimba2.htm).

another unconditionally, Ephesians 5:28 because God Himself hates divorce (Mal 2:16).

### **Delimitation**

The research confines itself to a study of SDA Church members in the CZC. Only those who are in the current local church membership records are considered. The study includes female and male Church members aged from 18 years and above in selected churches. The survey is conducted in four churches in the Conference, two churches in the city, one Church in the farms and new resettlement area and one Church in the typical rural area. One district is chosen for the implementation of the program. The first two Churches include the city taking into account the low and high density suburbs. The second two churches include the rural areas and the farms thereof.

### **Methodology and Procedure**

Biblical foundations for the marriage institution and the family, taken from the Old and New Testaments, are investigated in order to gain some information about love, marriage, intermarriage and divorce. Forgiveness is discussed and analysed in the context of the Bible. The theological problem of the project is identified and a solid Biblical foundation is formulated around the answers to the problem. Ellen G. White books are investigated to find supportive information on the given themes.

The marriage union is theologically investigated through the engagement in the conversation with the Bible. At the end of the chapter which is chapter two in this case, a summative account is given as a reiteration of themes and ideas discussed in the chapter. However, the summary of the chapter leaves an open window for further investigation of the subject in question which is divorce.

In the area of literature review in chapter three, various categories of topics related to the study are taken into account. These include marriage as a covenant, marriage as a contract and the family as the fabric of the society. Furthermore, marriage is investigated according to culture and religious perspective. Divorce causes and effects on couples and children are discussed. Moreover, love and forgiveness are surveyed in relation to the marriage union. Contemporary SDA writers and other Christian authors are reviewed.

The headship and submission as it relates to marriage is discussed and analysed accordingly. Authors are allowed to agree and differ where possible. Ideas are compared and contrasted around the central factors of the research. The roadmap for further research in the area of study is formulated, Conclusions are drawn from facts and reasons therein which shape the subject under study.

In line with the theological and theoretical research, the following procedures are undertaken in the fourth chapter of the research. A description of the ministry context is shown in the form of macro and micro contexts. The quantitative methodology is used, a survey is carried out, Questionnaires are administered according to the quantitative research methodology to investigate the nature and the extent of the problem, a remedial program is developed and implemented. Data is collected, analyzed, interpreted and evaluated which leads to the overall evaluation. The intervention program is informed by the theological foundation, the literature review and the field research. The chapter further gives the criteria used in the recruitment of the participants in the research. A description of the findings in relation to the number of sessions involved and the content thereof is outlined accordingly. Furthermore, a brief summary of the main points is also indicated with the

acknowledgement of the fact that this research is not the end on its own but rather the means towards further researches.

Chapter five gives detailed information as to how the intervention programme is implemented in a chronological and logical manner. A step by step narrative of the intervention is shown in a sequential manner. Moreover, a precise account of the evaluation process is also indicated in a logical and comprehensible manner.

Chapter six in this regard presents a summary of the whole dissertation in relation to a concise description of the evaluation process and the methodology employed thereof. A brief and clear reiteration of all the conclusions in the dissertation is synthesized and a summative conclusion is given. A summary of the findings again is concisely given. Finally in the last chapter which is chapter six, a concise and comprehensive list of recommendations is shown as additional knowledge to the field of research.

### **Expectations**

When the dissertation is completed it is anticipated that it would make a contribution in further research material in the area of divorce. It will minimize divorce among SDA Church members and further strengthen family ties. In addition, the resource material for family ministries will be provided. Again the material will be useful in evangelizing couples in marriage. The resource material will be used for Bible study across the religious divide.

Furthermore, the study will assist in church growth studies and in the area of marital counselling. Moreover, the research is expected to give more insights in the field of sociology in the African context. On another note, the dissertation is entirely expected to bring about an environment for reconciliation among those who are under separation and divorce.

## **Definition of Terms**

**DIVORCE:** It is the dissolution of a marriage bond by a judgment of a court or by an accepted custom in a society.

**DISTRICT:** It refers to a group of churches in a particular territory under the leadership of one local pastor.

**CONFERENCE:** It is a group of church districts in a particular territory administered from one point.

**UNION:** It is a number of conferences in a particular geographical area or territory headquartered and administered at a particular place.

**DIVISION:** It is a section of the General Conference in a particular geographical territory in charge of a number of unions, headquartered and administered at a particular place.

**HOMOSEXUALITY:** It refers to the marriage of people who belong to the same sex or the same sex marriage.

**RESETTLEMENT AREA:** It refers to the area which was initially a farm but latter changed to the settlement area in a village format.

## **Summary**

The chapter looked at the description of the ministry context with regard to the macro and micro elements of the context in relation to the statement of the problem combined with the statement of the purpose. A brief justification of the whole dissertation and delimitations were explained in accordance with the methodology to be used in the research. The expectations anticipated in the study were briefly outlined. The terms to be used in the research were defined accordingly. The next chapter is going to discuss the theological foundation aspect of the marriage

institution and divorce in the bible. The chapter will further discuss marriage and divorce according to the writings of Ellen G. White.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Culture and sociology have immensely eroded the very foundation of marriage in Zimbabwe. Subsequently both the society and church are in the dilemma of defining and redefining marriage as it relates to who is supposed to marry in regard to societal norms.

The research tends to reveal that God is the founder of marriage and further that marriage is a God-oriented institution. This chapter seeks to investigate the solemnization of the first marriage by God before sin. It further discusses, the marriage institution as a covenant and as noted in the writings of Ellen G. White. Moreover, the chapter indicates the state of the marriage institution after the Edenic fall and the perversions thereof which include divorce, homosexuality, intermarriage and many others.

#### **Marriage in the Bible**

The Bible presents marriage as a union for life given to the human race. It is the institution which God ordained so that the miracle of creation can be manifested to subsequent generations.<sup>1</sup> God united a man and a woman in a unique and profound manner, there is a biological and sexual union in the marriage. Love is shown as the

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<sup>1</sup> Reinhol Bietz, *Happiness under One Roof* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1977), 34.

central part as indicated in Ephesians 5:28-29. Marriage has a spiritual dimension which is a practical source of food for marital growth and health.<sup>2</sup>

Marriage in the Bible is understood to have the third person who is God through Jesus Christ. He works with couples and strengthens them.<sup>3</sup> In Malachi 2:14, the Bible brings out that God is the witness in a marriage relationship or union. It therefore suggests that marriage in the Bible is meant to last forever since God is the witness and guarantor in the marriage union.

### **The Suitable Helper**

Genesis. 2:18 suggests that human beings are sociable beings by origin. The word suitable refers to convenient, appropriate for a given job or occasion.<sup>4</sup> Fee and Hubbard argue that, God declares for the first time that it was not good for the man to be alone according to the creation narrative, they further reveal that God created a woman as Adam's equal in status.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand they argue that God was Adam's helper but the superior one. Again animals were also Adam's helpers but on the inferior side. Eve was the only equal to Adam and suitable for him.<sup>6</sup> The researcher observes that meaningful companionship has no aspects of inferiority and superiority complexes between the equals. True companionship in line with the

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<sup>2</sup> Howard J. Clinebell and Charlotte H. Clinebell, *The Intimate Marriage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 179.

<sup>3</sup> H. Norman Wright, *Communication, Key to Your Marriage* (Glendale, CA: Regale Books Division, 1975), 1.

<sup>4</sup> The New International Version Bibles is used throughout this dissertation unless stated.

<sup>5</sup> M. L. Watkins, *The Complete Christian Dictionary for Home, School and Office* (2002), 388.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

creator shows that human beings were sociable beings and one without the other is somehow incomplete.

Rad points out that man is created for sociability and solitude is termed as not good<sup>7</sup>. Solitude denotes helplessness. Furthermore, Genesis 2:20 reveals that Adam after giving names to all the creatures, no suitable helper was found for him.

Moreover, Von Rad states that the phrase “suitable for him” has the notion of similarity and supplementation.<sup>8</sup> The Bible in Ecclesiastes 4.9-11 supports this view that two are better than one and one cannot do without the help of the other. Taking into account the Song of Solomon 8:6 which brings out that love is as strong as death, the researcher agrees with the writer that Adam’s desire for a similar being was by God’s design.

### **The Profound Declaration**

In Genesis 2.23, Adam made a profound declaration about his newly found companion. “Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, this is now born of my bones and flesh of my flesh” Genesis 2.22-23. The Hebrew word for “this is now” reads as follows *Zoth hapaam* which literally refers to “Finally, here she is.”

Subsequently, this points out Adam’s previous longing for another human being like him because he was the only single person on earth by then<sup>9</sup>. It is also noted that, the word helper means one agreeing with him mentally, physically,

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<sup>7</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976), 83.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>9</sup> H. A. Strong, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium of Three Volumes in One* (Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1973), 265.

spiritually but not an inferior being.<sup>10</sup> It is observed that Eve was mysteriously created from Adam's bones and flesh. The new Bible Commentary asserts that the rib signifies the fact that male and female were originally one.<sup>11</sup>

The human race was in the first place made in a personal unity not as a pair. The researcher identifies that Adam did not witness Eve's childhood, she was given to him in marriage as an adult which suggests that Eve was not a child to Adam neither was she a servant. She was an equal before God with different function and physical features.

### **Leaving**

The first part of Genesis 2.24 brings out that the man is to leave father and mother and be united to his wife. These words are not to be regarded as prophetic sayings on the part of Adam but the words of God Himself.<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, these utterances are an integral part of the declaration made by God at the marriage solemnization ceremony.

It is further observed that the issue of leaving father and mother reveals the sincerity of physical and spiritual unity of man and woman. Moreover, monogamy is portrayed as the standard for marriage ordained by God world over. These words in essence do not suggest that father and mother are to be deprived of their parental respect and care.

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<sup>10</sup> Edward E. Hindson and Woodrow Michael Kroll, *Parallel Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 18.

<sup>11</sup> F. Davidson, A. M. Stribbs and E. F. Kavan, *The New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954), 79.

<sup>12</sup> Francis D. Nichol, ed, "Genesis," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1978), 226.

The leaving entails the fact that a man's wife is to occupy the first place in his affections. The very first duty of the man is to be towards his wife and the love thereof is to exceed but not to supersede the very love for the parents as it were.<sup>13</sup>

### **The One Flesh Principle**

The Bible text in Genesis 2.24 in totality reads, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh." One flesh in this regard recognizes that man and woman constitute an indissoluble union of humankind from every perspective.<sup>14</sup> However, one flesh does not refer to sexual intimacy in a narrow way but rather in a broader way.

Furthermore, God did not take the bone only from Adam but took the bone with flesh attached to it and from the flesh He formed woman's flesh and from the bone as well He formed woman's bones.<sup>15</sup> Looking in the aspect of family, man stands in dire need of the very help from the woman, and thus it is not good for the man to be alone.

It is noted that a man and a woman were originally together, God took a woman from a man which subsequently suggests that by destiny they do belong to each other. Moreover, the researcher observes that the material which was used by God in creating Eve all came from Adam. In Genesis 2:7, the Bible narrates how Adam came into being, how he became a living soul.

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<sup>13</sup> *SDABC*, 227.

<sup>14</sup> Neil M. Alexander, *The New Interpreter's Bible in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 354.

<sup>15</sup> John H. Sailhamer, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 48.

The Bible is silent in the creation of Eve as to whether God breathed into her nostrils or not. It is therefore logical to suggest and admit that Eve was uniquely a product from Adam with a complementary function. The researcher further note that the one flesh union is a function of God in the affairs of the human race, and further that the one flesh business is between a man and a woman.

In view of the holy matrimony, solemnized by God Himself, there is no room for homosexuality or same sex marriage as it were. Again the parents of those who enter into marriage are supposed to be compliant with the Divine mandate as stated that, “the man must leave his father and mother”<sup>16</sup>, which suggests that the one flesh marriage must and should be always heterosexual.

### **Marriage as an Institution**

According to Genesis 1:26-27, God created man in his own image. Looking at this narrative in relation to the creation account, of heaven and earth, it indicates that the creation of man marks the climax of the whole creation exercise. The creation of Eve by God demonstrates the plan of God for the marriage of Adam.

Consequently, the marriage is termed as a marriage between a man and a woman who in their own accord bring their different gifts in equal honour and in equal exercise.<sup>17</sup> All subsequent marriages involved by all standards are a monogamous heterosexual relationship. In actual fact God only made one suitable helper for Adam and she was female, Genesis 2:18. In accordance with this creation narrative, the researcher notes that the creation of a man and woman is a direct act of God not evolution assumptions of man.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 500.

<sup>17</sup> *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), 500.

Marriage as an institution is solely grounded between the husband and wife as well as God. One flesh in essence is actually there for the benefit of Godly offspring<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, the woman is placed alongside the man as his associate and on a personal level as a provider for man's need for companionship as stated in Genesis 2:18.

Indeed, the woman is the suitable helper or partner in both procreation, Genesis 2:24, and in earth's domestication as it relates to Genesis 1:28. Moreover, the woman was assigned to the man as his helper. She is also a co-ruler of the earth on behalf of God. It is this understanding that Adam and Eve were given the mandate to rule the earth and its inhabitants minus the human race.

Furthermore, the researcher notes that the marriage institution does not recognize in any way the ruler-ship of one person over the other. It is in this vein that there is somehow animosity in marriage because there is an element of ruler-ship which was not part of the Divine injunction in as far as the marriage institution is concerned. On another note, Eve was not intended to be a man's child neither was she a keeper or servant but she was by all means to compliment him. She was however supposed to work alongside with him leaving and cleaving for the marriage union<sup>19</sup>.

Eve was to be one with Adam in life and love forever and ever. Adam could not pair him with lower races because he was directly from the fount of Deity.<sup>20</sup> It is God who joins together a man and a woman in a unity which is not simply a partnership with limited liability but rather a unity initiated by the bond of God's spirit which suggests that no man can put asunder.

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<sup>18</sup> Ralph L. Smith, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 325.

<sup>19</sup> Takunboh Adeyemo, *African Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive, 2006), 14.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 81.

## Marriage as a Covenant

It is very important to note and understand the significance of marriage in the light of the Bible, as it relates to the covenant. There are two terms which are often interchangeably used in marriage but do not mean the same thing. These were covenant and contract. Covenants were witnessed by God, with God as the guarantor, whereas contracts are witnessed by people with the state as the guarantor.<sup>21</sup> In simple terms it means that contracts have to do with services of human beings yet covenants refer to the people themselves or engage people.<sup>22</sup>

It therefore means that contracts are made for a definite period of time in question. Covenants have no stipulated time since they involve people, there are valid as long as those people live. Furthermore, contracts can be terminated with possession or material loss to the parties involved. On the other hand covenants cannot be terminated if so it threatens human life since it has to do with persons, in fact it causes human loss.

Moreover, when couples enter into a covenant relationship, they make vows of commitment which go beyond health, poverty and prosperity. When two people happen to enter into a covenant relationship, they live for each other and have everything in common. Similarly the Old Testament introduces marriage as a lifelong link between two individuals who share their lives that they become one in their experience here on earth.<sup>23</sup> Again, the commitment of husband and wife to each other reflects God's covenant commitment to his people.

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<sup>21</sup> Chimezie A. Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence O. Richard, *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 233.

God's ideal marriage is that one of an unbroken covenant which mirrors on earth God's faithfulness to those whom He has chosen to love and cherish. It is observed as well that covenantal relationship bears the aspect of unconditional love as it were. A covenant is made out of total surrender and mutual agreement as mentioned in Genesis 2:24. In the Bible there are basically two kinds of covenants, these are man to man and God to man. In Isaiah 54:10, God reveals Himself as a covenant maker as well as a covenant keeper. In this regard, the covenant is reflected as the supreme methodology of mingling with the human race.<sup>24</sup>

God has presented Himself as the faithful covenant party. In 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, God is further depicted as the one who enables humanity to keep the covenants. Furthermore, man to woman covenants are there to bring about a lasting sense of commitment to each other in terms of relationship.

An example of man to man covenant is found in 1 Samuel 18:1-4, where David and Jonathan made a covenant. All belongings, riches and power are shared and exchanged in honour of the covenant. Garments, sword and bow belonging to Jonathan are given to David in respect to the man to man covenant.

In a healthy covenant, debts, abilities and possessions are shared and used for the benefit of each other, as a way of earning a living and personal protection. In Proverbs 22:17 and Malachi 2:14, the Bible mentions marriage as a covenant. According to Matthew 19:6, God joins marriage and no one is qualified to undo what God has joined together. It is in this regard that when believers marry they enter into a man to woman covenant as well as God to human race covenant.

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<sup>24</sup> Richard, *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, 233.

The marriage covenant in relation to other covenants has the aspects of promises and vows as well as terms. During the wedding couples promise each other love, obedience and respect. The terms of marriage covenant include the vows for richer or scarcity, for better or for worse. According to 1 Corinthians 7:4-5, bodies of couples in a marriage covenant are given to each other without reservations. All possessions and interests are shared and are co-owned. Conflicts in marriage usually arise when parties to the marriage do not comprehend the mutual or complete sharing of everything in marriage. It is viewed that marriages to some extent are not up to the ideal due to the denial of the concept and essence of the marriage covenant. Marriage is regarded as the most sacred covenant in relation to other covenants.<sup>25</sup>

### **Intermarriage in Biblical Perspective**

According to Genesis 6:1-2, the sons of God married the daughters of men. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* identifies the sons of God as the angels, the sons of men as royalty. On the other hand, the commentary asserts that the sons of God refers to the pious men of the line of Seth. The daughters of men has to do with the godless line of Cain<sup>26</sup>.

*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* brings out that the sons of God were the descendants of Seth and the daughters of men are the descendants of Cain. The daughters of men were unbelievers and the sons of God married them for the sake of beauty. Genesis 6:3 suggests that God did not want that practice<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 555.

<sup>26</sup> Frank E. Gaebelien, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 76.

<sup>27</sup> [Gen 6.1-2], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D, Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1978), 250.

In 2 Corinthians 6:13-14, the Bible states that marriage among believers and non-believers is prohibited. According to Deuteronomy 7:3-4, God puts it clear that intermarriage would result in apostasy among the Israelites. In Joshua 23:12-22, Ezra 9:2 and in Nehemiah 13:25 God emphatically forbids intermarriages.

It is observed that the nations in question were not worshipping the God of Heaven or the creator but they were worshipping pagan gods as indicated in Deuteronomy chapter seven. In actual fact the researcher notes that intermarriages in this regard refers to interfaith not international or intertribal.

Looking into the issue of the sons of God and the daughters of men, Seth and Cain were brothers Genesis 4:1 and 25, they were blood relatives, the next of kin. The descendants of Cain were godless yet they were blood relatives with Seth whose descendants were Godly. Furthermore, the researcher rejects the arguments by the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* that sons of God refers to angels, because angels do not marry or given in marriage as stated in Matthew 22:30.

Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 states clearly that forbidden marriage is between a believer and an unbeliever, in other words between a Christian and a non-Christian. Subsequently, intermarriage in the Bible has to do with marriage among people who worship or believe in God the creator of the Heaven and earth and those who worship other gods which did not create the universe. Intermarriage does not mean marriages among different tribes or nationalities but different affiliations in terms of faith.

### **The Male Gender Headship**

In Ephesians 5:22-28, Paul encourages the church members of Ephesus to exemplify Christ through marriage. Ephesians 5:22 points out that wives are to submit to their husbands as it relates to Jesus Christ. Moreover, believers are to model God in everything through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Ephesians 5:23 suggests that the

husband is the head of the wife. The headship is in relation to Christ as the head of the church. Talbert states that in “the culture of that time and place it was generally believed that the headship of husbands was a law of nature.”<sup>28</sup>

The wider culture shared the assumption that wives should submit to their husbands, Talbert further argues that the rule of every household is a monarchy, for every house is under one head.<sup>29</sup> Ephesians 5:24-25 brings out that there is voluntary submission on the part of wives and voluntary love on the side of husbands.

Thielman says that in this scenario there is nothing about the natural inferiority of women to men and the appropriateness then of men ruling over women. Moreover, there is no evidence in this chapter that suggests all women should submit to all men. “Submission to the husband in this regard reflects the union of the church and Christ, as revealed in Col 3:18.”<sup>30</sup>

It is further noted that Paul is not subjecting all women to all men but all wives to their own husbands. Furthermore, “this is not a text based on the inferiority of women to men. It is certainly a text on the Christian marriage relationship. It also bears the element of voluntary self-subjection and not subjugation.”<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, wives might be inclined to refuse self-subjection due to a false view of emancipation and independence. Marriage in simple terms is a miniature and a reflection of Christ’s relation to the church. It is observed that male headship referred to in the Bible is not based on ruler-subject relationship but rather based on

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<sup>28</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Padeia Commentaries on New Testament, Acts to Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 143.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>30</sup> Frank Thielman, *The Book of Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 370.

<sup>31</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St Paul’s Epistles To The Galatians, To The Ephesians and To The Philippians* (Columbus, OH: The Wart bury Press, 1946), 626.

order and total surrender to the will of God through Jesus Christ. Female and male gender human beings were created in the image of God Genesis 1:26-27 and they are both equal before God, although they differ in function in as far as procreation is concerned.

### **What is Divorce?**

Marriage is defined as the ceremony by which a man and a woman become husband and wife. It is also a covenant as explained previously, it is the lifelong union in which God is the witness and guarantor. *The complete Christian Dictionary* defines divorce as “the ending of a marriage as declared by a court of law, to end a marriage or to separate.”<sup>32</sup> Furthermore *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines divorce as “the dissolution of the marriage bond.”<sup>33</sup> There are two Hebrew words used for divorce, these are *yarus* and *sailah*. These often used in several different contexts. They mean to drive out or away or to send away.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, Van der Woude in *the Abingdon Commentaries* argues that the word divorce refers to sending or stretching out the hand which is a phrase which notes a morally detestable, hostile act.<sup>35</sup> The definition almost describes the emotional pain brought by divorce, since divorce is a complete violation of the one flesh through the marriage union.

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<sup>32</sup> M. L. Watkins, *The complete Christian Dictionary for Home School and Office* (2002), s.v. “Divorce.”

<sup>33</sup> F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1997), s.v. “Divorce.”

<sup>34</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 233 “Divorce.”

<sup>35</sup> Julia M. O’Brian, *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 302.

On the other hand, the *New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, divorce means to divide the marital union.<sup>36</sup> This may be due to reasons accepted by the parties concerned and the law of the land thereof. Furthermore, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* brings out that divorce is the cutting off of a marriage by a judgement of a court or accepted custom.<sup>37</sup> The researcher adopts this definition because it seems to be the most ideal. In some cultures especially in Africa, divorce can be effected through customary means without engaging the legal fraternity or the court of law. There is also an element of cutting which suggests that there is pain in the divorce process and the researcher agrees with this.

### **The Development of Divorce**

Divorce in actual fact is a human-made institution in contrast with marriage which is a God-oriented institution. The book of Deuteronomy introduces divorce for the first time. God permitted divorce Deuteronomy 24:1-4 but did not categorise it as a commandment.

Furthermore Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is considered as a concession rather than a command. The purpose was to limit the consequences of sin by allowing divorce but it does not reveal the intention of marriage. The Pharisees considered the man as the Lord of marriage but on the contrary, God considers God as the Lord of marriage.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, the divine intention behind Deuteronomy 24.1-4 was to minimize divorce to a certain extent. Divorce was permitted because marriage had already

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<sup>36</sup> *The New Strong's Expanded Exhausted Concordance of the Bible, Red-Letter ed., s.v.* "divorce."

<sup>37</sup> Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary (SDABD)*, rev. ed. (1979), s.v. "Divorce."

<sup>38</sup> Gary M. Burge and Andrew E. Hill, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids; MI: Baker, 2012)*, 1034.

dissolved due to the unfaithful partner.<sup>39</sup> It is further stated that Jesus considered divorces in the Jewish life as an accommodation to human fallenness.

In Deuteronomy 22:19 and 29, God through Moses permitted divorce in a particular and situational manner. God allowed divorce basically for three reasons. Firstly, to protect the sanctity of marriage from defiling the marital relationship. Secondly, as a way of protecting the woman from a husband who might just send her away for no apparent reason. Thirdly, to document her marital status as a legitimately divorced woman so that she was not thought to be a harlot or run away adulteress.<sup>40</sup>

Again Jesus uses the exception clause to protect the non-offending partner and to protect the marriage institution from being an indecent shame. Moreover, death sentence as stated in Deuteronomy 12:21-22 was no longer practised when Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was put into action<sup>41</sup>In Jewish society only a man could divorce his wife in the presence of two witnesses. A certificate was intended to protect the wife from arbitrary and overhasty action on the part of her husband. Rabbi Akiba taught that finding a woman more attractive than one's wife amounted to something in decent.<sup>42</sup>

### **Divorce as an Option**

The two categories of divorce are being dealt with in 1 Corinthians chapter seven. Paul looks at the pros and cons of the two categories of divorce as it relates to

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<sup>39</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Padeia: Commentaries on New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI Baker Academic, 2010), 84, 233.

<sup>40</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 246.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 644.

<sup>42</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Understanding The Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 47.

the proper teaching of divorce by Jesus in the New Testament. According to 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul is addressing the audience by reiterating the principles of divorce as taught by Jesus. Paul in this instance is advocating the maintenance of the status quo in as far as divorce is concerned.

Furthermore, *the Brazos Theological Commentary* says that “people are made to desire one another as male and female and further that marriage can be a remedy for sin.”<sup>43</sup> It is also noted that Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 emphasises the fact that marriage was original intended to be a lifelong union or covenantal in nature and in essence (Matt 19:3-9).

In 1 Corinthians 7:12, Paul prepares his audience that the following verses with particular attention to verses 13-16 will address a peculiar situation in regard to what Jesus taught about divorce. Moreover, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 addresses the category of marriage parties who are all Christians of which divorce is prohibited at all costs.

In accordance, with 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, Paul deals with a scenario of divorce where a Christian is married to an unbeliever of which Jesus did not address in His divorce discourse. It is noted that Jesus taught the basic principles of divorce, which does not imply that every situation concerning divorce should be the same.

It therefore suggests that since Jesus was addressing the issue of divorce among Jews who had a different theological orientation, so obviously the divorce situation cannot be uniform everywhere to everyone, since Paul is now addressing the issue of divorce between a Christian and a non-Christian who understand divorce from different perspectives.

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<sup>43</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, Brazos Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 169.

## **Divorce among Christians**

In line with 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul states that the wife should not by any means separate from her husband in the same manner if she does separate from her husband and if reconciliation is not possible she must remain single. The husband is also discouraged to put away or divorce his wife. The two verses reveal that in a marriage union between a man and a woman, no one is allowed to initiate divorce.

In the New Testament, there are five passages about divorce these are Matthew 5:32, 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-18. Furthermore, they are in categories, category one include Matthew 5:32 and Luke 16:18. These do resemble each other in lacking historical content and setting in the life of Jesus.

The second category has to do with Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:2-12. These are the same in the sense that they are in the same place in the life of Jesus<sup>44</sup>. Again their content and wording are similar, the main difference is that Matthew has the exception clause which will be discussed later in this chapter. Category three includes 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. Paul here quotes Jesus as saying divorce is not allowed although spouses can be deserted by unbelieving spouses.

Jesus saw divorce as a tragedy, any divorce indicates a total failure of the divine purpose for those God has joined in holy matrimony. It therefore suggests that there is no good divorce or bad divorce. Marriage is a sacred covenant blessed by God and an honourable union between male and female for the purpose of fellowship and establishing family life. Covenant keeping with God and covenant keeping with a

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<sup>44</sup> Kenneth Deruiter, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downer Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1992), 192.

mate is obvious. Furthermore, the imagery for husband and wife used for God and Israel Hosea 2.1-19, Eze 16.6-34.

There is a unique word used in Malachi 2.14 which refers to the nailing together of pieces of wood in a construction Exodus 26.6 which in actual fact suggests the permanence of marriage as opposed to divorce<sup>45</sup>. Moreover, the marriage bond is too sacred to be dissolved at the will of men. Moses permitted divorce not that it was lawful but to deal with a rebellious and intractable nation God joined the male to the female so that the two made an entire man. Therefore the one who divorces tears from him as it were the half of himself but nature does not allow any man to tear in piece his own body.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, Matthew 19.3-9 is in line with Deuteronomy 24.1-4. Marriage is viewed as not a contract to be cancelled when no longer convenient but rather a covenant relationship that really calls for sustained faithfulness.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, it is noted that by then there was no legal instrument to protect women against arbitrary divorce.

*The Apollos Bible Commentary* mentions that the reasons for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not refer to adultery because adultery had resulted to death sentence (Deuteronomy 22:22). The word used here is *erwa* which refers to nakedness which in any case ought to be hidden (Deut 23:14-15, Exod 20.26).

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<sup>45</sup> Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 709.

<sup>46</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bakers Books), 2009, 378.

<sup>47</sup> John Nolland, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 245.

Furthermore, *erwa dabar* means something to be hidden before God, something shameful. It further says that the reason for divorce in this regard has to do with some form of unaccepted behaviour.<sup>48</sup> Marriage has been the victim of the intrapharisaic debate between the schools of *Shammai* and *Hillel* on the issue of divorce. Rabbi Shammai interpreted Deuteronomy 24.1-4 with reference to adultery whereas Rabbi Hillel interpreted the same text as meaning to divorce the wife for anything including the burning of a dinner.<sup>49</sup>

The Man and the woman were created to be with each other not to be separated. In other words God created two genders to complement each other. God intends as well marriage to be a life-long commitment. In addition, God is the one who joins marriages together Ephesians 5.31.

The human race has no right to separate people Matthew 19.6. It therefore points out that marriages can be broken but they should not be tragically broken. However concessions to human hard heartedness during the Mosaic Law period cannot nullify Gods initial intention for marriage and may no longer be used as an excuse for divorce.

Furthermore, if the hearts of the then Israel was not hard, certainly as the Bible states divorce was not going to be part of humanity, otherwise it was not going to be there.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, during the Mosaic period if the wife talked so loudly that the neighbours could hear her, that was a cause for divorce.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> J.G. McConville, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 358.

<sup>49</sup> G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 158.

<sup>50</sup> Carson, "Matthew," 198.

<sup>51</sup> William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), 715.

In Matthew 19.3-9 Jesus regarded marriage as an indissoluble union, a divine institution which must not be tempered with. Death alone could end marriage as shown on Romans 7.2 and 1 Corinthians 7.39. Jesus further refutes the rabbinical law and reaffirms it in the light of Mat 8.17-18.

It is observed that divorce was permitted in Deuteronomy 24.1-4 through Moses. It is also noted that it was not a command or injunction but a concession. The researcher notes that the bill of divorcement was introduced as a remedial intervention towards divorce aiming at total eradication since divorce came into being as a human tragedy.

### **Divorce among Christians and Non-Christians**

According to Malachi 2.16, God hates divorce. The word hate here refers to ‘disliking something or to detest’<sup>52</sup> on the other hand, God becomes the key player in the divorce scenario among the Israelites when they became adulterous with the surrounding nations. Jeremiah 3.8. During the time of Ezra, in the Bible God allowed divorce. “Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my Lord and of those who fear the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the law” (Ezra 10.3).

This text points out that God allows divorce to some situations which threatens the kingdom of God and the wellbeing of the human race. This is evidenced in Ezra 9.1-2. The divorce in question came about because of the total violation of the divine instruction.

In Deuteronomy 7.1-4 God instructed the Israelites not to intermarry with the nations around them for the obvious reason that they would apostatize. The divorce

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<sup>52</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, S.V.* “hate”

according to the book of Ezra is a result of the violation of the marriage institution of which God is the witness Mat 19.6.

Furthermore, the Bible Commentary states that the believer brings more to the marriage union than the unbeliever. It further says that if the relationship is not sound it must be terminated.<sup>53</sup> It is noted that, marriages where God is not the witness do not possess the permanence aspect since the marriage principles are not embodied therein. Taking into account 1 Corinthians 7.13-14, Paul brings out that the subject in question has to do with marriage between a believer and a non-believer. To be precise marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian. According to 1 Corinthians 7.15, divorce is permitted if it is initiated by the non-believer. Moreover, it is noted that Paul is discussing the subject of divorce in the manner different to what Jesus taught in the gospel particularly in Matthew 19.

Furthermore, Hagin argues that<sup>54</sup> “Jesus was interpreting the law of Moses concerning marriage to the Jews yet Paul was applying the law of love about divorce, marriage and remarriage to the church based on 1 Corinthians 7 and Matthew 19.<sup>55</sup> He is saying the Holy Spirit is leading (John 14.26). On the other hand, Hagin asserts that God only joins his sons and daughters, His only people not those in the world.<sup>56</sup> Christians in Corinthians during the time of Paul were converted after marriage which was arranged by parents.

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<sup>53</sup> Norman P. Madsen, *The Bible Commentary First and Second Corinthians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988), 55.

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth E. Hagin, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage* (Toronto, Canada: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 2006), 16.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 26

Christians in this regard did not choose marriage with pagans. Again, children born in such circumstances in religiously mixed marital unions were within the category of the gospel influence and cannot in any case be used as a reason for divorce. In a divorce situation during this era, children usually went with the father.

As a result, women in question would lose the opportunity to influence children for God. Therefore, Paul alluded to the Jewish divorce certificate which states that “you are free to marry another man.<sup>57</sup>” It is observed that marriage bond has to do with parties who are both willing to keep the marriage intact.

However, Paul suggests that the marriage vow works even to those who are united in marriage when the other party is not a believer. In the event that the believer decides otherwise, he or she is not obliged to stay in marriage, since God is not the ultimate in terms of faith. It therefore suggests that divorce is permitted due to the desertion of a spouse by the unbelieving one.

### **The Exception Clause in Marriage Union**

Looking back in this chapter, evidence has been presented indicating that God, does permit divorce. Permission is granted between a believer and a non-believer in the event that the unbeliever tends to leave the marriage on his or her own accord. Furthermore, marriage as a covenant was discussed earlier in this chapter showing that marriage is a covenant with terms and promises thereof.

According to Deuteronomy 22:13-21 and Deut 22.22-24, the violation of the marriage covenant resulted in capital punishment. Israelites in the Old Testament regarded adultery as a total violation of the marriage covenants as it relates to its

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<sup>57</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 467.

terms and promises. Again Leviticus 20:10 affirms that adultery attracted death sentence among the guilty.

Under the then Jewish law adultery referred only to Jewish wife's misbehaviour not the husband.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Matthew does not agree with the status quo as revealed in Matthew 5:28. Both Jewish and Roman laws permitted divorce in the case of adultery.

Furthermore, the school of Shammai was predominant in Jesus day. Moreover, the Jewish teachers of the law did recognize that there was a legal category known as the concession which refers to something that was permitted to regulate sin than to relinquish control over it altogether.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, the scribes used Genesis 1-2 to argue against polygamy and Jesus also used it to argue against divorce (Matthew 19:4-6). The debate in this particular instance was not that divorce was ever allowed or valid but the ground for divorce. However, many Jewish teachers allowed polygamy in order to accommodate second wife at the same time recognizing that divorce was not all that good<sup>60</sup>.

In Matthew 19.9 Jesus points out that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery. Matthew seems to be the only one with the exception clause as it relates to divorce in as far as the gospels are concerned as well as Paul in the Epistles. In line with Deuteronomy 24.1-4, God through Moses points out that something indecent would cause divorce, which in a way is the exception clause. In Matthew 19.9 Jesus mentions adultery as

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<sup>58</sup> Keener, Matthew, 59.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>60</sup> Anderson J. Köstenberger and David W. Jones, *God Marriage and Family: Building the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 279.

the exception clause for divorce. According to Deuteronomy 22.22-24 adultery was punishable by death.

During the New Testament era, death sentence was no longer permitted<sup>61</sup>. The researcher notes that in the Old Testament adultery was punishable by death which suggests that marriage came to an end after death. Marriage is a covenant as shown previously in this chapter.

More so adultery amounts to the death of the marriage institution as revealed in Genesis 2.24 and Genesis 1.27. It therefore suggests that the exception clause in Mathew 19 does not negate the fundamental principles of marriage but rather confirms and affirms it to the fullest. Furthermore, the status of women during this period was little more than property. Jesus was pointing out the worth of women in relation to the sanctity of marriage. There is a covenant relationship between a husband and wife to be regarded with honour and respect.

### **Divorce and Forgiveness**

When God says He hates divorce He really meant that He decisively rejected it, He detested it. He does not want any contact or relationship with it. Indeed divorce is not God's will for a couple. Even if adultery is involved God's solution is forgiveness and continuing love regardless of untold hurt which might be incurred<sup>62</sup>.

Furthermore, divorce was not part of God's original plan but came under the provisional approval of the law of Moses because of the hardness of people's hearts. In other words Moses did not initiate divorce through divine instruction. Moses

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<sup>61</sup> Orion N. Hutchinson, Jr, *Basic Bible Commentary* (Nashville Press, 1988), 100.

<sup>62</sup> Richards, "Hate," 325.

tolerated and regulated it in order to prevent abuses. As a result Christian marriages should be based on Genesis 2.24 rather than on Deuteronomy 24.1-4 and Matt 5.31-32.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, true love is kind and longsuffering. Again, marriage provides the very ideal environment in the perfection of a Christian character. The marriage relationship was instituted by God and sanctioned by God, accordingly all who enter the marriage union are joined in line with God's plan for the rest of their lives.

Karl Rahner says that the measure of Eve's nature is based on Adam's nature. He further argues that man's dignity consists in being woman's head and woman's dignity consists of being the brightness and glory of man<sup>64</sup>. In this regard it suggests that forgiveness is inevitable since the dignity of both husband and wife in a divorce situation is under threat.

On the other hand, the law is said to be concerned with divorce not separation. The word "Bill of Divorcement" is related to the word for hewing down trees even cutting off heads. It indicates the severing of what was once a living union<sup>65</sup>. Therefore divorce can be referred to a kind of amputation. It cannot occur without injury to the parties concerned thereof.

In John 8.3-11, a woman caught in adultery was forgiven by Jesus Christ. There was an assurance of mercy upon her. From that time, the woman was asked not to continue in sin neither that for which she was brought for judgement nor any other

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<sup>63</sup> [Matthew 19.4-9], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)* rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 5:337.

<sup>64</sup> Karl Rahner, *Marriages Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. (Mumbai, India: St Paul, 1975), 906.

<sup>65</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 346.

deed of defiance against the living God. In actual fact, mercy from God has to do with life surrender to God. The woman was sent to the world as a justified sinner.<sup>66</sup>

In Matthew 6.12-15, Jesus teaches the human race the meaning and essence of prayer. The phrase “forgive us our debts” refers to sins which are moral and spiritual debts to God’s righteousness. On the other hand, we seek forgiveness as we forgive not that because we do forgive<sup>67</sup>. Moreover, one is to seek forgiveness in the same manner as he or she would forgive others. In other words forgiveness can be termed as the evidence of a born again person or a regenerated heart. These are several theories surrounding the woman in John 8.3-11 mentioned in the previous discussion.

It is assumed that Jesus wrote about the sins of Pharisees and scribes. The other theory says that He wrote the Ten Commandments. He wrote a message to the Pharisees. Subsequently in love and mercy Jesus forgave the adulteress and ordered her to go and sin no more.<sup>68</sup>

One of the word in the New Testament meaning forgiveness is *charizomai* which suggests that forgiveness involves giving. In classical and New Testament Greek, *charizomai* refers to giving or granting. In New Testament it implies undeserved kindness and goodness freely given in reference to Ephesians 4.33, Colossians 2.13 and 2 Corinthians 2.7 and 10.<sup>69</sup>

As a result there is nothing outside the sphere of God’s forgiveness. Furthermore, there is no one who can sin so much that he or she can be closed off

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<sup>66</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids; MI: Zondervan, 199), 147.

<sup>67</sup> Hindson, “Matthew,” 1896.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 2096.

<sup>69</sup> Anthony Bush, *Just forgiveness* (London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2011), 43.

from God's forgiveness.<sup>70</sup> It is observed that adultery as a cause of divorce is part of the Decalogue, on the other hand, forgiveness is part of the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus mentions that adultery can be a contributory factor in divorce but it is not mandatory. Jesus Himself exemplified it that it is possible to forgive a transgressor of that magnitude (John 8.11). The researcher argues that divorce is not the end to the marriage menace but the means to the realization that there is nothing impossible with God (Luke 1.37), if the guilt party confesses accordingly (1 John 1.9). God can restore the marriage tie and the innocent party can do the same.

### **Ellen G. White on Marriage and Divorce**

Ellen G. White wrote extensively on marriage and divorce however, this section is going to discuss this issue in the context of the marriage union, the marriage tie, the essence of marriage, the intermarriage, divorce and the causes of divorce.

#### **The Marriage Union**

According to White, marriage should not be entered into until before considering it carefully and prayerfully. The union should glorify God by all means<sup>71</sup>. When the creator joined the hand of the holy pair in Genesis 2.24 in wedlock, He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time.

Furthermore, God created the woman from the man to be a companion and help meet for him to be one with him, to cheer, encourage and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper. On another note, the marriage institution was designed of heaven to be a blessing to mankind.

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<sup>70</sup> Bush, *Just forgiveness*, 61.

<sup>71</sup> Ellen White, *Messages to Young People* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1930), 460.

Moreover, Christ came not to destroy the marriage institution but rather came to restore it to its original sanctity and elevation. He further came to restore the moral image of God in man and He started His work by sanctioning the marriage relationship.<sup>72</sup>

On the other hand marriage is said to be an institution that has a potential of influencing and affecting one's life born in this world and the world to come<sup>73</sup>. Jesus did not enforce celibacy upon any class of man. He came not to destroy the sacred relationship of marriage but to exalt it and restore to its original state or sanctity.

It was lawful to marry in the days of Noah. It is still lawful to marry now. In the days of Noah people got married without consulting God or seeking His guidance<sup>74</sup>. The marriage relation is holy that it is not safe for man to enter into it without God the founder of marriage. The spirit that Christ manifests towards the human race is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest towards each other. Again marriage does not do away with one's individuality<sup>75</sup>. God has claims upon each one higher than any earthly claim.

It is observed that marriage originated from God. It therefore suggests that it is proper to consult Him when it comes to matters relating to it. Human wisdom in this regard cannot suffice and thus proper to seek advice from Him. According to the original marriage, there is no human being who is supposed to be the shadow of

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<sup>72</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 99.

<sup>73</sup> White, *Messages to Young People*, 460.

<sup>74</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 121.

<sup>75</sup> White, *TSB*, 26-27.

another human being. God's servants are to labour together in a unity that blends mind with mind.<sup>76</sup>

If the husband and wife would only continue to cultivate these attentions which nourish love, they would be happy in each other's society and would in turn have a sanctifying influence upon their families. As a result, they would have in themselves a little world of happiness and would not desire to go outside this world for new attractions and new objects of love<sup>77</sup>. It is noted that marriage is between people who are equals before God and who have mutual responsibility in making marriage work.

### **The Marriage Tie**

Jesus declared clearly that there is no dissolution of marriage except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, a woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the sight of God and in accordance with the higher law. There is only one sin which is adultery that places the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, to gain a proper understanding of the marriage relation is the work of a lifetime.

In other words, those who marry do enter a school from which they are never in this life to be graduated<sup>80</sup>. Moreover, the success and happiness of the marriage covenant do depend on the oneness of the marriage parties. It is observed that

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<sup>76</sup> White, *Mind, Character and Personality*, 2:429.

<sup>77</sup> White, *Mind, Character and Personality*, 1:158.

<sup>78</sup> White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 63.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>80</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 344.

marriage is a process not an event. On the other hand, it is a mystery which can only be comprehended from the creator point of view although it is subjected to ridicule and surmise.

### **The Essence of Marriage**

In both the New and the Old Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His church.<sup>81</sup> There is a very close and sacred relationship between Christ and His church. He being the bridegroom and the church the bride, He the head and the church the body.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, marriage is a union for life. It also signifies the union between Christ and His church. On the other hand, the spirit that Christ manifests towards His church is the very spirit that the husband and wife are to manifest towards one another.<sup>83</sup> White points out that Christ honoured marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. Again difficulties and discouragements may arise but neither husband nor wife should harbour the thought that their marriage is a mistake or disappointments. In other words marriage should be the beginning of love as opposed to the end of love.<sup>84</sup>

### **Intermarriage**

The inhabitants of Canaan were idol worshipers at the expense of the living God, the creator of the universe, God did forbid intermarriage between His people and

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<sup>81</sup> White, *The Desire of Ages*, 151.

<sup>82</sup> White, *Education*, 268.

<sup>83</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 95.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

them, with the realization that such marriages would result in apostasy.<sup>85</sup> The Israelites were chosen by God as the peculiar people unto Himself above all the nations in the world.<sup>86</sup> There is a possibility that the hearts of those who follow God can be led astray through intermarriage so God forbade intermarriage in order to keep His sons and daughters pure from idolatry.<sup>87</sup>

## **Divorce**

In line with the book *Adventist Home*, Jesus declared that there should be no dissolution of marriage tie except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, hasty marriages seem to be causing divorce, promises which are made at the altar by marriage parties do not bind them together.

It is noted as well that candidates for marriage do not consider marriage carefully and prayerfully, they do not put themselves in the hands of God to be guided and controlled by His spirit.<sup>89</sup> The innocent party in a divorce situation is free to marry after the granting of divorce. There is no moral right in leaving a spouse and get married to another.<sup>90</sup>

Jesus came to the world to rectify mistakes and to restore the moral image of God in marriage. Wrong sentiments in regards to marriage had found a place in the

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<sup>85</sup> White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 171.

<sup>86</sup> White, *Prophets and Kings*, 569.

<sup>87</sup> White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 369.

<sup>88</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 314.

<sup>89</sup> White, *Messages to Young People*, 458.

<sup>90</sup> White, *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 340.

minds of teachers in Israel. As a result Christ came to correct these evils and apparently His first miracle was done on the occasion of marriage.<sup>91</sup>

There are thousands of those in marriage who use mated but not matched. The books of Heaven are burdened with woes, the wickedness and the abuse that lie hidden under the marriage mantle<sup>92</sup>. Furthermore, the curse of God rests upon many of the ill-timed, inappropriate connections that are formed in this age of the world.<sup>93</sup>

In as far as the marriage contract is concerned, men and women have made a trade, an investment for life and they should do their utmost to control their words of impatience and fruitfulness even more carefully than they did before their marriage bond. The destiny for marriage parties is united for life as husband and wife<sup>94</sup>. It is revealed that inexperienced marriages do cause divorce. The other contributory factor in this regard is the marriage of Christians and the ungodly as written in 1 Corinthians 6.14-18.

### **Causes of Divorce**

Ellen White identifies six reasons which appear to be causing divorce.<sup>95</sup> The first one is said to be the marriage through impulse. It refers to a sudden marriage whereby people just get married without considering factors involved in marriage. The second one relates to failure in consulting or seeking advice from those who have experience in terms of marriage. It means to just get married without sitting down with those who have taken a long time in marriage and gain experiential knowledge

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<sup>91</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 341-344.

<sup>92</sup> White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 102.

<sup>93</sup> White, *In Heavenly Places*, 205.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>95</sup> White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:503.

through them. Again the third cause relates to pleasing the fancy which is the superficial feeling of attraction to someone whether a believer or not which results in the negation of the very basic in the marriage union.

Furthermore, the fourth cause is the unequally yoking in marital terms which is the marriage among believers and non-believers which is Christians and non-Christians this has also contributed to the teaching apart of the marriage institution. It is noted that many are at the verge of losing their interest and confidence in the truth because they have ventured into unbelief and connected themselves with it.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, the fifth cause has to do with wealth many have corrupted themselves with those things God had placed upon the earth for man's benefit. In other words riches are also a cause of divorce. The sixth cause in this regard is identified as polygamy people have a plurality of wives which is contrary to God's wise arrangement. In the beginning God gave Adam one wife as an indication to all those who should model themselves according to the law and order of God.<sup>97</sup> In simple terms it means that polygamy is a contributory factor to divorce.

### **Summary**

Marriage is the most sacred and vulnerable institution ever given to the human race. The marriage union is likened to the relationship of Christ to the church. God intends marriage to be among believers or Christians only.

The male gender is regarded as the head of the woman in a marriage relationship. The headship is for the order and harmony in the marriage not that the man is superior to the woman or wife. The two are equal before God the Creator Gen

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<sup>96</sup> White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:504.

<sup>97</sup> White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 3:63.

1.26-27. Moreover, marriage is described in scripture as a covenant which is terminated by death in either of the marriage party. On the other hand divorce is seen as the human institution which was permitted by God through Moses in Deut. 24.

Jesus permitted divorce in the exception clause in Matthew 19. Adultery is mentioned as the cause of divorce but it is not mandatory, marriage parties can forgive each other and restore or retain the marriage union. In fact God hates divorce at all cost. Hasty marriages through impulse, inexperience, secularism and intermarriages are mentioned among other factors as causes of divorce in this present age. It is to be noted that divorce is not a desirable element among Christians and non-Christians, it is happening but it must not happen because it is a tragedy. The next chapter will deal with the literature concerning the views of others about marriage and divorce.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Many books have been written about marriage and divorce from Christian and non-Christian perspectives. Basic principles of marriage have proved to be long lasting as a result, books have been written and re-written from different angles in this regard.

This chapter is intended to investigate the literature that have been written about marriage and divorce. However, the literature surveyed in this chapter is not exhaustive due to the scope of the study and the limitations thereof. Furthermore, the comprehensive, bibliography will be shown at the very end of this research.

#### **The Significance of Marriage**

Marriage is understood differently in many parts of the world. As a result there are so many views and beliefs about marriage which are not in harmony. John Witte says, “Marriage is the harbour of the self and harbinger of the community, a symbol of divine love a structure of reasoned consent, and enduring ancient mystery and constantly modern invention.”<sup>1</sup>

The modern Anglo-American marriage law is a result of two traditions. The other is rooted in Christianity whereas the other one is based on the enlightenment.

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<sup>1</sup> John Witte, *First Things* (New York: The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 2002), 30.

Subsequently each of these traditions has led to a variety of legal views and ideas which are overlapping whereas others are conflicting.<sup>2</sup>

Marriage in other parts of the world is viewed in four categories. The first says that marriage is a contract formed by mutual consent of the marital couple subject to their will and preference. The second view states that marriage is a spiritual association subject to the creed, code, cult and canons of the religious community.

Furthermore, the third category has to do with marriage as a social estate subject to special state laws of property, inheritance and evidence to the expectations of the local community. Moreover, the fourth category regards marriage as a natural institution subject to the laws taught by reason, conscience, nature and custom.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Cressman argues that marriage is the joining together of one man and one woman in a lawful manner as husband and wife. It is further revealed that marriage is the door to the home of a man and a woman.<sup>4</sup> According to George Ritzer, marriage is to be regarded as a private contract.<sup>5</sup>

It is observed that the way other countries view of marriage leaves a lot to be desired in the attainment of the ideal marriage. It is noted that there is no mention of the Bible in the four views cherished in some parts of the world. However, the word spiritual is mentioned which is subject to any kind of belief and religion which might not be based on the Founder of the universe as well as the Founder of the marriage institution, God, the Creator.

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<sup>2</sup> Witte, *First Things*, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Annie Cressman, *Marriage and the Home* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangelical, 2005), 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> George Ritzer, *Classical Sociological Theory* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 340.

Furthermore, marriage cannot be considered as a private enterprise because, God commanded the human race to be fruitful in terms of procreation Genesis 1.28. This kind of responsibility cannot be done in private because it involves visible results, so marriage is family life in totality.

### **The Same Sex Marriage**

The difference between male and female is so critical in reference to what it means to be human. It cannot refer to humankind without having to mention male or female. Humankind exists in the duality of male and female. According to the Book of Genesis chapter 1, heterosexuality is pointed out as the order of creation.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the proponents for homosexuality argue that marriage is a social construction that may have a variety of forms and purposes. It is further argued that marriage is a matter of love and commitment between autonomous individuals. Furthermore, marriage is defined as not grounded in the natural distinction between men and women. It has no permanent or necessary characteristics as it were. Again it is not a social institution which is centred on the causing of children.<sup>7</sup>

Gays and lesbians argue that homosexuality is an innate characteristics, like skin colour rather than a perverse life-style choice. It is further argued that gays do deserve legal protection similar to the laws that prohibit racial discrimination.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the sexual orientation of gays and lesbians is likened to a God-given

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<sup>6</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Homosexuality in the Old Testament," in *Homosexuality, Marriage and The Church*, ed. Toy E. Gane, Nicholas P. Miller and H. Peter Swanson (Berrien Spring, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Scot Zeniner, *Freedom and Marriage*, in *Homosexuality, Marriage and the Church*, ed. Roy E. Gane (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2012), 276.

<sup>8</sup> Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, *Sexual Orientation and Skin Colour*, in *Homosexuality, Marriage and the Church*, ed. Roy E. Gane (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2012), 413.

characteristic as the colour of their skin or the sexual orientation of their straight brothers and sisters.

In as far as homosexuality is concerned Kehinde says,

From the very beginning we see in the word of God created the world and when He created the world, He also created man in His own image male and female He created man, so going by the order of creation, that is the divine arrangement - man and woman. In our African set up, when you talk of a man cohabiting with another man, it is an abomination, it is unheard of.<sup>9</sup>

It is observed that marriage is one of the social institutions that shape the habits of the people. As a matter of fact, it shapes the naturally different yet complementary characteristics of men and women. It is further noted that the proponents for homosexuality fall in the category mistake in regard to the extent and kind of human rights to be a means of expressing love and commitment between autonomous persons but rather recognizes needs and tendencies of sexes.

Again, marriage civilizes the male gender and creates situations and conditions suitable for the upbringing or rearing of children. Under normal circumstances freedom is not absolute but it has to be channelled to a particular order. It is to be understood that the claims made by homosexuals are against nature in the sense that if anyone is allowed to act in vicious ways the conditions that permit meaningful freedom for personal and cooperate would actually not exist.

On the other hand, some argue that God recognizes homosexuality, but God in Leviticus 18:21-23, declares “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, that is detestable.” The immoral act of homosexuality is regarded as a perversion. Looking closely to Levitical code, it reveals that the condemnation of homosexuality is

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<sup>9</sup> Kehinde E. Obasola, “*An Ethical Perspective of Homosexuality among the African People*,” Department of Religious Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, accessed 7 March 2013, URL:<http://www.rbss.com/recent.aspx> ISSN: 2235-767X.

expressed with the connotation of judgement, which suggests that God hates homosexuality.

According to Leviticus 18.24-25, homosexuality and bestiality are equated and that resulted in God judging the Canaanites. These two acts are classified as abomination before God. Therefore, homosexuality cannot in any way be a form of marriage. As a result the divorce under these circumstances is not meaningful since homosexuality in this regard is a violation of the social norm.

According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, marriage is a lifelong union of loving companions between a man and a woman. Heterosexual union marriage is regarded as the symbol of bond between deity and humanity. In addition it is stated that marriage is both monogamous and heterosexual<sup>10</sup>.

Furthermore, the human race was given the mandate for procreation Genesis 1.28 so in same sex marriage there is no procreation which is a total violation of the divine commandment. The researcher supports the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that marriage is both monogamous and heterosexual because it is in line with the original marriage.

### **Marriage in African Context**

Marriage is viewed as a central institution indispensable for the survival of the community. It is further constructed only when there is seemingly a chance of it benefiting the community as a whole.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it is an alliance or covenant, which suggests that there is an element of permanence. The covenant is not only

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<sup>10</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Minutes of the General Conference Executive Committee” (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference, 20 June 2014), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Benezet Bujo, *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Africa, 2009), 95-96.

between the two but between two families and then into broader community thereby connecting two clans or tribes. Freedom in terms of marriage in African context can only be achieved when both the individual and the whole community are integrated.

Moreover, parents are required to ascertain the maturity of their children before they are encouraged to marry. The community plays a significant role in the marriage ceremony particularly in celebration. Both families in the marriage process are expected to participate fully in the marriage ceremony. Furthermore, African marriage is generally imbued with a religious atmosphere where God, the ancestors, the earthly community and the not yet born are all involved.<sup>12</sup>

According to African religion, one major responsibility on earth is for people to get married. There is a belief that married couples will be able to live together in the spirit world<sup>13</sup>. In addition, the African tradition, religion and culture are inseparable. There is a belief as well that all people originate from love which is God's love and parents' love from the womb.

Again, marriage is regarded as the social arrangement by which a child is given a legitimate position in the society determined by parenthood in the social sense. It is also viewed as the strong affection that exists after some years of successful marriage. In other words marriage is a process resulting from living together and cooperating in many activities particularly in the rearing of children<sup>14</sup>.

On the other hand, English marriage is viewed as an event that concerns primarily the man and the woman who are forming a union. In the union there is also

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<sup>12</sup> Bujo, *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage*, 103.

<sup>13</sup> J. N. K. Mugumbi and Mary N. Getui, *Religions in Eastern Africa under Globalization* (Nairobi, Kenya: Action, 2004), 35.

<sup>14</sup> A. R. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Darryl Forde, *African Kinship and Marriage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 46.

the state which gives union the legality and alone can dissolve it by an act of divorce. In this instance parental consent is strictly required for minors.

It is observed that the African view of marriage recognizes that marriage is a covenant which points out that marriage is a lifelong commitment. The African view also reveals that God is part of marriage and the community is entirely involved in the marriage union. Furthermore, culture and religion are one in essence and function.

On the other hand, the English view of marriage is based on individual bases from start to finish. The researcher supports the African view of marriage because it has the qualities of the original marriage as it relates to the Bible Genesis 2.18 and 24. Furthermore, the community is involved in marriage which suggests that there is wisdom in the multitude of counsellors (Prov 11:14).

In addition, the parents of the parties in marriage are part and parcel of the marriage union, the involvement itself is a healthy scenario in marriage enrichment exercise. Although there appears to be some distortion pertaining to the state of the dead in African view, the principle of marriage remains sound and Biblical, in the sense that marriage is holistically viewed as the covenant.

### **The Forms of Marriage**

Marriage between a male gender and female gender is known as heterosexual. It is a marriage where one is attracted to the opposite sex.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, gay marriage is said to be the same sex marriage whereby an individual is attracted to a person who is of the same sex.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, same sex marriage is further divided

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<sup>15</sup> "Gay and Homosexuality," accessed 17 February 2017, [english.stakexchange.com/questions/74557/](http://english.stakexchange.com/questions/74557/).

<sup>16</sup> "Gay marriage," accessed 17 February 2017, [www.bing.com/search?q=gay+marriage&form=1](http://www.bing.com/search?q=gay+marriage&form=1).

into other categories such as lesbians which is marriage between a woman and another woman, gay marriage between a man and another man and bisexual marriage for those who are attracted to both a person of the same sex and the opposite sex<sup>17</sup>.

The researcher supports heterosexual marriage because of the fact that God the creator from the very beginning created the human race in the form of male and female as indicated in Genesis 1:27. God further entrusted them with procreation thereafter as shown in Genesis 1:28. Therefore, heterosexual marriage remains meaningful by all standards.

### **Types of Marriages**

According to Gilbert, there are five types of marriages which seem to contribute to divorce as will be discussed later in this chapter. There is the pursuer-distancer, this is the marriage where the wives want to discuss problems and their feelings and the husbands want to avoid problems at all costs.

The husbands in this regard, avoid confrontations, either denies problems or withdraws. In actual fact this type of marriage is a mismatch and usually ends in divorce. The second type has to do with disengaged marriage. Couples share few interests, activities or friends, conflict is low which also results in low affection and low sexual satisfaction. Thirdly, there is the operatic marriage. In this condition couples like to function at a level of extreme emotional arousal. The couples are attached and attracted and given both to frequent fighting and passionate lovemaking.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Kathleen R. Gilbert, *Annual Editions, The Family*, Thirty-fourth edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 178.

The fourth type is known as the cohesive-individuated marriage. The marriage is characterised by worth equity, respect and mutual support. Both partners retain their autonomy to pursue their own goals and to have their own friends based on their choice. The fifth type is called the traditional marriages. In this instance the husband is the main producer. The role of the wife is nurturance support and basically child care. It seems that these marriages work very well if the couple share the traditional view of gender roles.<sup>19</sup>

The researcher agrees with Gilbert in the sense that the analysis pertaining to types of marriages is practical and real. It seems that the types are applicable to all nations and traditions. It is also noted that there is no one type of marriage in the world which therefore suggests that all people are created in the image of God but each individual has the freedom of dependence.

### **Marriage in Zimbabwean Context**

In Zimbabwe there are basically two legal types of marriages. These are customary marriages and civil marriages which are entered into on voluntary bases and according to religious rites.

#### **Customary Marriage in Zimbabwe**

This marriage is under chapter 5.07 popularly known as Customary Marriage Act Chapter 5.07. The marriage is potentially polygamous in the sense that a man in this type of marriage is allowed to marry many wives. However, women are not allowed to have more than one husband.

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<sup>19</sup> Gilbert, *The Family*, 173.

On the other hand, the Customary Marriage Act does not set an age limit for people who can enter into this type of marriage. The marriage is only applicable to Africans whose culture allows them to be polygamous. Furthermore, only people who are proven to be mentally sound are allowed to enter this marriage.

Again, people who are related to a certain degree of affinity are not allowed to marry one another in this marriage. In addition, parties to this marriage are to be married on voluntary basis, coercion is not allowed. The bride price is not a prerequisite to this kind of marriage. Under this Act there is the unregistered customary marriage which fulfils the cultural requirements without the legal aspect.<sup>20</sup>

The marriage can be solemnized by the magistrate, the chief appointed to do that or a government appointee. The marriage after solemnization is binding to an extent that when divorce is sought only the court of law can grant the divorce where possible. The marriage cannot be entered into in absentia, the two parties are to be present and one witness is needed during the solemnization. The marriage is required to be entered where the woman in question live or stays at the time of marriage.<sup>21</sup>

### **Civil Marriage in Zimbabwe**

According to Zimbabwe Civil Marriage refers to the Marriage Act Chapter 5.11 revised in 2006. In this case the marriage is only solemnized by the marriage officer, who is the magistrate and the minister of religion certified by the government.

For the marriage to be solemnized one of the parties or both of them must cause banns of marriage to be announced in the church for a consecutive period of three weeks. The other alternative prior to the solemnization is the attainment of the

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<sup>20</sup> "Marriage in Zimbabwe Culture," accessed 18 September 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=customary+marriage+act+zimbabwe&FORM=R5FD3>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

marriage licence or the notice of intention to marry from the magistrate of the local court. Furthermore, the marriage is entered in the presence of two witnesses. The marriage is monogamous. The parties are not allowed to marry another person after the solemnization. The marriage can only be dissolved by the high court of law<sup>22</sup>.

On the other hand, the type of marriage does not allow people who are related to get married to each other. The age limit for entering into this marriage is eighteen years. According to the Act those who are under age are required to obtain consent from parents or legal guardians.<sup>23</sup> The researcher supports the civil marriage because it resembles the ideal marriage as it relates to the Bible. The civil marriage is monogamous and it criminalises polygamy and promiscuity. The Bible reveals that marriage is supposed to be monogamous Ephesians 5:31. Furthermore, the Bible prohibits adultery in all forms as shown in Exodus 20.14 and the civil marriage seems to be the better option in this regard.

### **The Contributory Factors to Divorce**

The previous chapter discussed the causes of divorce according to Ellen G. White. This chapter identifies the causes of divorce according to various authors in the area of marriage and divorce. The age at marriage is the strongest predictor of divorce in the first five years of marriage.<sup>24</sup>

The use of alcohol and drugs are also cited as reasons for divorce. Moreover, couples who are facing more financial problems and those spending less time together

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<sup>22</sup> L. E. Lawrence, "Types of Marriages in Zimbabwe," accessed 12 October 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=types+of+marriages+inzimbabwe&FORM=R5FD>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Kay Degenova, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 406.

are likely to divorce. It is further argued that those who stay in big cities are divorcing more than those in small cities. Mary Kay argues that parental divorce contributes to the divorce of their off springs it is so because children of divorced parents do marry when they are young, especially girls which results in divorce. Again childlessness is identified as one of the causes of divorce.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, Shorter states that one of the effects on the traditional canon law of the courts was the fact that marriage was thought of as a legal contract between individuals.<sup>26</sup> Communication is known as a cause of divorce in the sense that couples do not understand each other. Problems of authority and unrealistic expectations in marriage are factors in divorce in the sense that the sex life is not satisfactory. The absence of loving feelings and marital infidelity which leads to lack of affection leads to divorce as well.

Furthermore, the legal context which refers to countries with laws which place many obstacles before people who wish to divorce. The multiplicity of the feminist movements which advocate women freedom has led to divorce. Dysfunctional marriages have been enabled to seek divorce as an alternative.<sup>27</sup>

According to Gitaari, divorce is caused by a lack of communication between the couple. He further mentions that those who marry outside their tribes also face the challenge of ending in divorce. Each tribe has some values and virtues which are very particular in terms of practice. It then poses a challenge to someone from another tribe

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<sup>25</sup> Degenova, *Intimate Relationships*, 407.

<sup>26</sup> Julian Melgosa and Annette D. Melgosa, *New Life Style to Couples: Enjoying a Stable Lifelong Relationship* (Madrid, Spain: Editorial Safeliz, 2005), 144.

<sup>27</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Church and Marriage in East Africa* (Eldoret, Kenya: The Amecea Research Department, 1975), 6.

and thus causes tensions and finally divorce.<sup>28</sup> However, this is subjective in the sense that Christians are bound by Christian values which are stronger than tribal ones.

Furthermore, racial marriages contribute to divorce in the sense that some races regard themselves as superior than others and thus brings about social tensions and suspicion. In addition, the marriage of those who were brought up in the rural areas and those from the city also contribute to divorce. The way of life in the rural areas is different in terms of exposure and enlightenment.

Whereas those brought up in the city are so exposed to modern issues due to intermingling with different nationalities, with differing cultures. The endeavour to reconcile the challenge ends up in divorce, it is noted that marriage of this nature is not the best in terms of permanence.<sup>29</sup> Today people do regard divorce as socially acceptable. According to Nancy Van Pelt, divorce is caused by a decline in family life. In the past the home used to be the mainstream of activity but now it has become a step over before people move on to other areas of interest.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, early marriages and unpreparedness in training for marriage do contribute to divorce rate as well. It is noted that people assume that the knowledge about marriage is inherent yet it needs some kind of education in order to comprehend the complexities of marriage and the issues related to marriage. Failure to live according to Christian standards has one way or the other contributed to divorce<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Dr. Sammy, Gitaari, *Resolving Conflicts in Marriage* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangelical, 2006), 51.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Nancy Van Pelt, *Marriage* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1986), 21.

<sup>31</sup> Nancy Van Pelt, *To Have and to Hold: A Guide to Successful Marriage* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1986), 22.

The cry for freedom and independence in every respect suggests that people want to pretend to live as if there are no principles and rules. The end result in this regard is to play down the pillars of life which include marriage and thus bring about divorce. Furthermore, divorce seems to be solving a little but destroys a lot. Sometimes it appears to be a cure for a sick marriage but it latter turns to be worse than the sickness itself.<sup>32</sup> The researcher goes along with Van Pelt that the decline in family life contributes to divorce. The family has been redefined in terms of composition and function.

The ideal family is according to the Bible so the departure from the ideal causes problem. In addition, there is no one born a marriage partner, so it suggests that knowledge related to marriage is acquired. It brings out that education about marriage is needed before, during and after marriage. Marriage is the divine institution which plays a significant role in human life in shaping the society for the better. Consequently it points out the fact that marriage must be reserved for the mature. The parties in marriage must be mature physically, mentally and emotionally in order to do well in this regard.

The lack of maturity in these three areas suggests that marriage can end in divorce. Again marriage is the only course which issues certification of completion beforehand. It therefore suggests that a lot of education is needed in regard to pros and cons of the marriage institution. According to John Witt, parents nowadays are no longer getting support from their respective extended families and thus get vulnerable and end up in divorce<sup>33</sup>. Moreover, polygamy, fornication and heathenism are cited as the factors which cause divorce.

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<sup>32</sup> Van Pelt, *To Have and to Hold*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> John Witt, *The Big Picture: A Sociology Primer* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 139.

Reports according to the United Nations indicate that domestic violence is one of the cause of divorce. Domestic violence is a concern worldwide because it exists in all regions, classes and cultures.<sup>34</sup> It is revealed that the majority of women who are murdered are murdered by their husbands and boyfriends.<sup>35</sup>

In line with Wachege, the lack of religious practice cunning strategic international manoeuvres aimed at the destruction of the marriage institution and ungentine family hood is the cause of divorce. It simply means that the departure from the Biblical marriage causes divorce. The egoistic selfishness and foolish dominating pride that confront the families in our modern times crowned with media unfriendly images of individualism cum false liberation intertwined with artificial superficial independence, also contributes to divorce.<sup>36</sup>

It is observed that the causes of divorce are many and differ according to environment and circumstances. However, the researcher does allude to the submissions of Wachege which seem to be common and prevalent. Lack of religious practice and false liberation and independence supported by the media appears to be on the increase and thus the divorce rate on the high side.

### **The Stages of Divorce**

According to Omeonu, there are five stages of divorce which are always found in a divorce situation. These are emotional, legal, economic, community and psychic divorce<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, a large portion of these stages is derived from Omeonu.

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<sup>34</sup> Shawn Meghan Burn, *Women across Cultures* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 25.

<sup>35</sup> Joan C. Chrysler, *Lectures on the Psychology of Women* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 326.

<sup>36</sup> P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows* (Nairobi, Kenya: Signal Press, 2003), 132.

<sup>37</sup> Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 121.

### **Emotional Divorce**

It is when parents or husband and wife live in the same home but actually divorced. There is usually very little going on between them to an extent of sleeping in different bedrooms. The basic issue here has to do with the deteriorating of the marriage bond.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Legal Divorce**

In this stage one or both parties in a marriage seek legal separation where they are unable to work out their own differences. In actual fact this stage marks the end of the marriage union.

### **The Economic Divorce**

In a marriage union there is normally a source of income which sustains the couple in terms of physical needs. In the event that the other party to the marriage is a breadwinner if he or she leaves there remains a vacuum economically. If both parties are gainfully employed during divorce there is a challenge in balancing up finances.

### **The Community Divorce**

In accordance with this stage, the divorcee faces a challenge in the reaction of friends and the community to the divorce. The bond between the divorcee and the community becomes a big challenge of accepting the new marital status after having been known as a married person<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 132.

<sup>39</sup> Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 120.

## **The Psychic Divorce**

The stage involves regaining individual autonomy as it relates to new marital status. The mental divorce from the married status to divorce status is a psychological process which requires time and energy. However, in a divorce situation this kind of mental challenge is inevitable.<sup>40</sup> It is observed that these stages of divorce are practical and inherent in a divorce scenario. Therefore the researcher supports these stages or stations due to the general observations of divorce cases.

## **Divorce in African Context**

According to typical Black African, marriage is meant to be indissoluble up to and even beyond death. The fact that the brother is married already does not make him a polygamist in African context if he marries the widow because she is married to the whole community and remains married to her deceased husband.<sup>41</sup>

During good days and bad days, the support of the extended family to the husband and wife is material as well as the spiritual help free of charge. Moreover, marriage conflict is the concern of the entire family and nothing may be decided without a family discussion in which important members of the community both men and women take part.<sup>42</sup>

In Africa the issue of divorce does not rest with the couple. The divorce process may not happen without the discussion of the entire community. In other words, the couple cannot separate without the consent of the extended family and the community at large. Furthermore, divorce is viewed as a social disaster. Again marital

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<sup>40</sup> Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 120.

<sup>41</sup> Bujo, *Models for Marriage*, 104.

<sup>42</sup> Bujo, *Models for Marriage*, 106.

breakup is regarded as a sense of failure, rejection and defeat. It is further noted as abnormal and in a sense considered to be the utter dismay.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, procreation is the main object in a marriage union according to African tradition.

In addition, companionship and mutual attraction of the young people themselves count little as well as their preferences.<sup>44</sup> Divorced women are not respected, they cannot be re-married if the *lobola* or bride price is not paid back. If the woman has children within the wedlock, the bride price is not paid back. Furthermore, if the *lobola* is paid back, the former husband is consulted in the event of re-marriage.<sup>45</sup> It is observed that divorce in African context is a taboo. Marriage is regarded as a permanent union, however, divorce is permitted where there is no prospects of restoring the marriage relationship. In other words divorce in African context is allowed not instructed or commanded. The researcher agrees with the African position on divorce because it is in line with Biblical position on divorce, as discussed in the previous chapter.

### **Marriage in the Eyes of Different Authors**

The previous chapter discussed marriage and identified it as a God-oriented institution ordained by God Himself. This chapter surveys and discusses how other authors view marriage. David W. Armstrong sees marriage as a contract between a man and a woman called respectively husband and wife. A special kind of social order for the founding and maintaining of a family practised from pre-history times to the last of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It occurs now only among primitive cultures and in ethnic

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<sup>43</sup> Rukwaru, *Tie That Binds*, 21.

<sup>44</sup> Isaac Schapera, *Married Life in African Tribe* (London, UK: Cox and Wyman, 1971), 247.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

or religious subgroups in isolated locations.<sup>46</sup> According to Omeonu, there are six levels of marriage which bring out different views of marriage and the whole of this section is derived from Omeonu.

### **Marriage in Sociology**

In this instance, marriage is an approved union between two individuals of the opposite sex made with the expectations of permanence and usually with the aim of producing children.

### **Marriage in Anthropology**

It is termed as an association of a man and a woman for the purpose of establishing a household or family in which children may be born or reared.<sup>47</sup>

### **Marriage according to Law**

It is known as a legally sanctioned union between two individuals of the opposite sex and that accords status to their offspring and is regulated by laws of the land rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners.

### **The Marriage of Convenience**

The kind of marriage is entered into for a certain person's advantage. It may be socially, politically or economically the marriage is basically characterised by lack of love. Furthermore, cohabitation is also part of the marriage of convenience.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> David W. Armstrong, *Cherishable Love and Marriage* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), 10.

<sup>47</sup> Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 3.

## **The Contract Marriage**

It has to do with both a man and a woman agreeing to marry for a certain length of time. It may be due to good business for getting money or something related to their needs at that particular time.

## **Marriage in Christianity**

It is an institution ordained by God which started in Eden (Gen 2:20), involving the sacred covenant joining a man and a woman in holy matrimony for the sake of companionship and procreation till death do them part from each other.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, marriage is the foundation of family life.<sup>50</sup> In addition, Craig points out that marriage is a special relationship created by God, he further mentions that it is a Divine gift.<sup>51</sup> Marriage has remained the strongest and the most meaningful unions among the human race before the fall and after the fall that is before sin entered the human realm.

According to Roberts, marriage is the outward and spiritual sign of the greatest, holiest and noblest thing that has ever existed or ever will exist. In other words marriage in this regard is the union of the divine and human natures in Christ.<sup>52</sup> It is observed that all these categories and views of marriage do have one thing in common, that is the realization that marriage ought to be between two individuals of

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<sup>49</sup> Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home* (Grand Rapids, MI: Book Academic, 2014), 40.

<sup>50</sup> Balswick and Balswick, *The Family*, 43.

<sup>51</sup> Brain Craig, *Searching for Intimacy in Marriage* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2004), 20.

<sup>52</sup> Christopher C. Roberts, *Creation and Covenant* (New York: T. and T. Clark International, 2007), 112.

the opposite sex. However, the researcher do agree with the elements of the original marriage as it were.

### **What Is a Family?**

According to Schaefer, a family is a set of people who are related by blood, marriage or some other agreed upon relationship or adoption who do share the primary responsibility for reproduction and the caring for members of society<sup>53</sup>. On the other hand, Degenova describes the family as the group of two or more people, one of whom is the householder, related by birth, marriage or adoption and residing together. It is further, noted that a family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household.

There is also interacting and communication with each other in their respective roles, husbands and wife, mother and father son and daughter, brother and sister. There is also maintenance of a common culture.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, a family is a place where individuals can express and meet needs. It is a place where acceptance and belonging are available for each member. In fact it is a place where members take care of each other in times of needs.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, the African society views the family as more than the extended family. The family in African context include, the tribe, and the clan. Furthermore, it include the living, the living dead and the not-yet-born, in other words the family is understood to be in threefold<sup>56</sup>. While the Western world defines the

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<sup>53</sup> Richard T. Schaefer, *Sociology Matters* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 199.

<sup>54</sup> Mary Kay DeGenova, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families* (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2008), 50.

<sup>55</sup> Diana R. Garland *A Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2012), 36.

<sup>56</sup> Benezeto-Bujo, *Models for Marriage*, 19-20.

family as the one man and one woman united in matrimony plus natural adopted children and secondarily any other persons related by blood<sup>57</sup>. Considering the family in the Old Testament of the Bible, it is noted that four elements were taken into account, these are people, tribe, clan, and house of the father.<sup>58</sup>

It therefore suggests that the Bible defines the family as more than the nuclear but includes the whole clan. This fact is evident in Israel's way of life that they regarded themselves as one family as they claimed to be the descendants of one ancestor. It is observed that the African definition of a family as well as the Biblical one do resemble each other although the African one includes the dead. The researcher do agree with the African definition with the exception of the dead.

The English definition appears to be so narrow in terms of family members. The family of the in-laws is not included in this regard. The Biblical family and the African definition of a family include the whole tribe and the whole clan which seems to be the ideal, Judges 17-18. The family provides the environment for love and nurturing of each other with the Bible flavour from John 13.34-35.

Therefore, the ideal family seems to be the one which meet the needs of humanity as it relates to living among others and asking them. Indeed the family is to go beyond blood relationship and include even those who are distantly related as noted in African and Biblical families.

### **Domestic Violence**

It is sad to note that some people have given themselves absolute power and authority over others. Domestic violence has to do with bodily harm associated with

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<sup>57</sup> Jones, *Family*, 85.

<sup>58</sup> Jones, *Family*, 86.

harassment, emotion abuse as well as the destruction of property. Moreover there is coercion, control, revenge or punishment on a person with whom the abuser is in a close relationship.<sup>59</sup>

Domestic violence is a cause of concern all over the world because it exists in all places, classes as well as cultures and is always accompanied by verbal threats. It is common knowledge that those who are subjected in domestic violence yet in marriage do consider divorce as the solution.

It is further reported that 40 to 70 percent of women murdered in the US, Canada, Australia and Israel were killed by their husbands. Again in Russia 12000 women die every year as a result of domestic violence, which suggests that divorce in these circumstances is inevitable. The country of Kenya in particular 42% of women are beaten by their husbands every year. Furthermore in Pakistan 80% of women are also reported to be experiencing domestic violence every year<sup>60</sup>.

On the other hand, the religion does contribute to domestic violence which latter leads to divorce. The QUR,AN has this to say about women:

“As from those whom you fear disobedience admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Allah is high and supreme 4.34 Suras.”<sup>61</sup>

The Islamic religion is basically patriarchal in terms of control over women. It is clearly stated in the chapter mentioned above that women are totally under the male

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<sup>59</sup> Shawn Meghan Burn, *Women across Cultures* (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2005), 25.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Catherine Clay and Chandrika, *In Visioning women in World History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009), 153.

gender<sup>62</sup> It is however, observed that marriage in such conditions is more or less like a prison cell. The ideal marriage as stated in Ephesians 5.22 and 25 is characterised by voluntary submission and voluntary unconditional and affectionate love.

In accordance with these conditions, divorce can be termed as from bad to worse. The conditions created by other religions and social norms bring out the fact that divorce is the way out yet divorce is also the way out from the welfare and well-being of the family. It is further observed that divorce can be necessary to serve life although it is not the best option. Marriage is the only human contract in the world which has no time length, no opportunity to review and no socially acceptable means for termination.<sup>63</sup>

### **Effects of Divorce to Couples**

Currently in many parts of the world to process a divorce is as easy as buying a shirt from the shop. As a result marriage will no longer be seen by many as a covenant with God as the witness. Similarly marriage will further be recognized as the social alliance governed by civil laws. The dissolution in this regard will be among the easiest things to be accomplished.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, Omeonu, states that divorce is on the increase as from 1960. The United States of America seems to be leading in this area, in 1998, 9.8% of the registered population divorced<sup>65</sup>. When people get married they attain a status which

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<sup>62</sup> *The QUR,AN, Saheeh International* (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: AbulQasim,1997), 105.

<sup>63</sup> Augsburger, *Love and Marriage*, 10.

<sup>64</sup> Chimezie A. Omeonu, *After You Say "I Do"* (Nigeria: Unique Impressions, 2007), 215.

<sup>65</sup> Chimezie A. Omeonu, *Before You Say "I Do"* (Nigeria: Unique Impressions, 2007), 38.

is forfeited after divorce. Couples of divorcees do face a challenge in readjustment in a divorce situation.

According to Joe A. Crews, marriage is a lifetime commitment. To divorce an innocent partner and marry someone else is more strongly condemned than the popular polygamy practised in the Old Testament days.<sup>66</sup> He further argues that Matthew 19.9 forbids divorce and remarriages. Again God's approval of the sin of divorce must be registered in order to impress the guilty ones of the magnitude of this transgression.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, Rukwaru points out that divorce among couples brings personal shame. It also brings about erosion of self-confidence in as far as interpersonal relations are concerned.<sup>68</sup> Financial problems and challenges do affects the couples in the sense that divorce comes in an accident manner. Child support and visitation orders also stresses couples in a divorce scenario.<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, new relationships in the community affect divorces one way or the other. In addition there is an issue of new marriage in terms of remarriage which may generate negative attitude towards marriage itself due to previous marriage. On the other hand, some divorces encounter difficulties in acceptance by the immediate family and the community due to status change.

It is noted that divorce is on the increase as from 1960 to late. The researcher agrees with Omeonu to the fact that divorce nowadays is like buying a shirt from the shop. Divorce is so common so much that it is the order of the day. Furthermore, the

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<sup>66</sup> Joe A. Crews, "Lawfully Joined," *Adventists Affirm*, Summer 2007, 27-37.

<sup>67</sup> White, *Adventist Home*, 344.

<sup>68</sup> Rukwaru, *Tie That Binds*, 21.

<sup>69</sup> Wachege, *Mother Widows*, 118.

civil law has relaxed the divorce proceedings to an extent that it is easier than getting married.

Crews and Wachege do present divorce to couples as a serious crime before the human race and God the creator. The intensity of the effects discussed and maintained by these authors is in line with the divine guidance in that God Himself hates divorce. Due to this divorce by all means cannot exert positive effects among the divorces.

### **Effects of Divorce to Children**

Divorce is described as irreparable, it is one of the worst tragedies in human life. It brings insecurity, anger and total recrimination.<sup>70</sup> In most cases children are the victims of circumstances in a divorce situation. Children face the problem particularly those in school in relation to their peers, the adjustment to new surroundings do affect children one way or the other.

Furthermore, children find themselves involuntarily on the side of economic loss, every family has a way of earning a living but during the divorce all this is lost which possess a big problem especially to children. Since divorce is unpredictable, poor parental adjustments to the new situation or status do affect children negatively. Moreover, interparental conflicts also influence children for worse, parents argue in front of children and thus psychologically and emotionally affect children.<sup>71</sup>

Divorce is said to be a tragedy that dramatically impacts children negatively for the rest of their lives. On the other hand, Schoeder argues that it is not divorce that

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<sup>70</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive, 2008), 255.

<sup>71</sup> Lynn H. Turner and Richard West, *Prospective on Family Communication* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 253.

burdens children but the way in which parents divorce.<sup>72</sup> It is further argued that divorced families should be renamed as changed or re-arranged instead of damaged or destroyed.

Furthermore, it is revealed that children of divorcees do not wish by all means divorce process. Children are at a greater risk as well in terms of maladjustment and juvenile that their parents be united in marriage again after the delinquency since there is no coordination in a divorce situation.

Moreover, parent-child relationship seems to change for the worse. In addition, living arrangement changes which include financial situation thereof. The moving away from the neighbourhood as well the school play a significant role in children. As a result children get affected emotionally, behaviourally and academically. In the long run children develop weaker bonds with parents<sup>73</sup>.

According to Debbie Barr, children in a divorce dilemma lose self-esteem and trust in adults. The family home which may be lost do affect children one way or the other. Furthermore, children lose respect and status in the eyes of others especially peers.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, faith in God is affected and compromised among children.

The ability to concentrate in school is affected which actually affect the physical and mental well-being of children in the entire health. It is noted that children in this kind of situation always feel rejected and embarrassed about the divorce undertaking. It is often noted that parents get angry to children in the event

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<sup>72</sup> Elizabeth Schoeder, *Taking Sides: Contemporary Learning series* (Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 49-51.

<sup>73</sup> Maureen T. B. Drysdale and B. J. Rye, *Taking Sides: A Contemporary Learning Series* (Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 237.

<sup>74</sup> Debbie Barr, *Caught In The Crossfire* (New York: Zondervan, 1986) 28-29.

that they get too close to one parent. Furthermore children sometimes get angry for they are not given freedom when it comes to what they want.<sup>75</sup>

In 1960 a divorce was enough to end a politician's career as a result most married people stayed together but to date more than one million children are reported to be affected by divorce per year. Spouses are traded in for newer models as if they were cars, during the same period out of wedlock pregnancy was a shame.<sup>76</sup>

Looking and analysing closely the arguments for and against divorce, the researcher rejects the argument by Schoeder that what affect children is not divorce but the way parents' divorce. The argument does not have value in the sense that whether the word divorce is given a different flavour the critical point remains the same, the dissolution of the marriage union.

Schoeder further argues that the words destroyed or damaged families must be replaced with changed or re-arranged families, all these do not alter the result. However, the researcher agrees with her that divorce is a tragedy which affects the innocent including children who are not participants in a marital divorce. God the creator of the universe hates divorce so it can never be good in whatever way.

### **The Divorce Law in Zimbabwe**

According to Ashley Lauren, higher rates of divorce is a sign of progress and women's empowerment ,which is evidenced by the number of divorces received in the High Court of Zimbabwe in 2011 which totalled 1 551. Furthermore, others say divorce is an abomination while other argue that divorce may be a solution to the

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<sup>75</sup> Chap Clark, *Hurt 2.0 Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 98.

<sup>76</sup> James Dobson and Garry Bauer, *Children at Risk* (New York: Word, 1990), 174.

disintegration of a marriage<sup>77</sup>.The researcher disagrees with Ashley Lauren because marriage was instituted by God before the so-called women empowerment,(Gen 2:24).

It is further argued that when more and more women get divorced, on the other hand, the social stigma get reduced. It also shows that women no longer need men economically, emotionally to survive. The ever rising importance of education for women in Zimbabwe enables women to get better employment. Consequently, women are no longer dependent on men financially.<sup>78</sup> Again, the researcher rejects the above statement because marriage is not based on material gain but it is a divine right for one to get married as indicated in (Gen 2:18).

### **The Matrimonial Causes Act Chapter 5.13**

Divorce law in Zimbabwe is governed under the Matrimonial Causes Act Chapter 5.13 of 1986 which was amended in 2000 June. There are basically two grounds of divorce in Zimbabwe these are irretrievable breakdown of the marriage to the extent that restoration of a healthy relationship is not an option. The second one is an incurable mental illness or continuous unconsciousness of one party.<sup>79</sup>

### **Irretrievable Breakdown of Marriage**

In this instance the parties have not lived together for a continuous period of at least twelve months the defendant has committed adultery the defendant has been sentenced to prison for an extended period or declared a habitual criminal during the

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<sup>77</sup> Ashley Lauren, "Women and Divorce in Zimbabwe," accessed 1 August 2016, [www .genderacrossborders.com](http://www.genderacrossborders.com).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

marriage the defendant has treated the plaintiff with cruelty or during the marriage, the defendant has abused alcohol or drugs uncontrollably.<sup>80</sup>

### **An Incurable Mental Illness**

In this regard, the court will grant divorce due to mental illness or continuous unconsciousness. The defendant is suffering from mental disease and has been receiving mental treatment for a combined total of five out of the last ten days of marriage. The defendant has been in a state of unconsciousness for at least six months prior to filing for divorce.<sup>81</sup>

The final analysis in the divorce law of Zimbabwe points out that there are facts which are in line with the original marriage and divorce concession. First and foremost the researcher rejects the argument by Lauren that divorce is indicative of progress and women's empowerment, she further argue that divorce is a sign that women are no longer dependant on men economically.

Marriage itself is not about depending on men economically but it is a divine right for every human being to enjoy (Gen 2.18 and 24). Divorce is a sign of family disintegration it does not reduce stigma as suggested but instead it brings about stigma and issues related. The issue of adultery as a cause of divorce is not divorced from the Bible (Matt 19.9).

Furthermore, marriage can be terminated by death and divorce only. Death in actual fact is the state of unconsciousness, so if someone is mentally ill to the extent of unconsciousness it is the same as dead. Therefore, the researcher agrees with these

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<sup>80</sup> Ashley Lauren, "Women and Divorce in Zimbabwe," accessed 1 August 2016, [www.genderacrossborders.com](http://www.genderacrossborders.com).

<sup>81</sup> "The Divorce Law in Zimbabwe," accessed 5 August 2016, [www.ehow.com/facts\\_6912292\\_divorce\\_law\\_zimbabwe.htm](http://www.ehow.com/facts_6912292_divorce_law_zimbabwe.htm).

two factors in the divorce law as in line with the biblical marriage. The other grounds for divorce in this regard leaves a lot to be desired, in the area of theology and sociology.

### **Love and Forgiveness in Marriage**

When it comes to matters of love, the bible gives the example which cannot be equated with any human effort. The Bible in John 3.16 reveals the unconditional love, ever displayed in action to the human race from eternity past to forever. The human nature is wired in such a way that it needs to hear and receive expressions of love from birth up to the point of death.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, to keep love alive in a marriage union there must be passion, commitment and intimacy. A great deal of energy and investment in the area of marital relationship is critical to make the way for love and forgiveness. Moreover, reciprocity in terms of the ongoing process of caring and closeness in which couples work together to formulate an enduring relationship.<sup>83</sup>

On the other hand, forgiveness has to do with the communication of anger and hurt as the first step towards the resolving of differences between couples. By all means the effort in this regard is to be based on restoration as opposed to punishment. Furthermore, forgiveness focuses on the future whereas punishment focuses on the past.<sup>84</sup> In other words punishment has to do with giving the other person what he or she deserves not mindful as to whether it hurts or not. In contrast forgiveness focuses on the needs of the other person and the relationship for the future. Again forgiveness

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<sup>82</sup> Balswick, *The Family*, 243.

<sup>83</sup> Craig, *Intimacy in Marriage*, 200.

<sup>84</sup> Garland, *Family Ministry*, 358.

invites restoration to the fullest. Forgiveness is not a contract that can be conditional in procedure and purpose but rather seek not restitution.

Moreover, forgiveness is a desirable element in a marriage relationship. It requires strength not weakness in the sense that one can only forgive when he or she has the choice to do so. Forgiveness is not a denial of reality, it is a recognition of the injury that has been done and further it is not forgetting about the injury. Deciding to forgive starts the process of forgiveness accompanied by confession and repentance<sup>85</sup>.

According to Bruce and Carol Britten, love means choosing to do works of kind, unselfish deeds for each other. Love is termed as giving as well as forgiving. In addition love is helping and thanking. More so love is not just a feeling, love is actually what people do.<sup>86</sup> It is noted that forgiveness is not acceptance given on condition that the other become acceptable.

Forgiveness is referred to giving freely. It also exercises God's strength to love and receive the other person without any assurance of complete restitution and making of amends. Again forgiveness is the relationship between equals who recognize their deep need of each other and before God each drops all charges, refuses all self-justifications and forgives.

The central point in the forgiveness process is that one must recognize that he or she too must be forgiven in the same manner one to be loving he or she has to know that he or she is loved.<sup>87</sup> As a matter of fact Augsburger, puts forgiveness into five categories which are as follows, in psychology, the person who might be

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>86</sup> Bruce and Carol Britten, *Answers for Your Marriage* (Nairobi, Kenya: Uzima, 2008), 149.

<sup>87</sup> Augsburger, *Love and Marriage*, 143-145.

offended and justly angered by the offender bears his or her anger and let the other go free.

In legal terms, the injured party drops charges or cancels his or her suit for damages and absorbs the loss incurred by the injurer. In practical terms, the one hurt or betrayed and cheated accepts the loss and pay the cost of forgiving the other's wrongs asking for no repayment, seeking no revenge and holding no resentment as it were.<sup>88</sup> Forgiveness in theology is regarded as substitutional, it is vicarious in nature, there is no man who truly forgives his or her brother until he or she bears upon himself the hurt of the other's deeds. God forgave us in Jesus because God was in Christ paying the cost of forgiving men by bearing the total hurt of our evil upon himself at Calvary (1 Pet 2:21- 24).

In as far as marriage is concerned, love accepts deliberately the hurt and abrasions of life and drop charges against the other person. It is accepting the other when both of you know he or she has done something unacceptable. Forgiveness is smiling love to one's partner when the justifications for keeping an insult or injury are alive and are at the tip of one's tongue yet one swallows them. Indeed, love and forgiveness go together in marriage. It is observed that divorce happens but it can be avoided and minimized through the application of love and forgiveness.<sup>89</sup>

It is further observed that there is no human being who is immune to love and forgiveness because the Bible points out that all people sinned Rom 3.23. On the other hand, all people are loved John 3.16 and are all forgiven through Jesus Christ Rom 6.23. Before divorce becomes the option in a marriage relationship, love and forgiveness should be given space and become functional.

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<sup>88</sup> Augsburg, *Love and Marriage*, 143-145.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

It takes courage to communicate one's thoughts and feelings, preferences, concerns, hurts and hopes. In addition to grow a relationship involves trusting one another and opening enough to each other which often results in love and acceptance reciprocally. All parties in a marriage are potential forgivers if they do choose to seek the path of forgiveness instead of retribution.<sup>90</sup>

### **Summary**

All the literature, references surveyed in this chapter agree from different angles that marriage as an institution is under serious threat. Marriage is being secularised and redefined the world over. Divorce rate among nations is at its height. The family structure has become subjective and thus affecting negatively the fabric of the society.

There are divorce indicators which can be prevented through marriage enrichment seminars as direct or indirect interventions. The divorce laws have become catalysts in the divorce process by making it easy to do so. Furthermore, all the literature reviewed reveal that the ideal marriage is the one ordained by God in the Genesis narrative.

It is noted that divorce is not the only option in resolving marital problems. Love and forgiveness if applied can minimize and prevent divorce, the Zimbabwean divorce law has some points which are somehow biblical, above all the reviewed literature indicate that divorce is an undesirable element in the family structure, in the society and in the world as a whole.

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<sup>90</sup> Karen Holford and Ron Flowers, *Jumpstart Connections: Fresh Ideas to Invigorate Your Relationships* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Resource Center, 2004), 99.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The previous chapter surveyed categories of literature review which included the significance of marriage in line with the Western culture, marriage in African context and types of marriages. The chapter also discussed divorce, the causes of divorce its stages, the family and marriages in the eyes of different authors.

This chapter deals with the research process. The essential data was collected accordingly. The data collected included the age groups of participants, academic qualifications and gender. The research further investigated the marital status of all the participants and the causes of divorce. The study also looks at the condition of different marriages as it relates to the ideal marriage.

In addition, the research also sought to examine the marriage situations as it relates to emotions and feelings thereof. The level of different feelings towards marriage was catered for by the administration of questionnaires. Data was collected and analysed accordingly. As a result the data was interpreted and used in the founding of the intervention strategy for minimizing divorce.

The Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White and writings of many different authors in the area of marriage are the spring board for the intervention process and curriculum. The design for the intervention was developed and the curriculum thereof. The material appropriate for the intervention process were sourced. Qualified facilitators in the relevant areas of study were sought accordingly.

Appropriate ways of delivery towards the intervention process were applied, programs for intervention were designed and relevant topics and subjects which were an answer to the challenges and problems were sought in order to bring changes in the married life and potential divorcees. To allow the smooth running of the research process, permission was obtained from the Conference Executive Committee, the district, as well as from the individual participants.

On the other hand, the Gantt chart was used as the guideline for the research yet the log frame was used as the instrument for checking the suggested objectives as to whether they were in line with the expected final project aftermath. The programs which were implemented were adequately monitored in every respects.

### **Description of the Ministry Context**

#### **The Macro-Context**

Central Zimbabwe Conference is in Zimbabwe which is a sovereign state. Zimbabwe is situated in South Central Africa as a landlocked country between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. It is bound by Zambia on the north and north-west, by South Africa on the South, by Mozambique on the East and north-east and the South-west by Botswana.<sup>1</sup>

Zimbabwe lies wholly to the north of the Tropic of Capricorn. It is part of the great plateau which is a major feature of the geography of Southern Africa. The area of Zimbabwe is 390 245km<sup>2</sup>. It has the outstanding feature, the central plateau called the Highveld which is 650km long and 80km wide. On either side of this there is Midleveld which is between 600m and 1200m above sea-level. The Lowveld is below 600m which comprises a narrow strip in the Zambezi Valley and broader tract

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, *Zimbabwe in Brief* (Harare, Zimbabwe: The Government Printer, 2009), 5.

between the Limpopo and Sabi rivers. The lowest point in the country is the junction of the Lundi-Sabi rivers which is about 162m above sea-level.<sup>2</sup>

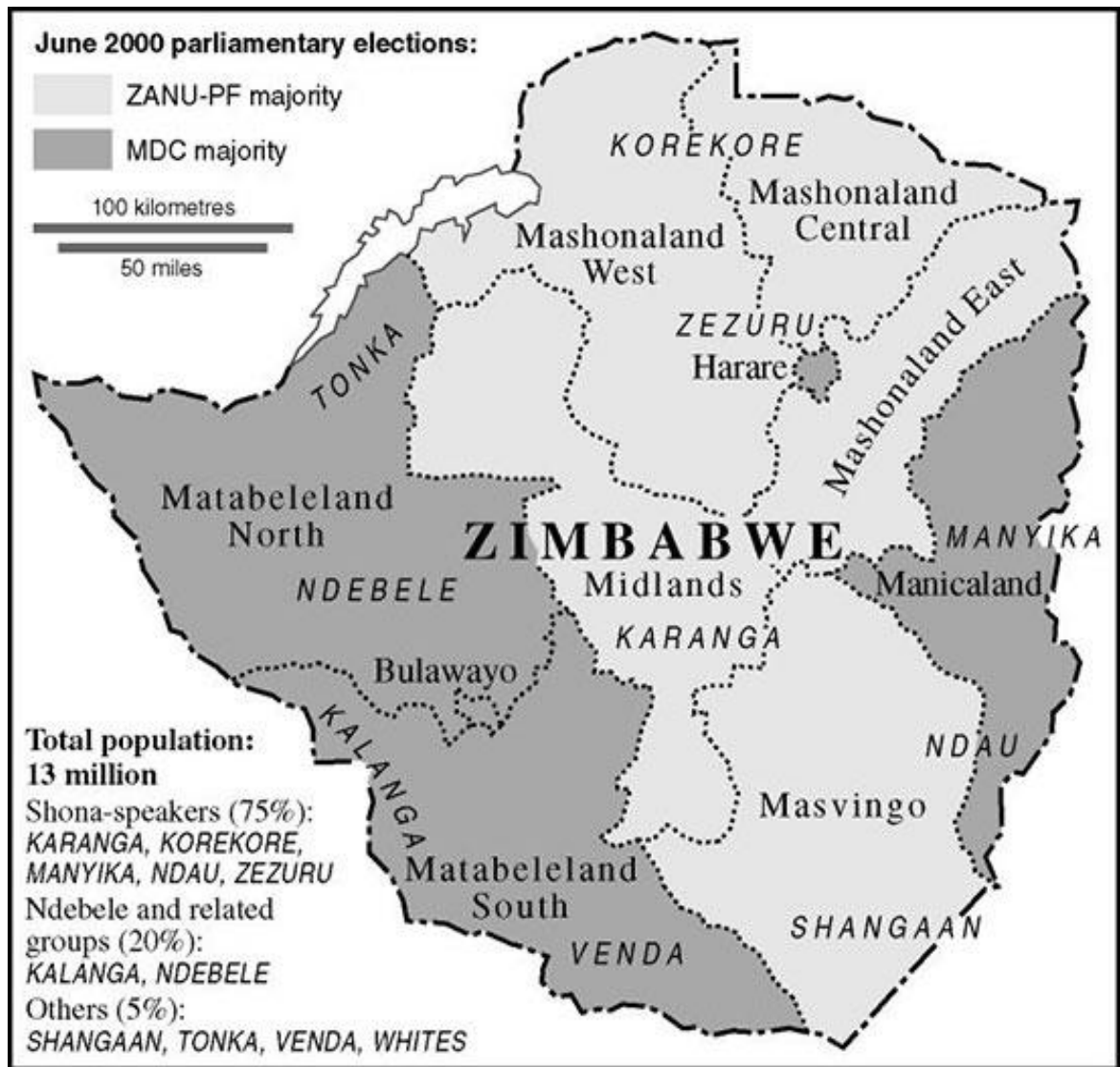


Figure 1. The Map of Zimbabwe showing provinces and cities and towns

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, *Zimbabwe in Brief*, 5.

**The History of Zimbabwe.** In line with the Lancaster House Agreements of 1979, majority rule was internationally recognized in Zimbabwe which did lead to independence in 18 April 1980. The country had been known by several names which include, Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe Rhodesia. Before the arrival of Bantu speakers in Zimbabwe the country was populated by the ancestors of the San people.<sup>3</sup>

The Bantu people who occupied Zimbabwe came from West of the Great lakes, the coastal regions of South Eastern Kenya and North Eastern Tanzania. The first Bantu group to stay in the country came to be known as the Shona. The second group to occupy Zimbabwe was the Zulus under the name the Ndebele in 1838.<sup>4</sup> The Ndebele kingdom was headquartered in Bulawayo in the province of Matebeleland. In the 1880s the British arrived and became the third to occupy Zimbabwe under Cecil John Rhodes, whose name became the country's name, Rhodesia from Rhodes by then.<sup>5</sup>

In 1923 the white settlers who were in Zimbabwe voted to become the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia. There was a brief federation with Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia and Nyasaland now Malawi. In 1963 two partners in federation chose to go for independence whilst Zimbabwe the then Southern Rhodesia chose to remain a colony.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> William Muchayi, "Ian Smith Has the Last Laugh in His Grave," accessed 13 September 2016, [www.zimbabweansituation.com/news/zimsitian-smith-has-the-last-laugh-in-his-grave/](http://www.zimbabweansituation.com/news/zimsitian-smith-has-the-last-laugh-in-his-grave/).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Whitney Smith, "Flag of Zimbabwe," accessed 14 September 2016, <https://www.brittanica.com/topic/flag-of-Zimbabwe#ref948360>.

On 11 November 1965, the white minority government of the then Rhodesia declared its independence from Britain. The country resisted the majority rule and on 1 March 1970, it declared itself a republic. In 1976 the war was heightened against the white-minority government which led to the majority rule in 1980 to the present.<sup>7</sup>

**Culture.** The name Zimbabwe comes from Great Zimbabwe, the 15<sup>th</sup> century capital which was built of stones which belonged to the Rozwi Shona dynasty. The name literary means “great stone houses.” Culture among the Shona, Ndebele and the smaller groups of Tonga, Shangaan and Venda are similar. They practice the same traditions when it comes to marriage and the belief in the supernatural ancestors, they all believe in the spirit world.<sup>8</sup>

**Basic Economy.** Agriculture is the major source of the economy over 70% of the population is into agriculture. Economic decline started in the mid-1980s when foreign demands for minerals dropped drastically. The situation was made worse by the several droughts and economic structural adjustments programmes, which impacted more on the poor.<sup>9</sup> In 1992 the country was in a position of self-sufficiency in terms of grain and massive maize production by smallholders. The major crops grown by smallholders are maize, sunflower, groundnuts and cotton. Whereas in the Zambezi valley millet and sorghum are grown than maize.<sup>10</sup>

**Government.** Zimbabwe is a democratic state headed by the Executive president. The president is elected by direct vote in advance of party elections and he

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<sup>7</sup> Clyde William Sanger, Kenneth Bradley, and Kenneth Ingham, “Zimbabwe,” accessed 14 September 2016, <https://www.brittanica.com/place/Zimbabwe>.

<sup>8</sup> “Zimbabwe Cultures,” accessed 15 September 2016, [www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Zimbabwe.html](http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Zimbabwe.html).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

or she holds office for six years. The duration of a ruling party is five years. Structures in terms of representatives consists of the house of Assemble and the Senate as well as the Cabinet appointed by the president.<sup>11</sup>

**Population.** The population of Zimbabwe is currently at 15 602 751. Of the figure 7 731 524 are women which translate to 50.71% of the total population. Men are 7 514 331 which represent 49,29% of the national population. The population density is 40 people per square km which is considered to be moderate in all standards.<sup>12</sup>

The population growth rate is estimated at three percent per annum. The number of live births for the years 2005 to 2010 is 370 000 per year and the number of deaths for the same period is 190 000 per year.<sup>13</sup> The table below shows the number of live birth per year and the number of deaths per year.

*Table 1. Number of Live Births and Deaths per Year*

		Total
Live births	2005 – 2010	370 000
Deaths	2005 – 2010	190 000

**Marriage in Zimbabwe.** According to Rumbidzai Dube, there are three types of marriages in Zimbabwe, the customary marriages which are governed by customary law and the civil marriages which are under the general law. There is also

<sup>11</sup> “Zimbabwe Government System,” accessed 16 September 2016, [www.zimembassy.se/administration.html](http://www.zimembassy.se/administration.html).

<sup>12</sup> “Zimbabwe Population,” accessed 16 September 2016, [www.tradingeconomics.com/Zimbabwe/population](http://www.tradingeconomics.com/Zimbabwe/population).

<sup>13</sup> “Zimbabwe Population,” accessed 17 September 2016, [www.woldometers.info/world-population/Zimbabwe-population/](http://www.woldometers.info/world-population/Zimbabwe-population/).

the unregistered customary law union. The civil marriages are administered under the Marriage Act 5:11 while customary marriages are governed under the Marriage Act Chapter 5:07.<sup>14</sup>

Zimbabwe has a big challenge of child marriages. The current official information indicate that 4 500 pupils dropped out of school due to early marriages. Secondary schools lost 3 650 pupils in the female gender, while 251 pupils in the male category dropped because of early marriages.

In the primary sector it is revealed that 305 females dropped school because of early marriages.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, 13 males left school as a result of early marriages.<sup>16</sup> Under normal circumstances a child who is at secondary school in Zimbabwe is 14 years old, beginning from form one. A grade one child in primary school is normally six years old, which adds up to 14 years when beginning the secondary level.

Apparently the legal majority age in Zimbabwe for marriage is 18 years. The common trend in marriage as observed indicates a problem in the stability of the marriage union. It is observed that the figure of 4 500 pupils recorded as school dropouts because of early marriages is a conservative figure because some are not recorded due to fear of the consequences. The table below shows pupils in Early Marriage Dropout for the year 2016.

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<sup>14</sup> Rumbidzai Dube, "Till Death Do Us Part? Marriage in Zimbabwe," retrieved from research and advocacy unit, [Org/system/files/marriage](#). In Zimbabwe. Pdf.

<sup>15</sup> Samantha Chigogo, "4500 Pupils in Early Marriage, Drop Out," *The Herald*, November 22, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

*Table 2. Pupils in Early Marriage Dropout for the ear 2016*

<b>Year</b>	<b>School Level</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>No</b>
2016	Primary	Female	305
2016	Primary	Male	13
2016	Secondary	Female	3 650
2016	Secondary	Male	251

The conservative figure released of pupils who leave school because of early marriages is a cause of concern. The nation as a whole is being short changed in the process because potential service providers are made to end their academic pursuit prematurely. It is common knowledge that the marriage parties in early marriage do not normally have resources to earn a living, due to age.

It is noted that there is a crisis in Zimbabwe in regard to child marriages which has reached an alarming rate. There is no maturity in the marriage parties among those who get married in early marriages. Child marriages lacks physical, emotional and mental maturity among the parties. It is also observed that early marriages lack commitment to the marriage bond or union which leads to divorce and street kids which is now on the increase. According to statistics, women who get married before the age of 15 is going up. Those aged 14-49 constitutes 5% while men in the same age group constitutes 0.3%.<sup>17</sup>

Marriage union before the age of 18 years for women who are now at the age of 20-49 years is at 32.8% and the male counterparts in the same age group is currently at 3.7%. It is further noted that men aged 20-54 years, the marriage percentage is 3.9% per year. On the other hand, young people who get married at the

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<sup>17</sup> "Zimbabwe Child Marriage," accessed 17 September 2016, [www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/Zimbabwe/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/Zimbabwe/).

age of 15-19 years among women is 24.5% per year and among men in the same category is 1.70% per annum.<sup>18</sup>

All these statistics related to marriage are on yearly basis. It is observed that figures on the female gender are on the high side. It suggests that a lot is needed to protect the female gender in terms of child marriages.

*Table 3. Yearly Marriage Percentages according to Age Group*

Age	Gender	Percentage
15-49 years	Female	5%
15-49 year	Male	0.3%
15-54	Male	0.3%
20-49	Female	32.8%
20-49	Male	3.7%
20-54	Male	3.9%
15-19	Female	24.5%
15-19	Male	1.7%

The figures indicate that there is a deliberate abuse of women in Zimbabwe in the name of marriage. There are many social irregularities that leave a lot to be desired. Gender based violence is inevitable due to the oppressive stance in the marriage procedures.

**Divorce.** According to Doreen Gapare, divorce rate in Zimbabwe is currently at 105 per month.<sup>19</sup> Ages involved in divorce are from 22 to 38 years up to the age of

<sup>18</sup> “Zimbabwe Child Marriage,” accessed 17 September 2016, [www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/Zimbabwe/](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/Zimbabwe/).

<sup>19</sup> Doreen Gapare, “Divorce Cases on the Increase in Zimbabwe,” accessed 12 September 2016, [www.sundamail.com.zw/divorce-cases-on-the-rise-in-zim](http://www.sundamail.com.zw/divorce-cases-on-the-rise-in-zim).

60. In 2015 January to July, 1 102 divorces were recorded. It means that 157 couples divorced every month and 40 couples divorced every week.<sup>20</sup>

**HIV/AIDS.** The first reported case related to AIDS was in 1985. It is interesting to note that all the infections were found in the 17-30 years age group. The infection is on the high side on the male gender. The province of Matebeleland South has the highest figure of HIV infections as compared to other provinces which is at 21% of the national figure.<sup>21</sup>

The HIV/AIDS situation in Zimbabwe is generally taking a downward trend as compared to previous years. In fact Zimbabwe is one of the countries in the whole world currently experiencing a decline in the pandemic prevalence. The statistics are at 13.69% from 15.27%. the factors contributing to the decline are behaviour change, high mortality rate of the infected and the severe economic decline.<sup>22</sup>

**Political Structure.** The official name of the country is known as the Republic of Zimbabwe and the form of state is unitary republic. The legal system is based on Roman-Dutch law and the 1979 Constitution. Furthermore the national legislature is composed of the House of Assemble with 270 members and a senate of 78 members.<sup>23</sup> There are 16 traditional chiefs and two elected to represent those with disabilities. The head of state is the president who is elected through universal suffrage, under the 2013 constitution which states that a president must serve two terms which however does not apply retrospectively. The president and the appointed

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<sup>20</sup> Learnmore Zuze, "Divorce Rate in Zimbabwe," *Newsday*, July 7, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Duri Kerina, Babill Stray-Perdersen, and F. Miller, "HIV/AIDS: The Zimbabwean Situation and Trends," accessed 18 September 2016, pubs, sciepub.com/ajcmr/1/1/5/.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> The Economist Group 2016, "The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited," accessed 14 September 2016, country.eiu.com/article.aspx?.

cabinet forms the national government which runs the country and the post of the prime minister was done away under 2013 national constitution.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Micro Context**

**Central Zimbabwe Conference.** Central Zimbabwe Conference includes two provinces of Zimbabwe that is Midlands and Masvingo as shown in chapter one. The main languages spoken are Sindebele and Shona, there is a small portion in the Eastern side of the conference which speaks Shangani.<sup>25</sup>

The population of the conference according to the national census is at 3 100 031. The total area of the conference in terms of kilometres is 105 732km<sup>2</sup>. In accordance with the local government administration the conference has 15 districts, each with a resident district administrator. Moreover, the population growth rate is 2.31% which is said to be higher than the world medium 1.2%.<sup>26</sup>

The alarming divorce rate in the country as a whole has a contributory factor in the research since the Conference is part of Zimbabwe. In 2010 the Midlands province recorded 1600 divorces. On the other hand Masvingo province recorded 2200 divorces between 2007 and 2008. In the years 2009 to 2013, 2 500 divorces were also recorded in Masvingo province.<sup>27</sup>

It is noted that 2 500 divorces is only for those who have divorced through the court of law. The number of those who have not gone through the law court is

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> “Zimbabwe Population by Provinces,” accessed 18 September 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=Zimbabwe+population+by+province+2015&FORM=QSRE3>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> “Zimbabwe Divorce Rates,” accessed 18 September 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=divorce+rate+in+Zimbabwe&form=UP97DF&pc=UP97>.

unknown. It is also observed that Masvingo province has the highest divorce cases as compared to the Midlands province.

According to SDA Church annual statistical reports in the Conference, 140 people divorced in 2015 in Central Zimbabwe Conference.<sup>28</sup> This is a conservative figure found from those who have revealed their marital status. The fact of the matter is that, the number is more than the reported one because many fear to declare their status because there is stigma attached to it.

The international road from Beitbridge to Chirundu runs through Masvingo province. It is likely that many couples get influenced one way or the other which leads to divorce. The known fact about the main road which runs across Masvingo province is prostitution which is at its height along the road. According to the church structure, the conference has 28 districts each of them with a resident pastor in charge of the district. There are 414 organized churches and the membership is currently at 144 483. The number of companies has risen to 352. The number of schools run by the church is totalling to 24 of which 17 are primary schools and 7 are secondary schools.<sup>29</sup>

## **Research Design**

### **Types of Research**

The researcher uses the Quantitative method, in line with Kothari, the quantitative method is used to measure the quantity of data in quantitative form which can be formal and a rigid way. It can also be further classified into inferential

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<sup>28</sup> Central Zimbabwe Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Family Ministries, Annual Reports* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Central Zimbabwe Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Central Zimbabwe Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Secretariat, *Annual Statistical Reports* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Central Zimbabwe Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2015), 2.

approach to research from which to infer characteristics or relationships of population.<sup>30</sup>

### **Rationale**

The researcher uses the Quantitative method because it quantifies the social phenomena by collecting, analysing and interpreting numerical data among a smallest number in relation to many cases. It is conducted under strict rules, measurements, procedures and statistical data analysis techniques. It operates within a framework of a philosophical paradigm that assumes a stable reality that can eventually be explained.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, there is testing of the hypothesis which becomes the major characteristic.

The Quantitative method is under the Applied Research which is done to answer specific questions and solving specific problems. The main objective of the Quantitative method is not to gain knowledge parse but to use knowledge to improve the welfare of human beings<sup>32</sup> which is the major reason as to why the researcher uses this methodology.

### **Population**

Population validity is referred to as the extent to which the sampling distributions mirror those of the population which the sample is supposed to represent.<sup>33</sup> Central Zimbabwe Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a

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<sup>30</sup> C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology* (New Delhi: New Age International, 2010), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Abel Gitau Mugenda, *Social Science Research* (Nairobi, Kenya: Applied Research and Training Service, 2008), 82.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>33</sup> Victor Jupp, *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (London, UK: Sage, 2006), 312.

membership of 144 483 and 414 organised churches. Furthermore, it has 28 districts all of them with resident pastors.

### **Sampling and Criteria**

The researcher carried out the population sampling from among the Seventh-day Adventist church members only. Divorce from an African point of view is common among all church members so the researcher involved church members for meaningful contributions. Furthermore, the researcher uses church membership and age group as criteria for population sampling, 18 years and above is the years bracket used in this sampling.

According to survey sampling methods, judgement<sup>34</sup> sampling is a common non-probability method based on judgement. The researcher decides to draw the entire sample from one city as an entity, even though the population includes other cities. In this regard, the researcher used four churches. The churches include Zone One Church, Zone Two Church, Zone Three Church and Zone Four Church.

### **Surveys as an Instrument**

James D. Lester brings out that surveys can produce accurate data that one can tabulate and analyse quickly. He further shows that a formal survey of a selected population include age, gender, education and other necessary information.<sup>35</sup> The researcher uses surveys for collecting data. The instrument used in survey are questionnaires and interviews, but in this case the researcher uses questionnaires only.

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<sup>34</sup> "Survey Sampling Methods," accessed 15 September 2016, <https://www.statpac.com/surveys/sampling.htm>.

<sup>35</sup> James D. Lester, *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* (New York: Harper Collins College, 1973), 67.

It is noted that questionnaires are not to be framed or designed in such a way that questions which<sup>36</sup> are personal are avoided at all cost. One is to guard against his or her own prejudices because that can affect the results of the questionnaire in terms of pre-conceived ideas.

### **Justification of the Study**

The first and for most reason for the study arose from the observation that Central Zimbabwe Conference church members are affected socially and spiritually to the extent that the missionary work of the church is compromised, divorce being the pivotal contributory factor. The other reason is that there is no evidence in black and white that a study on the causes of divorce and minimizing it was ever done or carried out in Central Zimbabwe Conference, so it was necessary to do so as a response to the prevailing challenge.

It is also noted that there is no documented research which was ever carried out in Central Zimbabwe Conference concerning divorce. The divorce issue has become a challenge and a hindrance in the welfare and wellbeing of the church members in Central Zimbabwe Conference yet no measures have been undertaken to minimize the challenge. Due to these reasons mentioned above, this study serves to close the gap that has a significant need but had not been particularly attended to in Central Zimbabwe Conference as a whole.

### **Questionnaire Development**

According to Jon Krosnick and Stanley Presser, a questionnaire is the heart of a survey. They further bring out that simple and familiar words should be used,

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<sup>36</sup> Lester, *Writing Research Papers*, 67.

technical terms and slang should be avoided at all costs. Words with ambiguous meanings should be avoided and opt for wording that is specific and concrete in contrast to words which are general and abstract.<sup>37</sup>

The response options should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. On the other hand, questions that lead and push respondents to the answer should not be included. Double-barrelled questions are to be avoided and one question should be asked at a time. Moreover, questions with single and double negations are to be excluded in the questionnaire.

Early questions should be easy and pleasant to answer and should build relationship between the respondent and the researcher. Questions on the same topic are to be grouped together. Furthermore, questions on the same topic should be arranged from general to specific<sup>38</sup>.

### **Questions Asked**

Respondents were asked questions which started on gender, age and education level attained. The questionnaire further asked about the marital status of the participants and the state of family life among the respondents with particular attention to marriage. The questionnaire further asked the respondents to respond as to whether there were divorce signs in their marriages or not.

Furthermore, the participants were asked to identify the causes of divorce according to their opinions. It was further asked as to how the respondents would react to divorce situations if encountered. The detailed list of questions in this regard is found in appendix B of this dissertation.

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<sup>37</sup> Jon A. Krosnick and Stanley Presser, *Handbook of Survey Research* (New York: Emerald Group, 2010), 264.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

The researcher uses Jon A. Krosnick and Stanley Presser's way of Questionnaire development. The major construction of the contents in the questionnaire were derived from these two specialists in the area of questionnaire development. There are basically two types of questionnaires, the open and the closed questionnaires. The open allows respondents to answer questions in their own words whereas the closed questionnaire requires respondents to select an answer from a set of given choices.<sup>39</sup>

It is further said that the two types of questionnaires can be somehow combined by using the word "other" to take care of the important responses which might not be included in the list of choices. The researcher uses the closed questionnaire with the inclusion of the word other in important questions.

### **Pretesting**

According to I. M. Crawford, pretesting identifies any mistakes that need correcting to determine whether the questions will achieve the desired results. It also assists in knowing whether the questions have been placed in the best order and whether the question are understood by all classes of respondents.<sup>40</sup>

It checks as to whether some instructions are adequate and whether the additional questions are needed or whether some questions should be eliminated. Again, a small number is selected for pre-testing and should be broadly representative of the type of respondents to be interviewed in the main survey.<sup>41</sup> The researcher selected Mpalawani SDA Church for pre-testing, ten questions were given to church

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<sup>39</sup> Krosnick and Presser, *Survey Research*, 266.

<sup>40</sup> "Survey Pretesting," accessed 19 September 2016, [metaconnects.org/survey-pretest](http://metaconnects.org/survey-pretest).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

members by the researcher through church elders. Five were females in the age group of 18 years and above. On the other hand, five were males also in the age group of 18 years and above, the selection was rather random or open in other aspects except age.

All the ten questionnaires which were given to respondents for pre-testing were all returned, all questions were answered except two items which were not answered in one question sheet. The assumption for the omission of the two items from the analysis was that of an oversight. Indicators showed that respondents understood the questionnaire. Among the respondents one was a university graduate, two college graduates, four who are holders of secondary school certificates and three who had primary school certificates. The table below shows the number of respondents according to gender.

*Table 4. Gender for Respondents*

Gender	No. of respondents
Female	5
Male	5

The table below shows the number of respondents according to gender and academic education level attained.

*Table 5. Academic Education Level of the Respondents*

Education Level	Gender	No. of Respondents
University	Male	1
College	Female	2
Secondary school	Male	3
Secondary school	Female	1
Primary school	Male	1
Primary school	Female	2

The researcher was satisfied that the questionnaire was appropriate for collecting data, as a result no additional information was applied or eliminated for the main survey since the pre-testing exercise was successful.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

According to K. Popper and S. Ackroyd, the questionnaire is practical in purpose and practice. A lot of information can be collected from a large group of people within a short time and without incurring costs. It can also be carried out by the researcher with confined effects to its validity and reliability. The outcome of a questionnaire can be easily analysed and quantified by the researcher through the use of software.<sup>42</sup>

The questionnaire can be analysed scientifically and objectively as compared to other forms of research. Furthermore, when information is quantified it can be useful in the comparison with other research projects. It can further be used to measure change for better or for worse. When data is collected in the form of questionnaires can be useful in the creation of new theories and in the testing of existing hypothesis.<sup>43</sup>

One hundred and eighty nine questionnaires were given to churches on 15 October 2014 and were returned on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2014. The questionnaires were given to local church elders in the presence of the researcher. The same church elders were also asked to bring back the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed in the following manner.

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<sup>42</sup> K. Popper and S. Ackroyd, The Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires, accessed 14 July 2016, [libweb.surrey.ac.uk/library/skills/introductiontoResearchandManagingInformationLeicester/page51.html](http://libweb.surrey.ac.uk/library/skills/introductiontoResearchandManagingInformationLeicester/page51.html).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Zone Four church was given 27 questionnaires and brought back 24. Zone Two Church was given 48 questionnaires and returned 45, Zone One Church was given 46 and returned 42 and Zone Three Church was given 68 and returned 67. The distribution of questionnaires was based on the estimated church membership of the churches in question. The table below shows the church by church distribution.

*Table 6. Distribution of Questionnaires*

<b>Church</b>	<b>No. given</b>	<b>No. returned</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Zone Four	27	24	89%
Zone Two	48	45	94%
Zone One	46	42	91%
Zone Three	68	67	99%

Local church elders were involved in the distribution of questionnaires for the safety of papers and confidentiality in as far as data is concerned. A total of 178 people responded by completing the questionnaire papers which represents 94%.

### **Data Presentation**

According to the data collected through the survey, there were 106 females and 72 males who participated in the study through completing the questionnaires. The table below shows the gender distribution of participants in relation to percentage.

*Table 7. Number of Respondents according to Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	106	60%
Male	72	40%
Total	178	100%

It was revealed that in the four churches which were selected,, there are seventeen divorcees of which four were males and thirteen were females. The number is believed to be more than the indicated one because many fear to declare their status for fear of stigmatization in the church as well as in the society. The table below shows the number of divorcees according to gender.

*Table 8. Number of Divorcees according to Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	13	12%
Male	4	6%
Total	17	18%

Among couples who participated in the study, 50 indicated that their marriages were very happy, 61 showed that their marriages are happy, 27 showed that their marriages are bad and 12 marriages are very bad yet on the other had seven indicated that they do not know whether their marriages are bad or good. The table below shows the condition of marriages in a clearer manner.

*Table 9. Shows the State of Marriages*

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very happy	29	25%
Happy	41	35%
Bad	27	24%
Very bad	12	10%
Do not know	7	6%
Total	116	100%

According to those who participated in the study 114 strongly agreed that the Bible provides all the answers for a good marriage and 56 responded by agreeing that the Bible does provides all the answers for a good marriage. On the other hand five respondents disagreed that the Bible does provide all the answers for a good marriage.

Two strongly disagreed that the bible does provide all the answers for a good marriage, while one responded by showing that he was in a position of neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The table below shows clearly how people responded in this instance.

*Table 10. Shows the Number of Those Who Accept the Bible in Marriage*

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	114	64%
Agree	56	31%
Disagree	5	3%
Strongly disagree	2	1%
Neither agree or disagree	1	1%
Total	178	100%

Among married respondents 76 indicated that they never thought that their marriages might be in trouble, eleven indicated that their marriages would have been in trouble within the last two years. Moreover, ten showed that their marriages would have been in trouble within the last four years.

Furthermore, five indicated that they thought their marriages would have been in trouble within the last seven months, whereas six responded that they did think that their marriages would have been in trouble within the last five months. Among those again eight showed that their marriages would have been in trouble within the last

year. The table below does tabulate clearly the number of respondents in this category.

*Table 11. The Number of Couples Thinking of Trouble in Marriage*

	Number	Percentage
Never thought of trouble	75	66%
Yes within the last 2 years	11	9%
Yes within the last 4 years	10	9%
Yes within the last 7 months	5	4%
Yes within the last 5 months	6	5%
Yes within the last year	8	7%
Total	116	100%

### **Analysis**

Among 116 married people who participated in the study 40 indicated that they did think that their marriages might be in trouble which represents 34 % of the total figure mentioned above. It also shows that the number of those who thought that there is trouble in their marriages is more than half of those who indicated no trouble.

The findings indicated that 77 married respondents showed that they never thought of getting a divorce which represents 34 % of the total figure. Eight indicated that they did think of getting a divorce but not within the last six years. Again twelve indicated that they did think of getting a divorce within the last year. On the other hand ten respondents indicated that they did think of getting divorce within the last six months. Furthermore, nine indicated that they did think of getting a divorce within the last seven months. The table below shows the number of married people thinking of getting a divorce within different period of times

*Table 12. Number of Couples Who Thought of Getting a Divorce*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never thought of divorce	77	66%
Thought of divorce within the last 6 years	8	7%
Thought of divorce within the last year	12	10%
Thought of divorce within the last 6 months	10	9%
Thought of divorce within the last 7 months	9	8%
Total	116	100%

The findings indicated that 78 of the married respondents revealed their spouses never suggested divorce one way or the other. On the other hand, seven indicated that their spouses suggested divorce within the last three years yet 9 showed that their spouses suggested divorce within the last two years.

Furthermore, 16 indicated that their spouses did suggest divorce within the last six months. It is further noted that seven people indicated that their spouses did suggest divorce within the last three months. However, two people indicated that their spouses suggested divorce within the last nine years.

The table below shows clearly the number of people whose spouses suggested divorce in different periods of time.

*Table 13. Number of People Whose Spouses Suggested Divorce*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never suggested divorce	73	63%
Suggested divorce within 3 years	7	6%
Suggested divorce within 2 years	11	9%
Suggested divorce within 6 months	16	14%
Suggested divorce within 3 months	7	6%
Suggested divorce within 9 years	2	2%
Total	116	100%

The survey revealed that 43 people among the married are in the verge of divorce. The highest figure is for those who had their spouses suggest divorce for the last six months which is 16 representing 14 % as it relates to the total figure in the category of the married ones.

The second largest in this regard is 11 for those whose spouses suggested divorce within the last two years. It suggests that divorce is very current among the people and thus indicated by the period and duration. The findings in terms of communication among couples indicated that only 45 people communicate well with their spouses yet 58 indicated that there is no good communication. on the other hand, 13 indicated they neither agree nor disagree in terms of whether they had good conversations with their spouses or not.

The table below illustrates well the number of those who agreed that they had good conversations with their spouses as compared to those who disagreed.

*Table 14. Level of Communication among Couples*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Those who strongly agree	4	3%
Those who agree	41	35%
Those who disagree	11	9%
Those who strongly disagree	47	41%
Those neither agree nor disagree	13	11%
Total	116	100%

Out of 116 couples who participated in the study only four strongly agreed that they had good conversations with their spouses which is 3% of the whole figure. In fact a total of 45 people agreed that they had good conversations with their spouses, which represents 48%.

On the other hand 58 people indicated that there was no good conversations with their spouses which also represents 50% in totality. The highest figure being that of those who strongly disagree that there was good conversations among spouses which represents 47 and 41% in totality.

The questionnaire revealed that 39 people did not experience any fights or accusations with their spouses. In addition 67 people showed that they had some fights with their spouses once in a while whereas 10 people indicated that they frequently experience some fights with spouses. The table below explains clearly the state of marriages in terms of violence.

*Table 15. Violence in Marriages*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Those who never experienced fights	39	34%
Those who experienced fights once in a while	67	58%
Those who experience fights frequently	10	9%
Total	116	100%

Those who never experienced fights or accusations with their spouses were less than those who did experience fights with their spouses. The total of those who experienced fights is 77 people which represents 67%. The highest figure is for those who experience some fights once in a while with their spouses, which represents 58% of the total number of couples in this regard.

The findings indicated that among the married 39 people were completely satisfied about their marriages and 55 were satisfied. The table below shows clearly the number and percentage of those who were satisfied and not satisfied about their marriages.

*Table 16. Satisfaction in Marriage*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Those completely satisfied in marriage	39	34%
Those satisfied in marriage	55	47%
Those not satisfied in marriage	16	14%
Those not satisfied at all in marriage	6	5%
Total	116	100%

It is noted that 94 people indicated that they were satisfied in their marriages which represents 81%. On the contrary 22 people indicated that they were not satisfied in their marriages which shows 19% of the total figure among the married ones.

The findings indicated that 131 respondents showed that seeking counselling first when a couple is considering divorce is a very good idea. Again 32 people indicated that seeking counselling before considering divorce is a good idea. The total number of those who supported the idea is 163 people. On the contrary 10 people indicated that it is a very bad idea to seek counselling before when a couple is considering divorce and five indicated that it is a bad idea to seek counselling before the actual divorce among couples.

The table below shows the number and percentage very clearly of those who supported the idea of seeking counselling before getting into the issue of divorce.

*Table 17. Number of Respondents Supporting Counselling before Divorce*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very good idea	131	74%
Good idea	32	18 %
Very bad idea	10	6%
Bad idea	5	3%
Total	178	100%

It is shown that 163 people were in support of seeking counselling before taking any action towards divorce. It represent 92% of overall figure of 178 who participated in this manner. The figure for those who were for the idea of seeking counselling before divorce is was above half of the total respondents not for the idea is for less than half of the total participants which is 15 representing 9% of the actual figure.

The findings indicated that there are a number of causes of divorce which include age disparity, unfaithfulness, interfaith marriages, sexual deprivation, money issues, separation and poverty. Those who indicated that unfaithfulness is the cause of divorce totalled 119 those indicated money is the main cause of divorce added up to 18 people.

Furthermore, those who indicated that sexual deprivation is the cause were 15 whilst those who indicated interfaith as the cause of divorce added up to 10. A total of 11 respondents showed that age disparity in marriage is the main cause of divorce yet only two indicated that separation is the main cause of divorce. On the other hand one indicated that poverty is the cause of divorce and another one indicated that divorce is caused by the interference of the in-laws. The table below puts it clearly the causes of divorce as it relates to the number of respondents.

*Table 18. Causes of Divorce and the Number of Respondents*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Poverty	1	1%
Separation	2	1%
In-laws interference	2	1%
Interfaith marriage	10	6%
Age disparity	11	6%
Sexual deprivation	15	8%
Unfaithfulness	119	67%
Money issues	18	10%
Total	178	100%

The highest number of respondents indicated that the main cause of divorce in Central Zimbabwe Conference is the unfaithfulness which is represented by 67%. The second cause according to the number of responses is money issues which represents 10% of the total number.

The figure representing unfaithfulness as the cause of divorce is way above half of the total participants. It is noted that unfaithfulness and sexual deprivation are interrelated and the total figure is 134 which represents 75% of whole figure of the respondents. Age disparity and interfaith marriages are represented by a relatively low figures as well in-laws interference and separation respectively.

On another note, the findings indicated that 55 couples did sought counselling from the marriage counsellor or pastor. On the other hand, 116 married people revealed that they never ever sought counsel from the marriage counsellor or pastor. Those who showed that they regularly go for counselling to marriage counsellor or pastor totalled six, while only one indicated that she seldom go for counselling from marriage counsellor or pastor.

The table below shows and illustrates the number of people who sought counselling from the marriage a counsellor or pastor.

*Table 19. Number of Those Who Sought Counselling and Those Who Did Not*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Those who said Yes	55	31%
Those who said No	116	65%
Those who said Yes regularly	6	3%
Those who said seldom	1	1%
Total	178	100%

It is noted that the number of people who have not sought counselling is the highest and is more than the half of the total figure of respondents. It also represents 65% in line with the total figure. This question was responded by all participants regardless of marital status.

It shows that many people have no idea about counselling and the benefit thereof. The large number of respondents who did not sought counselling one way or the other is indicative of whether people know something about marriage counsellor or not. Findings on the reaction of spouses in the event that divorce comes by among couples, indicated that 52 said that they would accept divorce. Those who totalled to 10 indicated that they would challenge divorce at any cost.

Moreover, 11 indicated that they did not know how they would react to the divorce situation if it comes by. Furthermore, six people indicated that they would neither agree nor disagree in the event that divorce surfaces in their marriages.

The table below indicates clearly as to how people would react to the divorce situation if it comes in one's marriage.

*Table 20. Number of People and Their Reactions to Divorce*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Those who would accept divorce	52	45%
Those who would not accept divorce	37	32%
Those who would challenge divorce	10	9%
Those who do not know	11	9%
Those who neither agree nor disagree	6	5%
Total	116	100%

The number of those who indicated that they would accept divorce is on the high side. It shows that people are ready for divorce, if not ready for it they would not accept it easily. Those who indicated that they would not accept it is the second highest.

Those who responded by saying they would challenge divorce and those who indicated that they did not know as to whether they would challenge, accept or do not accept it, the figures are relatively low as compare to other figures. The lowest number is for those who neither agree nor disagree with the suggested reactions to a divorce situation which represents 5% of the overall number of respondents.

The researcher engaged participants in the study from different age groups. The ages ranged from 18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, 46-55 years, 56-66 years and 66 years and above. The table below explains it more clearly.

*Table 21. Number of Respondents according to Age Group*

Age group	Number	Percentage
18-25 years	49	28%
26-35 years	25	14%
36-45 years	42	24%
46-55 years	24	13%
56-66 years	26	16%
66 years and above	12	7%
Total	178	100%

On the other hand, the study engaged people of different educational levels as a way of ascertaining the holistic divorce situation in Central Zimbabwe Conference. The education levels ranged from primary level to university level. The table below indicates the nature of respondents in a clearer manner and also shows the education levels of all the respondents.

The table further indicates another section that takes care of other educational attainments which might not be captured in the manipulation process.

*Table 22. Number of Respondents according to Their Education Levels*

Education Level	Number	Percentage
Primary school	28	16%
Secondary school	96	54%
College level	37	21%
University level	15	8%
Other	2	1%
Total	178	100%

The marital status of people who participated in the study ranged from single, married, divorced, separated, widowed and single parents who never got married in

life. The table below shows the marital status of those who were involved in the findings; the table indicates it in a clearer manner.

*Table 23. Number and Marital Status of Respondents*

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	116	65%
Divorced	17	10%
Widowed	14	8%
Single	21	12%
Separated	7	4%
Single-parent never married	3	2%

It was revealed that the number of young couples is more than other age groups and those who are in the age of 66 years and above are few as compared to others, which represents 7%. Furthermore, those who have attained secondary education level are more than those in other levels of education which represents 54% of the total number.

On the other hand, the number of those married was high as compared to other categories which represents 14% inclusive of those under separation because it is just in the verge of divorce. Those who are single and never got married the figure is significantly small and it accounts for 2% of the total.

### **The Logical Framework Approach**

The researcher used the Logical Framework Approach in the strategy to implement the study. According to Keerti Bhusan Pradhan it is a logical planning procedure for complete project cycle management. It is a way of solving problems and it takes into consideration the views of all stakeholders and it is also in line with

the criteria for project success. Again it includes the main assumptions of the project thereof.<sup>44</sup>

Table 24 shows the Logical Framework Matrix, shown in a simple and clear manner.

*Table 24.* Logical Framework Matrix

<b>Narrative Summary</b>	<b>Verifiable Indicators (OVI)</b>	<b>Means of Verification (MOV)</b>	<b>Important Assumptions</b>
Goal			
Purpose			
Outputs			
Activities	Inputs		

### **Key Features of the Log Frame Matrix**

It is a participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation tool. Its strength depends mainly on the extent to which it does include the full deal of views of the intended beneficiaries and those who have to do with the programme design. It is further used as a tool for summarizing the key features of a programme and it is useful to programme designers and stakeholders.<sup>45</sup>

### **Intervention Logic**

Goal: It is the higher level objective towards which the project is expected to contribute.

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<sup>44</sup> Keerti Bhusan Pradhan, “The Logical Framework Approach,” accessed 11 September 2016, keerti@aravind.org.

<sup>45</sup> Pradhan, Logical Framework.

Purpose: It refers to the effects which is expected to be achieved as the result of the project.

Outputs: It means the results that the project management should be able to guarantee and should by all means mention target groups.

Activities: It refers to the activities that are to be done through the project in order to produce outputs.

Assumptions: It refers to important events, conditions and decisions which are outside the control of the project which must take place<sup>46</sup>.

The figure below shows the relationship among objectives at several levels.

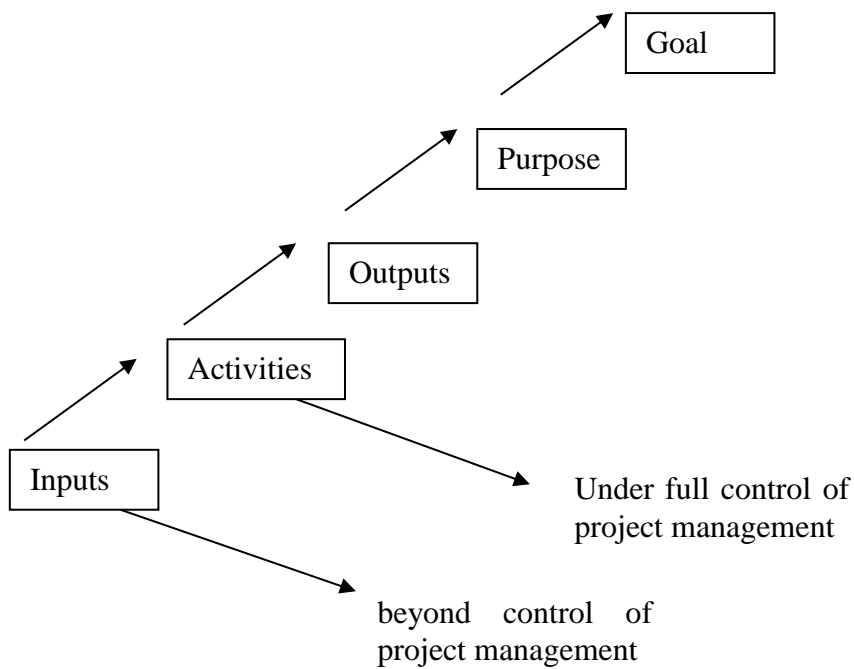


Figure 2: Cause-effect

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<sup>46</sup> Pradhan, Logical Framework.

Furthermore, Pradhan states that indicators in the Log Frame must be valid, reliable short and to the point intended. He further mentions that, indicators should make clear how the target group will benefit in the realisation of the outputs. The indicators on another note should be clear in terms of quality, quantity, time, target as well as place.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Logical Framework Approach**

It was developed in the 1970s as a tool for strategic planning with the aid of management through objectives. It is widely used by development agencies for planning, approving, evaluating and in the monitoring of the projects.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, the Logical Framework Approach weaves together the top-down and bottom-up approaches to the project management exercise. It also joins the classical top-down for identifying the activities in a project with bottom-up checking process as a way of making sure that these activities are comprehensive. It consequently reinforces this with risks and assumptions analysis which is thoroughly checked.<sup>49</sup>

It ends with the ways of identifying the controls needed to monitor and manage the project up to the logical end. This is done in the framework of the Log frame Matrix. The seven questions represent the key areas of the project and are as follows:

Goal - what result is expected?

Purpose - why is this project done?

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<sup>47</sup> Pradhan, Logical Framework.

<sup>48</sup> “Log frames and the Logical Framework Approach,” accessed 16 September 2016, [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newoom\\_86.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newoom_86.htm).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Outputs - what are the deliverables?

Activities - what will we do to deliver the outputs?

Indicators of Achievement - how will we know that we have been successful?

Means of Verification - how will we check our reported results?<sup>50</sup>

## **The Application of the Log frames**

### **Overall goal**

The overall goal of this log frame is to provide relevant and adequate nurturing of couples in Central Zimbabwe Conference. This is realised through equipping and teaching them how to solve marital conflicts, stress management and divorce challenges.

### **Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to find out the chief causes of divorce after which develop, implement and evaluate a holistic nurturing program for the potential divorcees who are couples in this case.

### **Outcomes**

The anticipated outcome is to see the couples being equipped and encouraged to guard against the marriage institution. The ways of combating domestic violence, marital conflicts and stress management as a way of preventing divorce.

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<sup>50</sup> Log frames and the Logical Framework Approach,” accessed 16 September 2016, [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newoom\\_86.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newoom_86.htm).

## **Activities**

In this regard, seminars played a significant role in reaching the intended outcomes. The counselling approach was one of the activities which contributed to the realisation of the outcomes.

### **The Initiative Implementation Overall Goals and Design**

The table next page shows the initiative implementation as it relates to overall goals and design.

Table 25. Overall Goals and Implementation Design

Narrative Objective	Measurable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumption
<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>To provide enough nurturing for couples, teaching them how to solve marital problems and stress management as well as divorce challenges</p>	<p>In seminars for equipping couples have been done at Zone Four, church and Zone One Church School hall by 2 October 2015</p>	<p>Monitoring papers and evaluation reports</p>	<p>Central Zimbabwe Conference Family Ministries Department and local churches are in support of the researcher in the study.</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>To establish the root causes of divorce in Central Zimbabwe Conference; after which develop, implement and evaluate a holistic nurturing program for the potential divorcees</p>			
<p><b>Outputs</b></p>			
<p>1. Enrichment seminars have been conducted for the couples by the end of October 2015</p>	<p>1) 50 couples have shown or indicated change of attitudes by October 2015</p>	<p>Monitoring Sheets</p>	<p>1) The church is engaged in a holistic approach.</p>
<p>2. Counselling sessions by Trainer of trainers</p>	<p>2) Reconciliation had been extended to spouses in separation</p>	<p>Family ministries report</p>	
<p><b>Activities</b></p>			
<p>1. Seminars in marriage institution are held</p>	<p>1) 3 major seminars are done by October 2016</p>	<p>Reports</p>	<p>Local church elders support and promote the initiative</p>
<p>2. Trainer of trainers program conducted for facilitators and nurturing. Topics such as communication and forgiveness are presented as a way of enabling the nurturing procedure.</p>	<p>2) 4 church facilitators trained on 7 May 2016</p>	<p>Reports</p>	<p>Church leaders are supporting the initiative and they have done training.</p>
<p>3. Couples Associations formed</p>	<p>3) Four couples associations are formed 7 October 2015</p>	<p>Reports</p>	<p>Local churches and leadership are supporting the initiative.</p>

## The Gantt Chart

According to David Seah, a Gantt Chart is a bar chart that illustrates a project schedule, seeing task dependencies in relation to starting and finishing dates of the project. It also includes the vehicles to completion as well as the hindrances to completion thereof.<sup>51</sup> The following Gantt Chart was used as a research guideline, beginning from year 2014 up to the year 2016 inclusively.

*Table 26.* Shows the Gantt Chart

Task	2014					
	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1.1 Activity constituency assessed needs	█					
1.2 Seek permission to conduct research		█				
1.3 Prepare questionnaires			█			
1.4 Select churches				█		
1.5 Administer questionnaires					█	
1.6 Analyse data						█

<sup>51</sup> David Seah, "The Gantt Chart," accessed 16 September 2016, <https://www.bing.com/search?q=david+seah&form=PRUSEN&mkt=enu-us&httpsmEn=1&refig=584e479d1b5148d38b1430e532825cc>.

Task	2015												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Intervention consultative meetings	■												
Curriculum development		■											
Facilitators sought			■										
Venue organisation				■									
Programs development					■								
Holding first seminar						■							
Administering first assessment							■						
Second seminar								■					
Formation of couples Associations and third seminar									■				
Second assessment										■			
Trainer of trainers for family ministries Leaders											■		

## **Curriculum Design for the Intervention Initiative**

The curriculum was designed following the love of God based on John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave his and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” The curriculum was tailor-made to address the sanctity of the marriage institution, the needs of those in marriage and the challenges thereof, inclusive of divorce as an undesirable element.

The first segment had to do with seminars. Seminars were conducted on the 13-20<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and August 22-30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The second phase included the formation of couples associations. The formation of couples associations took place on the 12 of September 2015. The couples associations were formed in order to bring about a co-ordinated help and assistance to couples who are in actual fact potential divorcees.

The third activity in this category was the third seminar which was held on the 7-14<sup>th</sup> of September 2015. The facilitation of the Trainer of Trainers exercise for the local church Family Ministries department as well as those leading Family Ministries department at district level was also carried out.

Family Ministries leaders were trained and taught on how to solve marital conflicts, the principles of marriage as a covenant and the theology of forgiveness. All these were done in the understanding that, the Family Ministries leaders would do the same to local churches. The program was meant to take care of potential divorcees who are all couples in this case, as well as those in the valley of divorce.

*Table 27. Curriculum Structure*

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<b>Topic</b>
The marriage institution
Marriage as a contract
Marriage as a covenant
Effects of divorce
Stress management
Anger management
Conflict management
Financial management
Divorce and remarriage
Forgiveness
Communication
Sexual disorders for males
Sexual disorders for females
Sexuality
Parenting and nurturing
Gender roles and relations
Love and hurting

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The curriculum was structured in such a way as to take care of the three major human areas which ranged from psychological, physical and spiritual. This was deliberately done to provide a holistic approach to family life matters, particularly to couples.

### **Formation of Couples Associations**

Couples associations were formed among couples. The spouses came up with their own way of forming couples associations. The main reason for forming couples associations was to create a network of nurturing and marriage enrichment. All the above activities added up to the overall goal of the research in totality.

## **Summary**

The chapter discussed the macro and micro elements of the ministry context. It covered the research design and the quantitative methods used. Data was collected from four churches in Central Zimbabwe Conference and data analysed and interpreted. The intervention initiative program was designed.

The curriculum for the implementation was developed. The next chapter will discuss the chronological narrative of the intervention initiative. The evaluation of the implementation process was also be done according to the Gantt Chart in the schedule.

## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION

The previous chapter dealt with the macro and micro elements of the ministry context as well as the research design. Data was collected from four churches in Central Zimbabwe Conference and the quantitative method of research was applied. The relevant data was collected analyzed and interpreted and the intervention program was designed.

The curriculum for the implementation was developed. This chapter describes the chronological and logical narrative of the intervention initiative. It also describes the evaluation of the implementation process as it appears on the Gantt Chart. The chapter further looks at the number of participants as it relates to gender and age groups. Again this chapter will highlight the obstacles and challenges encountered in the implementation of the intervention program.

#### **The First Marriage Seminar**

Having development the curriculum for the implementation, couples were grouped for the first seminar. An oral appeal was made to the churches for those who were to be regular in as far as seminars were concerned. It was noted that others were working away from their homes and they could not come home daily or weekly the majority could not manage to attend the seminars as expected. As a result the researcher found 40 women and 30 men who promised to be regular in attending

seminars. All these were married since the emphasizes was on couples who are the potential divorcees in this regard.

The first seminar had six sessions, the aim of the first seminar was to introduce couples to the marriage institution as it relates to the Bible. Session one was based on Gen 2:18 and it was structured as follows:

### **Session one**

- (a) It was God who said it was not good for the man to be alone
- (b) God proposed the making of the helper
- (c) God made the suitable helper
- (d) God is the one who said the helper was suitable

### **Session Two**

Session Two was based on Genesis 2:21-22 and it was presented in the following manner:

- (a) God caused the man to fall in a deep sleep
- (b) God took the rib from the man
- (c) God closed the place with flesh
- (d) God made the woman from the rib
- (e) God took the rib from the man
- (f) God gave the man a woman

All this was done to show the couples that marriage is not man -made but a God oriented institution. It was intended to instil in the minds of the couples that God was involved in every step as far as the first marriage was concerned and the same God is still involved in today's marriages. The third session had to do with Gen 2:23

which marked the great declaration and identity concerning the first couple Adam and Eve.

### **Session Three**

This session was based on Genesis 2.23

- (a) Adam declared that Eve was bone of his bones
- (b) Adam declared that Eve was flesh of his flesh
- (c) Adam gave Eve the title woman
- (d) Adam declared that Eve was taken out of a man

### **Session Four**

In this session Genesis 2:24 played a significant role, it was presented as follows.

- (a) Man must leave his parents for the sake of marriage
- (b) Man must be joined to his wife
- (c) The joining in a marriage is between a man and a woman
- (d) One flesh is between a man and a woman

The couples were cautioned that marriage is a lifelong union and cannot be entered into without God's guidance and cannot be entered into without God's guidance and intervention. The session was also meant to guard against other perversions which might militate against the ideal marriage institution like homosexuality, the so-called same sex marriage.

Couples were encouraged to stay together all the time. Among the 70 participants, 30 were couples and 10 were women whose spouses were not around due to some work commitments and non-church membership. The four facilitators including the researcher taught the couples, the couples were divided into five classes and the lessons were taught simultaneously.

### **Session Five**

This session was based on Genesis 2.25, the session emphasized the following

- (a) Adam was physically naked before Eve
- (b) Eve was physically naked before Adam
- (c) Adam did not hide anything from Eve
- (d) Eve did not mentally hide anything from Adam
- (e) Adam did not mentally hide anything from Eve

The session was designed to create openness and intimacy among couples. The lessons further encouraged communication in a direct and indirect manner. In addition the lessons tried to discourage and do away with fear as a great barrier to intimacy and communication. The lessons in this session also encouraged couples to be available for each other in all areas of family life in accordance with the ideal marriage.

### **Session Six**

In this segment all the five classes chose one couple to summarize all the lessons from session one up to five, this was done in the presence of the whole group of 70. Contributions were made to the whole group. After the presentations from the classes, a question and answer segment was entertained based on the lessons covered. The aim was to make sure that couples understood all the concepts covered in the sessions in line with the curriculum.

### **The Second Seminar**

The second seminar was held at Zone Two School Hall and Zone Three Church. This second seminar had seven sessions, the sessions had to do with communication.

## **Session One**

Communication was the subject in this session, the lesson was structured in the following manner.

(a) Definition of communication which means talking with each other freely Gen 2:25

(b) Levels of communication:

Level 1: Talking about what happened during the day.

Level 2: Talking about us, about our plans for the future, our relatives, our money and school for our children and so forth.

Level 3: talking about our feelings-sharing our feelings with each other, opening the door of our hearts.

## **Session Two**

This session looked at the known barriers to communication, the lessons were presented in the following format:

(a) Fear: The Bible says wives should respect their husbands not to fear them as shown in (Col 3:18 and 1 John 4:18).

(b) Not listening: Communication cannot happen unless and until people learn to listen to one another. Real listening is likened to work and church activities.

(c) Father-role and mother-role. Mothers are busy with issues related to the care of children while fathers busy earning for them at the expense of communication between the couple.

(d) Hurt: saying hurting words can block communication, saying sorry to each other is the best way to go.

### **Session Three**

Session three of seminar two dealt with the common positions in communication and the lessons were presented in the following manner:

- (a) Placating - one takes responsibility for everything that is happening in the relationship pleasing the other partner at all costs at the expense of his or her own needs.
- (b) Blaming - one accepts that everything that is happening wrongly is not because of him or her but the partner is solely responsible for everything that is going wrong.
- (c) Computing - here one deals with the unpleasant situation as if it is not threatening at all. In fact this is a denial that a problem real exists.
- (d) Distracting - here one simple ignores the situation and pretend that there is no problem or threat.

The lesson was aimed at reviving dialogue among couples as a way of enhancing meaningful relationships. The lesson was received with much joy and pleasure. In all the classes it was verbalized that the lesson was long overdue. Misunderstandings come through communication and also understanding one another comes through communication, so couples were encouraged to communicate with each other for the better.

### **Session Four**

Session four of the second seminar discussed love based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. The lesson was presented in the following way:

- (a) The Unconditional Love - God's love to His people was not based on proper response from His creation it was not dependent upon any good deed He saw on the human race so husbands ought to love their wives unconditionally.

- (b) The Compassionate Love – God did send a Saviour who identifies himself with the human race with tenderness and mercy. Likewise husbands are to go beyond the obvious by showing kind thoughts, words and actions as a way of showing compassionate love.
- (c) The Devoted Love - devoted love brings out a priority of kind pursuit regardless of challenges and problems of life. Devotions among husbands and wives must be unwavering in the light of possible danger or misfortune. At all cost it must be reflected that God has devoted love towards the human race.

### **Session Five**

The session in question had to do with the marriage analogies as it relates to the Bible. The lesson was presented to couples in the following sequence:

- (a) The church belongs to Christ (Rev 21:3). The wife belongs to her husband ( Eph 5:24)
- (b) Christ secured a bride through his life Acts 20:28. Husbands pays for a bride with (bride price, lobola).
- (c) Christ left his father in heaven John 3:16. Husbands leave their fathers Gen 2:24

The lessons were meant to indicate that God did not only institute marriage for procreation but to show His great and unconditional love upon His people. The couples were required to understand that marriage is to be regarded with honour and sanctity it deserves.

### **Session Six**

**Marriage as a Contract.** In the contractual approach, marriage is not regarded as the source of authority. The lesson was presented to the classes in the following manner:

- (a) Marriage is a bilateral contract that is voluntarily formed, maintained and dissolved at will by two people.
- (b) Contracts are made for a limited period of time.
- (c) Contracts deal with specific actions.
- (d) Contracts are conditional based on the performance and conditions of the contractual obligations by the other spouse.
- (e) Contracts are entered into for one's benefit.
- (f) Contracts are sometimes implied.

**Marriage as a Covenant.** In this regard marriage is defined as the sacred bond between a man and a woman instituted and entered into before God. The lesson was taught in classes with the following contents.

- (a) Marriage is conceived not as a bilateral contract.
- (b) Marriage is a sacred bond between husband and wife.
- (c) God is the guarantor and witness in the marriage bond.
- (d) Marriage is rooted in the standards of the divine law.
- (e) Marriage is heterosexual
- (f) Marriage is between one man and one woman.
- (g) Marriage is a permanent mutually supportive partnership between a willing man and a willing woman.

The lessons were presented in this manner as a way of bringing back the features and components of the ideal marriage. It is noted that a lot of pervasions have invaded the marriage institution right, left and centre. In fact the presentation was meant to show that marriage is not a contract but it is a covenant.

The understanding was that if all the couples would understand that marriage is a covenant, then they would treat their spouses with care and honour that God is

involved. The general assessment of the lesson indicated that the majority of the participants were touched in their hearts by the fact that God is the witness in their marriages. The other indicator to this effect was the several questions asked by the participants on how to be joined in holy matrimony from customary marriage.

## **Session Seven**

**Conflict Management.** Marriage involves two complete different individuals who are different in attitudes as a matter of fact conflicts are inevitable. In view of this, the lesson on conflict management was presented, realizing that under normal circumstances conflicts cannot be eradicated but can be managed. The aim was to equip the couples in managing the marital conflicts in a way that does not damage the marriage institution. The lesson was taught in the following manner.

According to Balswick, conflicts are to be regarded as a process which must be managed somehow rather than a situation which may not be resolved.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Styles of Conflict Management.***

1. Avoidance - involves a low degree of both cooperation and assertiveness and has to do with individuals who are known as withdrawals.
2. Competition - It has to do with a low degree of cooperation and a high degree of assertiveness and it is related to winners.
3. Accommodation - It is in line with a high degree of cooperation and a low degree of assertiveness and it is associated with winners.
4. Collaboration - It is associated with a high degree of cooperation and assertiveness and it is a characteristic of resolvers.

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<sup>1</sup> Balswick and Balswick, *The Family*, 262.

5. Compromise - This involves negotiation, cooperation as well as assertiveness and it is a characteristic of compromisers.

After teaching the couples on styles of conflict management, it was also necessary for them to know as well how to resolve conflicts. All this was done to preserve marriage by equipping couples with skills that are instrumental in the maintenance and nurturing of the marriage institution. The outline of the conflict resolution was structured in the following manner.

***The Stages of Conflict Resolution.***

1. The prior condition stage - this is where the problem starts.
2. Awareness stage - this is where a partner or spouse comes to notice that someone is a stumbling block in as far as the satisfaction of some needs is concerned.
3. Conflict stage - this is the real time where there is an exchange of words and non-verbal communication.
4. Non-solution stage - In this stage the problem is somehow resolved and consensus is reached.
5. Follow-up stage - this is the time where disagreements starts and grudges develops.
6. Resolve stage – This is the time where the family as a whole no longer feels the threat of conflict.

**Money Management.** Family finance under the sub heading money management was presented to couples in the following format realizing that the know-how is needed among couples in managing financial matters.

- (a) Planning supported by Prov 17:12
- (b) Spending supported by Luke 16:13
- (c) Saving support by Gen 41:35

***Keys for Financial Freedom.***

- (a) God owns everything Ps 24:1
- (b) God provides everything Phil 4:9
- (c) God must be first in everything Lev 27:30

***Reasons for a Family Budget.***

- 1. It gives proper direction to family budget
- 2. It allows and puts system into giving to God
- 3. It gives ability to control on spending
- 4. It enables and provides for the unexpected
- 5. It keeps the family together in planning and decision making
- 6. It takes care of the needed discipline
- 7. It enables and assists in managing what God gives

***Guidelines on Financial Planning.***

- 1. A well organised system must be developed
- 2. The system must be kept simple
- 3. You must be practical and realistic
- 4. You must be prepared to adjust to change
- 5. You must be sincere and organized
- 6. The records must be kept up to date
- 7. Valuable papers must be kept in a safe
- 8. Pray to God for wise decisions

**Divorce Warning Signs.** In realizing that divorce is an abnormal which must be guarded against at all costs, couples were taught how to notice signs of divorce before it is too late. It was noted that some get involved into divorce yet they could have prevented the situation through the observance of danger warning signs. The

danger warning signs which were presented to couples were based on Bryan Craig's book, entitled *Searching for Intimacy in Marriage*.<sup>2</sup>

The lesson was presented in the following manner, taking into account that couples are all potential divorcees who can divorce at any given time.

1. Complaints of loss of feelings - feelings of resentment and hatred have been harboured by one against the other.
2. Loss of interest in sex – Couples do not feel emotionally close to one another.
3. Recurring arguments that are not resolved - damaging recurring patterns of conflicts on a marriage relationship.
4. Signs of depression by one of the partners - feelings of dissatisfaction and unhappiness in losing the relationship may cause one partner to withdraw and become depressed as a result.
5. The abandonment of joint activities in partners live separate lives where there is little time to spend together in pleasurable activities that are in favour of attachment and bonding.
6. An affair - when the other partner is emotionally and sexually connected with someone outside marriage this can be a plea for help and an indicator that the marriage is headed for danger.
7. Preoccupation with interests and issues outside the wedlock - taking a lot of time in work or career at the expense of the other partner in fact the other partner is neglected.

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<sup>2</sup> Bryan Craig, *Searching for Intimacy in Marriage* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2004), 191-192.

8. Arguments concerning child - rearing when there is fighting related to the method of rearing children as well as which may lead the other partner to form an alliance with other children against the other partner.
9. Fatigue and the reduced ability to meet responsibility at work - It signifies that a lot of things are happening in a negative manner.

**The Formation of Couples Associations.** The end of the second seminar was culminated by the formation of couples associations. Couples were allowed to elect officers of the couples associations. The office bearers were chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Four couples associations were formed accordingly and named in the following manner. Zone Four Couples Association, Zone Two Couples Association, Zone One Couples Association and Zone Three Couples Association.

The couples associations were formed to work under the Family Ministries Department of those churches. The leaders were commissioned and challenged to specifically look at issues related to couples as it relates to the Edenic marriage. The associations were also tasked to look at the intervention program. Furthermore, the associations were also commissioned to go beyond nurturing couples within the church but to be involved in outreach activities in the context of couples associations.

### **The First Assessment of the Intervention**

The first evaluation of the intervention was done on the end of July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The methodology used in collecting data was the same as that one which was used in chapter four. The quantitative, survey method was used in the form of an evaluating form. The form contained close-ended questions as a way of keeping the respondents within the covered subjects. However, other suggestions were taken care of by the word “other” in the quantitative survey.

The evaluation form included the following

## **Questions Asked**

The summary of the questions asked in the evaluation included age, gender and the amount of time in marriage of the respondents. The questionnaire further asked the respondents as to whether they were helped by the intervention or not. Responses were also required concerning the quality of lessons and the divorce itself. Furthermore, respondents were asked to reflect measureable effects of the whole intervention upon themselves.

In addition, the participants were also requested to show in measureable terms as to whether the intervention strategy did manage to minimize the divorce tragedy. Moreover, the respondents were required to indicate voluntarily as to whether they were in a position to share the insights of the program to someone else. The full list of the questions is found in Appendix C of this dissertation.

## **Data Analysis**

Seventy evaluation papers were issued to couples and 68 were completed and handed back. The evaluation was done on the very day mentioned in this chapter when the evaluation exercise began. The table below shows the variations in a clearer way.

The data collected indicated that 98% of the couples participated in the evaluation exercise. Females in this regard were 38 which represents 98% of the total number of woman and 56 % of the total number of participants. On the other hand males were 30 which represents 100% of the total number of males and 44 % of the total figure of participants. The table below illustrates the gender participation in the program.

*Table 28. Participation according to Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	38	56%
Male	30	44%
Total	68	100%

### **Age Bracket of Participants**

The age bracket of those who participated were that those who were in the range of 18-25 years were five, those in the range of 26 -35 years were 14, those in the bracket of 36-45 years were 26, those in the range of 46-55 years were five. Those in the range of 66 and plus were three. The table below shows the age of participants in a clearer way.

*Table 29. Number of Participants according to the Age Group*

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-25 years	5	7%
26-35 years	14	21%
36-45 years	26	38%
46-55 years	15	22%
56-65 years	5	7%
66+ years	3	4%
Total	68	100%

The figures show that those in the age group of 36-45 years were the majority and represented 38% of the total figure followed by those in the range of 46-55 years and those in the age bracket of 26-35 years. The least figure is for those in the age group of 66 years and plus which is represented by 4% of the total figure.

### **The Statistical Years for Those in Marriage**

According to the collected information, six people had been in marriage ranging from zero to five years. Those who were in marriage ranging from 6-15 years were 9, those who were in marriage for a period ranging from 16-25 years were 15 and those who indicated that they were in marriage for the years ranging from 24-40 were 22.

In the same manner, those in the range of 41-55 years were three and those who showed that they were in the range of 56 years and above in marriage were three as well. The table below indicates in simple terms the number of years spent in marriage by the participants in the implementation exercise.

*Table 30. Number of Years in Marriage for Participants*

<b>Number of years</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-5 years	6	9%
6-15 years	19	28%
16-25 years	15	22%
26-40 years	22	32%
41-55 years	3	4%
56+ years	3	4%
Total	68	100%

The overall data collected in this regard indicated that those who were in marriage for the years ranging from 26-40 were the majority and they represented 32% of the total figure. The second from the highest figure is for those who indicated that their years in marriage were ranging from 6-15 which represents 28% of the whole number of participants.

The third in sequence are those in the range of 16-25 years which represents 22% in relation to the total figure. The least figure has to do with those who have 41-55 and 56 plus which represents 8% of the entire figure.

### **Those Helped through the Program**

The number of those who indicated that they were helped through the program were 45 and those who indicated that they got much help through the intervention were 21 whereas one indicated that he was not helped and one showed that she was helped or not. The table below does show the figures in a clearer way.

*Table 31. Those Who Got Help through the Intervention Program*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	45	66%
No	1	1%
Very much helped	21	31%
Do not know	1	1%
Total	68	100%

In this particular question, the highest figure was for those who responded by saying “yes” which represents 66% in reference to the total. The total figure for those who indicated that they were helped was 66 out of 68 which represents 97% in totality. The least figures are for those who responded by saying “No” and the one who indicated that she was not in a position to say yes or no, the percentage is the same which is 1% respectively.

### **Evaluation of the Whole Program**

The number of respondents who did indicate that the program helped them to change for the better in terms of divorce were 13. Those who indicated that their

marriages were strengthened were 22 and those who showed that they were made to understand more about marriage were 33. The table below shows the information more clearly.

*Table 32. Evaluation of the Whole Intervention Program*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Has changed my mind about divorce	13	19%
Has strengthened my marriage	22	32%
Has held me to understand more about marriage	33	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100%</b>

The figures indicate that those who were made to understand more about marriage constituted the highest number which represents 49% in reference to the total number of respondents. The second largest figure is for those who indicated that their marriages were strengthened through the program which stands for 32% in the descending order. On the other hand, 13 indicated that they did change their minds towards divorce which in actual fact meant that they were considering divorce and consequently stopped to do so.

### **Responses Based on Divorce**

In accordance with the respondents, 63 indicated that divorce must not be allowed to happen. One person indicated that divorce must be allowed at all costs whereas one as well indicated that there must be no efforts to curb divorce. Only three respondents indicated that people must not talk about divorce. The table below shows the responses in a simpler way.

*Table 33. Responses towards Divorce*  
**What do you say about divorce at this juncture?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Must not happen	63	98%
Must happen	1	1%
Must not be prevented	1	1%
Must not talk about it	3	4%
Total	68	100%

The analysis shows that the majority of the participants did not want to divorce to be entertained. On the contrary two people indicated that they were for divorce and three indicated that divorce should not be something to talk about in other words to them divorce is a non-event or something not important at all.

### **The Rating of Lessons Taught**

In as far as rating of the lesson taught is concerned 17 indicated that the lessons were relevant, 51 participants indicated that the lessons were practical and necessary and no one indicated that the lessons were irrelevant. The table below illustrates the figures and responses well.

*Table 34. Rating of the Intervention Lessons*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Relevant	17	25%
Irrelevant	0	0%
Practical and necessary	51	75%
Total	68	100%

The number of participants who indicated that the lessons were practical and necessary was the highest and represents 75% in line with the total figure, those who

indicated that the lessons were relevant ranged the second in sequence and represents 25% respectively. Surprisingly there was no one who indicated that the lessons were irrelevant even those who previously indicated that they were for the divorce did not feature in this point in time.

### **The Frequency Evaluation of the Intervention Program**

When asked on how often the program of this nature should be conducted, the respondents in the total of 40 indicated that the program should be conducted every month. Furthermore, 27 indicated that the program should be done once per quarter, this is to say after every three months of the year. On the other hand only one indicated that the program, should be done to young adults only.

The table below show the responses and the number of respondents in clearer and logical manner. The table ill as well take care of the total number of respondents in question.

*Table 35. Program Frequency*

Responses	Number of participants	Percentage
Must be done every month	40	59%
Must be done once per quarter	27	40%
Must not be done at all	0	0%
Must be done to young adults only	1	1%
Total	68	100%

The figures above shows that the majority of the participants wanted this kind of program be done in churches monthly which represents 59%. The second large figure was for those who did indicate that the program of such magnitude should be

conducted quarterly in every church and the figure represents 40% of the figure represents 40% of the whole number of participants.

The total number for those who advocated for frequency of the program was 68 inclusive of the one who indicated that it should be done to young adults only. The figure represents 100% of the total number of the participants. On the other hand there was no one who was against the frequency of the program in question.

### **The Measurement on Divorce Minimization**

In a very practical way, the respondents were asked to show as to whether divorce was minimized according to their opinions, in line with the program. The response was that 47 were on the affirmative and 18 said that divorce was minimized in a big way. On the contrary three indicated that divorce was not minimized. The table below will show in a logical manner the number of respondents and the responses thereof in a clearer manner.

*Table 36. Shows Divorce Minimization*

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	47	69%
No	3	4%
In a big way	18	26%
Do not know	0	0%
Total	68	100%

Considering the figures above, the highest figure of the respondents indicated that divorce was minimized through the intervention program done so far. On the same note, those who indicated that the program did minimize divorce in a big way ranged the second and it represent 26% of the total figure of participants.

The total figure for those in the affirmative group was 65 which represents 95% of the whole figure. The least figure was for those who indicated that the program did not minimize divorce which represents 4% in accordance with the overall number of the participants. Moreover, there was none in this instance who indicated to be not in a position of not knowing what to say.

### **The Topics Rating**

Looking at the responses from the couples, 24 indicated that they liked communication, 10 liked divorce signs, 19 liked the marriage institution, 7 people showed that they liked financial management and 8 participants like conflict management. The table below shows the topics as presented in the program and the number of respondents in support of those topics.

*Table 37.* Shows the Total Number of Respondents per Lesson Covered  
Which lessons did you like very much?

<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Communication	24	35%
Marriage institution	19	28%
Financial management	7	10%
Conflict management	8	12%
Divorce signs	10	15%
Total	68	100%

It is noted that the highest figure among the respondents liked the lesson on communication, the second lesson in this regard was the marriage institution which represents 28%. The least in this series was the financial management which represents 10% of the total number of respondents.

## Program Sharing

In analyzing the data 67 of the respondents indicated that they could recommend the program to someone else. Only one indicated that he did not know whether to recommend it to someone else or not to recommend. No one objected the issue of sharing the insights of the program. The table below shows the responses and the number of respondents clearly.

*Table 38.* Shows the Number of Respondents Willing to Share the Program to Someone Else  
Can you recommend this program to someone else?

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	67	99%
No	0	0%
To some but not to everyone	0	0%
Do not know	1	1%
Total	68	100%

It is observed that almost all the participants indicated that they would recommend the intervention program to others. On the other hand, one indicated that she was not in a position to know as to whether she could recommend the program to someone else or not and the figure represents 1% of the total figure of participants.

## The Third Seminar

The third seminar was conducted on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 The venues were still the same, Zone One Church School Hall and Zone Three church building. In this segment, the number of participants increased to 80. Three of the couples who joined the group were non-Adventist and two couples were Adventists. Among the Adventists one couple was an Adventist in regular standing while the other couple was a nominal Adventist. The total number of new couples was five in number.

## **Session One**

**Anger in families.** The lesson on anger was presented to couples. Anger was defined as the signal people give in reference to changes they experience within their bodies when there is a possibility of danger.<sup>3</sup> The lesson was presented in the following manner.

### **The three ways of feeling threatened.**

1. Physical threat - This has to do with the invasion of one's protective space making one vulnerable to any physical accident.
2. Threat of loss of power and control - It has to do with blocking one's path of operation making one to err and become disadvantaged in his or her daily activities.
3. Threat to self-esteem - It means the overlooking of one's being and treating one as if he or she is not important.

### **Anger styles.**

- (a) Ventilating - It concerns the expression of one's feelings and the relief that can come through the expression of those feelings. The feelings are to be expressed as a way of identifying the problem which later result in solving the problem.
- (b) Withdrawal - It is when a partner is angry and reacts to the other partner through moving away physically or by softened speech and total silence.
- (c) Reporting - Anger is regarded as a God-given emotional showing device which is meant to alert people that something is wrong within the body which must be corrected. As a matter of fact, reporting anger means doing and saying what is supposed to be done in line with the needs of that particular time (Eph 4:29).

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<sup>3</sup> Diana R. Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2010), 345.

The lesson on anger was deliberately taught as a way of helping the couples to manage anger in their marriages. It was noted that failure in the area of managing anger has resulted in divorce and physical harm which the couples were urged to avoid at all costs.

## **Session Two**

**Forgiveness.** Forgiveness focus on the invitation to restoration as opposed to punishment. The lesson was represented in the following manner.

- (a) Forgiveness focus on the future
- (b) Forgiveness is based on the needs of the other inclusive of the relationship for the future.
- (c) Forgiveness in actual fact focus on restoration
- (d) Forgiveness is not dependent on the repentance of the other partner and promise of reformation.
- (e) Forgiveness is not related to contract or promise, it does not demand restitution.
- (f) Forgiveness is born out of strength and hard work not out of weakness
- (g) Forgiveness can only be meaningful if there is an option of not doing so
- (h) Forgiveness is not the denial of the damage or injury done to someone
- (i) Forgiveness is not forgetting the effects of the harm caused or deciding not to think about the harm or damage.
- (j) Forgiveness on its own does not restore the relationship but confession and repentance on the part of the one being forgiven do restore the relationship.

The couples were made to understand that forgiveness is key to their wellbeing as couples. The main Bible text which was used over and over again was Matthew 6:12-15. Couples were taught that marriage is about forgiving one another regardless of

continued erring of the other partner in a marriage relationship. The lesson was tailor made to equip them against domestic violence.

**Parenting and nurturing.** In this instance, couples were introduced to basic parenting styles as a way of equipping them with skills necessary for parenting. This was deliberately done to reduce conflicts generated through the way of upbringing children.

The lesson was taught in the following manner

***Types of parents***

- 1) Authoritative parenting - This type develops competency in children and seems to be the most appropriate.
- 2) Authoritarian parenting - This style has to do with low support to children but high control to them and leads into producing children who respect authority at the expense of independence and social competence.
- 3) Permissive Parenting - This style has to do with high support at the expense of control to children in fact there is low corrective measures to children. Children in this style often fall short of social competence and interdependence as it were.

***Types of leadership skills***

- (a) Instrumental Parenting - It involves teaching children what they should know as well as how they are supposed to behave within the family and without.
- (b) Socio-emotional parenting - It takes care of the emotional nature of the oneness among parents and children.

***The instrumental parenting styles***

- (1) Neglectful Style - In this style, parents do not voice many directions to children whether by voice or any other. Children are left to conform to any social order or norm of their choice which latter form their behaviours and character.

- (2) Modelling Style - It is about children relying on observing how parents behave in order to gain a system of values and beliefs. It is the effective way of instilling values and beliefs. It is the effective way of instilling values and norms in children.
- (3) Teaching Style - It is the style of parenting that is low in action and high in terms of content. It is sometimes effective in bringing to the point the desired behaviour but rather in a way brings disrespect to parents who may not live according to expectations or who are hypocrites.
- (4) Disciplining Style - In this style, parents teach child by the word of mouth as well as by their deeds in fact it is a style which is high in action and in content.

**Stress among couples.** The word Stress is defined as an upset in the organism's ability to adapt to its environment. On another note stress is said to be transactional which means that it is a transaction between the need and ability not the demand as need alone.<sup>4</sup> The lesson on stress was presented in such a way that couples were given causes of stress in order for them to guard against such. The reason being that it is often better to prevent than to cure the best stress management in this regard was to avoid issues which bring about stress. The lesson was taught in the following format. Before giving causes of stress couples were asked to suggest causes of stress in their own views through pieces of paper. The majority of the answers given or suggested by the couples were almost similar to what was to be presented. In a way it meant that the presentation was applicable and relevant.

The layout of the lesson was as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> Garland, *Family Ministry*, 257.

### *Causes of Stress in Families.*

- (a) Parent-child Conflict – It is where parents or one parent quarrel with children to an extent that marriage and the home are threatened.
- (b) Unsolved problems between couples - It has to do with short and long term problems which are not amicably solved.
- (c) Disagreements about friends associated with the other partner yet the one does not seem to understand as to why he or she should not continue with the friendship in question
- (d) Caring to a family member who cannot communicate clearly - It has to do with taking care of someone who has communication challenge due to physical and mental disabilities.
- (e) New financial expenses - It involves financial expenses which may arise in the family unexpectedly and thus affect the normal family life of the couple.

### *The Spiritual Dimension.*

Having outlined the causes of stress in a normal setting, the couples were led to spiritual dimension as an overall solution to stress issues

- (1) They were encouraged to seek first the kingdom of God as a solution Matt 6:33
- (2) Couples were moved to recognize the divine security in every respects 1 Pet 5:7
- (3) Couples were assured that there is nothing impossible with God Luke 1:37
- (4) Finally couples were challenged to be faithful even at the point of death Rev 2:10

### **Session Three: Gender Roles**

The lesson on gender roles was taught as a way of doing away with gender inequality before God. The major aim was to put the male headship and female submission in the right perspective in order to generate harmony among couples. The presentation was as follows:

- 1) Eve was created out of Adam's flesh and bones Gen 2:23. This text suggests that the two were interdependent. There is no indication of superiority and inferiority in this instance.
- 2) The first two human beings were created as male and female Gen 1:27. There was no evidence of one being less than the other in humanity.
- 3) Both were commanded to rule over the creation Gen 1:26. There is no injunction suggesting that one was to rule the other human being. It suggests that the two female and male are equal before the creator and it means that there is no one who can view things and issues better than the creator.
- 4) God wants everyone to be submissive to each other in love Eph 5:21. In simple terms meaningful submission goes hand in hand with love.
- 5) Husband and wife are one flesh in essence Gen 2:24. So to be submissive or to submit to the husband is obvious Eph 5:22. The text specifically mentions husband and wife which refers to those in marriage not the women in general.
- 6) The analogy of Christ and the church in Ephesians 5:23-24 reveals that the headship in question is voluntary and accompanied by love. All believers in Christ are Christians by choice not by force or compulsion. The headship here refers to the nurturing and nourishing of the marriage institution as it relates to marriage as a covenant.

#### **Session Four: Divorce and Re-marriage**

The issue of divorce and re-marriage was intended to cement the fact that marriage is a God-orientation institution which is a lifelong commitment. Divorce has no room in the business of marriage and it is therefore man -made. The lesson was taught in the following way.

- (1) God hates divorce Mal 2:16. If God hates divorce He cannot love it again.

- (2) The utterances in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 came as an intervention exercise towards the problem of divorce which was brought by the hardness of the human heart.
- (3) Divorce is not allowed Mat 5:32. The same text here mentions adultery which is prohibited in the Decalogue Exod 20:14.
- (4) Those in marriage are one flesh as shown in Matthew 19:5. God is involved in marriage so if divorce is from God He must as well be involved.
- (5) The Bible says that no human being is authorized to divorce or to cause those in marriage to divorce Matt 19:6. It is clear that divorce is not from God and is not for God.

### **Session Five Human: Sexuality**

Human sexuality was one of the issues mentioned in the survey in this research. Sex was sighted as the cause of divorce among those who are not satisfied sexually. In bringing this lesson, the researcher wanted to discuss and assist couples on known reasons affecting sexual fulfilment or satisfaction.

The lesson was guided by the Bible text of Hebrews 13:4 which reveals that sex is holy and was designed by God for couples. The major content of the lesson was based on Doctor of Ministry class notes on Human Sexuality of 2015. In this session couples were separated according to gender in some segments and then re-grouped once again until the lesson was over. The separation of couples as females and males for some time in this regard was to allow thorough address of the subject taking into account that some would have had some disorders which were supposed to be handled with care, not in the presence of their spouses.

After addressing them separately, it became easy to address issues together with cognizance of the sensitive areas. The lesson was presented in the following way:

- (1) Types of Female Sex Disorder. Sexual interest arousal disorder - It is when a woman loses feelings for sex.
- (2) Female orgasmic disorder - It has to do with a woman not reaching the climax during the sexual intercourse.
- (3) Genitor pelvic /penetration disorder - It refers to pains experienced during sexual intercourse upon entering the vagina.

#### **Types of male sex disorders.**

- (1) Delayed ejaculation - It refers to the prolonging in the discharging during sexual intercourse on the side of the man.
- (2) Premature ejaculation - It means the releasing or discharging of the man before the normal time of doing so.
- (3) Erectile disorder - It refers to a problem where a man cannot have his penis erects normally.
- (4) Substance medication - induced sexual dysfunction - It's when a man cannot function sexually due to some medication being taken.
- (5) Male hypoactive sexual desire disorder - It is when a man become too sexy or needs sex in an abnormal way.

#### **Indications of sex disorders.**

- (1) When the disorder is experienced 75-100% of the time
- (2) When the condition exists for a minimum of six months
- (3) When the condition causes significant distress to the individual
- (4) When there is non-sexual mental disorder
- (5) When there is severe relationship distress
- (6) When there is partner violence.

### **Causes of sexual disorders.**

- (1) Hormonal imbalance - when the hormones are not in order
- (2) Side effects of medications - It is when medicines taken end up with an illness
- (3) Surgeries of pelvic region
- (4) Diseases like STI, diabetes and High blood pressure
- (5) Menopause - It is when a woman ceases to menstruate
- (6) Infections of bladder and vagina
- (7) Nervous systems disorders or damage
- (8) Obesity
- (9) Poor lifestyle

### **Causes of sexual disorders (Psychological).**

- (1) Low self esteem
- (2) Depression stress anxiety
- (3) Negative feelings such as anger, worry, fear and insecurity
- (4) Poor body image-arising from frequent negative comments
- (5) Past sex abuse

### **Causes of sexual disorders (Relationship).**

- 1) Troublesome relationship
- 2) Lack of intimacy
- 3) Lack of trust
- 4) Lack of commitment
- 5) Frequent conflicts and violence
- 6) Poor communication
- 7) Lack of transparency

### **Reasons for painful sex.**

- (1) Injury trauma or irritation
- (2) Vaginismus
- (3) Insufficient lubrication during the sexual intercourse

### **Symptoms of weak vaginal muscles.**

- (1) When there are problems in controlling urine
- (2) Sensations of heaviness bulge in vagina
- (3) Reduced penile sensation in vagina
- (4) Painful sex and pain in the pelvic area

### **Causes of weak vagina muscles.**

- 1) Childbirth
- 2) Obesity
- 3) Chronic constipation
- 4) Constant coughing
- 5) Menopause - It is when oestrogen is reduced.
- 6) Lack of exercise

### **How to tighten floor muscles.**

- 1) Foreplay for a long time
- 2) Be active try other sexual positions
- 3) Exercise to tone up body muscles
- 4) Healthy diet, fruits, vegetables and liquids
- 5) Start the Kegel exercise - It is an exercise by Doctor Anorld Kegel for opening and closing during urination for strengthening muscles around the vagina.

### **Suggested remedies.**

- (1) Resolve to improve marital relationship
- (2) Try by all means to improve communication
- (3) Avoid predictable and monotonous sex
- (4) Cultivate skills on non-genital sex
- (5) Identify stressors and plan to deal with them
- (6) Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- (7) Seek to improve the management of diseases
- (8) Take religion seriously

### **Session Six: Couples Outing**

The series of seminars in the intervention program was culminated by the all couples outing which was held at Zone Four Adventist Primary School. The dates for the outing were 16 to 18 October 2015. The purpose of the outing was to celebrate a number of things.

The components of the outing were as follows:

- 1) To summarize the lessons of the intervention program
- 2) To identify all those whose birth days fell on the days of the outing and consequently celebrate and pray with them
- 3) To identify all those whose marriage dates fell on the days of the outing to celebrate and pray with them
- 4) To identify all those whose children were born in the same dates as those of the outing celebrate and prayer with them.

The leaders of the Family Ministries Department of the four churches who were earmarked as the Trainer of Trainers were set aside, challenged and thoroughly instructed to propagate the concepts of the intervention program to all the churches in

the district. It was a great advantage for the Trainer of trainers because all of them were part of the program from start to finish, they were eight in number and the training specifically for them was not done since they were part of the intervention program.

The couples were joined by six couples who came for the first time and the number increased to 92 including the regular participants who were 80. The expenses of the outing were born by the hosting church which took care of all the expenses except bedding and toiletry as well as transportation which was taken care of by the participants.

The climax of the outing was the renewal of marriage vows ceremony. All the couples were requested to participate in the ceremony including visitors who gladly participated. The end of the ceremony was characterized by the certification. All the couples who participated were issued certificates bearing their names. The hall where the ceremony occurred was filled with joy and jubilation as couples were receiving certificates. The outing was concluded on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 in the morning with dedicatory prayer from the researcher and one facilitator.

A sample of the Marriage vows Renewal Certificate is included in Appendix C.

### **The Second and Final Evaluation**

The first evaluation of the intervention was carried out on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2015, data analyzed and interpreted as shown in this chapter.

### **Instrumentation**

This research uses the quantitative method which uses survey in the form of a questionnaire. The instrument which was used in the evaluation exercise was the questionnaire with close-ended questions as indicated in chapter four of this research.

However, the questionnaire in this regard had the “other” as part of the responses as a way of taking care of other responses which might be of great importance but not in the questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

Accordingly, 80 questionnaires were sent to couples in the usual venues mentioned earlier in the fourth chapter of this research, that is Zone Two Church School hall and Zone Three church. Apparently, 80 questionnaires were returned and all completed. The table below shows the number of respondents and questionnaires distributed and returned in comparison with the first evaluation.

*Table 39. Shows the Number of Questionnaire Send and Returned*

Questionnaire sent	Number of respondents	Questionnaire returned	Percentage
80	80	80	100%
Total	80		100%

It was observed that during the first assessment, participants were 70 and questionnaires sent were 70 and 68 were returned which represents 97 % of the total number. During the second evaluation 80 questionnaires were given out and 80 were given back which represents 100%. The table below shows a comparative evaluation analysis.

*Table 40. Shows the Comparative Questionnaires and Respondents*

Questionnaires	Number of respondents	Returned	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> 70	70	68	97%
2 <sup>nd</sup> 80	80	80	100%

The number of females who participated was 45 and the number of males totalled 35. The table below shows the gender participation in a clearer manner.

*Table 41. Shows Gender Analysis*

Gender	Number of participants	Percentage
Female	45	56%
Male	35	44%
Total	80	100%

It is noted that the number of participants increased by 10 people which means five couples. The number of females increased by five as well as males which increased by the same number, the increase represents 14, 3%.

**The age group of participants.** It was stated in the previous chapters that the age bracket for participants was 18 years. Those in the range of 18-25 years were five those in the age bracket of 26-35 years were 18. Those in the range of 36-45 years were 32, those in the range of 46-55 years were 17 and those in the age group of 55-65 years were 5 and those in the range of 66+ years totalled three.

*Table 42. Shows the Age Group of the Participants*

Age group	Number of participants	Percentage
18-25 years	5	6%
26-35 years	18	23%
36-45 years	32	40%
46-55 years	17	21%
56-65 years	5	6%
66+ years	3	4%
Total	80	100%

It is observed that the increase was in the age group of 26-35 years, 36-45 years and 46-55 years. The majority increase was in the age group 36-45 which went up by five people. The table below shows the comparative analysis of the ages of the participants in relation to the first and second evaluations.

*Table 43.* Shows the Comparative Age Groups of Participants for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Evaluations

	Age group	Number of participants	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup>	18-25 years	5	6%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	18-25 years	5	6%
1 <sup>st</sup>	26-35 years	15	19%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	26-35 years	18	23%
1 <sup>st</sup>	36-45 years	27	34%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	36-45 years	32	40%
1 <sup>st</sup>	46-55 years	15	19%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	46-55 years	17	21%
1 <sup>st</sup>	56-65 years	5	6%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	56-65 years	5	6%
1 <sup>st</sup>	66+ years	3	4%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	66+ years	3	4%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**Duration in marriage.** The number of those who responded that they were in marriage ranging from 0-5 years totalled seven, those in the range of 6-25 years were 21, and those in the category of 16-25 years were 17. Furthermore, those who indicated that they were in the range 26-40 years were 26, those in range of 41-55 years totalled 4 and those ranging from 66 plus were 3.

The table below illustrates well the number and the years of the respondents in marriage.

*Table 44. Shows the Number of Years in Marriage*

<b>Number of years</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-5 years	7	9%
6-15 years	21	26%
16-25 years	17	21%
26-40 years	26	33%
41-55 years	4	5%
56+ years	3	4%
Total	80	100%

It was noted that those in the range of 0-5 years increased by one person, those in the range of 6-15 years increased by two people as compared to the previous evaluation. Those in category of 16-25 years in marriage went up again by two people whereas those in the range of 26-40 years were the majority they increased by four people.

Again those in the range of 41-55 years went up by one person and those in the group of 56 years and above remained in the same number as before. The following table indicates the comparative analysis of the number of years in marriage for the respondents.

*Table 45. Shows the Number of Years in Marriage for the Respondents*

	Number of years	Number of participants	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup>	0-5 years	6	9%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	0-5 years	7	9%
1 <sup>st</sup>	6-15 years	19	28%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	6-15 years	21	26%
1 <sup>st</sup>	16-25 years	15	22%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	16-25 years	17	21%
1 <sup>st</sup>	26-40 years	22	32%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	26-40 years	26	33%
1 <sup>st</sup>	41-55 years	3	4%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	41-55 years	4	5%
1 <sup>st</sup>	56+ years	3	4%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	56+ years	3	4%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**Those helped in their marriages through the intervention initiative.**

According to the responses, in this category those who said “yes” were 51, only one said “no.” Those who indicated that they were helped very much were 28. The table below shows in a clearer way the number of those who were helped in their marriages through the intervention program.

*Table 46. Shows the Number of Beneficiaries through the Intervention Program*

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	51	64%
No	1	1%
Very much helped	28	35%
Do not know	0	0%
Total	80	100%

It was noted that the number of people who indicated that they were helped responding by the word yes increased by six people, those who indicated that they were not assisted decreased by two people and only one indicated that he was not helped, he was a male according to the response. Furthermore, those who said they were helped very much increased by seven people and there was no one who said she or he did not know as to whether she or he was helped. The total number of those who got helped was 79 which represents 99% of the total figure.

*Table 47. Shows the Number of Respondents Helped Comparatively*

	Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
1st	Yes	45	66%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Yes	51	64%
1st	No	3	4%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	No	1	1%
1st	Very much helped	21	31%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Very much helped	28	35%
1st	Do not know	1	1%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Do not know	0	0%
1st	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**The response on divorce: What can you say about divorce?** In line with this question 78 participants indicated that divorce was not supposed to happen, one did show that divorce must not be prevented and one again indicated that people should not talk about it at all. The following table shows clearly the responses and the number of responses thereof.

*Table 48. Shows the Number of Respondents about Divorce*

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Must not happen	78	98%
Must happen	0	0%
Must not be prevented	1	1%
Must not talk about it	1	1%
Total	80	100%

The statistics show that the number of the participants increased among those who indicated that divorce must not be allowed to happen, the number went up by 15 people, those who showed that, it must happen decreased by two. In line with those who indicated that divorce must not be prevented decreased by one person and those who advocated for not talking about it decreased by two.

The table below gives a comparative analysis of the responses in relation to the previous evaluation exercise. It is observed that the majority of the respondents did not like divorce and the number kept on going up on the negative as the table below illustrates.

*Table 49. Shows the Comparative Responses on Divorce by the Participants*

	Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
1st	Must not happen	63	98%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must not happen	78	98%
1st	Must happen	2	3%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must happen	0	0%
1st	Must not be prevented	2	3%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must not be prevented	1	1%
1st	Must not talk about it	3	4%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must not talk about it	1	1%
1st	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**Responses on the whole intervention: What can you say about this**

**program?** In line with the responses, 17 responded that the program changed their attitudes towards divorce, those who got strengthened in their marriages were totalled 28. Moreover, those who got more insights about marriage were 35 in total. The table below shows clearly the responses and the number of participants.

*Table 50. Shows the Responses Based on the Evaluation of the Whole Intervention*

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
It has changed my mind about divorce	17	21%
It has strengthened my marriage	28	35%
It has held me to understand more about marriage	35	44%
Total	80	100%

It is observed that the number of participants who got different views about divorce increased by four people from the previous assessment. Those who got their marriage strengthened went up by five people. In addition, those who were assisted in understanding more about their marriages, the figure rose to 35 which represents 44% of the total figure. It shows that the entire group of participants got helped through the program one way or the other.

The table below shows the responses and the number of participants against each response. The table shows the information in a comparative manner, taking into account the first evaluation exercise.

*Table 51. Shows the Evaluation of the Whole Intervention Program*

	Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup>	It has changed my mind about divorce	13	19%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	It has changed my mind about divorce	17	21%
1 <sup>st</sup>	It has strengthened my marriage	22	32%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	It has strengthened my marriage	28	35%
1 <sup>st</sup>	It has helped me to understand more about marriage	33	49%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	It has helped me to understand more about marriage	35	44%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**Responses about the lessons presented: What can you say about the lessons?** The total number of respondents who confirmed that the lessons were relevant added up to 21. Those who indicated that the lessons were practical and necessary were 59 and no one indicated that the lessons were irrelevant. The table below does put it clear by including the number of responses against the number of participants.

*Table 52. Shows the Evaluation of Lessons Taught in the Intervention Program*

Response	Number of participants	Percentage
Relevant	21	26%
Irrelevant	0	0%
Practical and necessary	59	74%
Total	80	100%

In comparison with the previous evaluation in this regard, the number of participants who confirmed that the lessons were relevant rose up by four people. Furthermore, those who indicated that the lessons were practical and necessary

increased by six participants and there was no one on the negative during the first assessment and the second which was the final.

The general observation was that the lessons were answering the needs of the participants and thus ranged necessary and practical. The following table shows the comparative responses between the first and second assessments in a clearer manner.

*Table 53. Shows the Evaluation of Lessons Taught in Intervention Comparatively*

	Response	Number of participants	Percentage
1st	Relevant	17	22%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Relevant	21	26%
1st	Irrelevant	0	0%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Irrelevant	0	0%
1st	Practical and necessary	53	78%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Practical and necessary	59	74%
1st	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**Responses on the frequency of the program: How often do you think this program can be conducted?** The number of participants who indicated that the program must be conducted monthly totalled 45. Those who advocated that it should be conducted quarterly were 31 and only one indicated that the program must not be conducted at all. On the other hand, three participants indicated that the program must be done to young adults only.

The table below shows the number of participants and the responses in a comprehensive manner.

*Table 54. Shows the Responses on Program Frequency*

Responses	Number of participants	Percentage
Must be done every month	45	56%
Must be done once per quarter	31	39%
Must not be done at all	1	1%
Must be done to young adults only	3	4%
Total	80	100%

It is noted that the majority of the participants wished the program to be conducted more often than not. Those who indicated monthly rose by five participants while those who advocated quarterly by four participants. On the contrary, those said that it must not be done the number remained at one person. Those in the affirmative particularly for young adults increased by one person.

The total number for participants who were in the affirmative group was 79 which represents 99%. The overall observation was that the participants were all for the program. The following table shows the number of participants and their responses in comparison with the first evaluation in an understandable manner.

*Table 55. Shows the Comparative Responses on Program Frequency*

	Responses	Number of participants	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup>	Must be done every month	40	59%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must be done every month	45	56%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Must be done once per quarter	27	40%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must be done once per quarter	31	39%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Must not be done at all	1	1%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must not be done at all	1	1%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Must be done to young adults only	2	3%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Must be done to young adults only	3	4%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Total	68	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Total	80	100%

**The responses on divorce minimization: In your own opinion do you think divorce has been minimized by this program?** The number of participants who indicated their responses by “yes” were 57. Those who responded by saying yes in a big way were 23 and there was no one who indicated that the program did not minimize divorce. The table below shows the number of respondents and their responses.

*Table 56. Shows Responses on Divorce Minimization*

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	57	71%
No	0	0%
In a big way	23	29%
Do not know	0	0%
Total	80	100%

The highest figure of the participants responded by saying yes and the second highest in the affirmative increased by three participants in comparison with the

previous assessment. The number of participants on the negative decreased by six and no one maintained the fact that the program did not minimize divorce. The total figure for those in the affirmative was 80 which represents 100% of the total figure.

**Responses on the rating of lesson topics: Which lesson did you like most?**

According to responses 15 respondents liked the lesson on communication, five liked family finance and 30 liked human sexuality. Those who liked parenting as a lesson were eight. Those who liked stress management were four. Again those who liked the lesson on divorce and re-marriage were 12 and those who liked the lesson on gender roles were four. The table below shows the above details clearly.

*Table 57. Shows Responses per Lesson Covered*

Lessons	Number of respondents	Percentage
Communication	15	19%
Family finance	5	6%
Parenting	8	10%
Gender roles	4	5%
Divorce and Re-marriage	12	15%
Human Sexuality	30	38%
Marriage Institution	6	8%
Total	80	100%

It is noted that the majority of the participants liked the lesson on human sexuality and the figure represents 38% of the total figure. The second highest figure in this regard was for those who liked the lesson on communication. The third in descending order was the lesson on divorce and re-marriage and it represents 15% in relation to the overall figure. The least in this regard is for those who liked the lesson on gender roles.

**Responses on the propagation of the intervention program: Can you recommend this program to someone else?** All the participants in the intervention indicated that they were in a position to recommend the program to someone else. The table below shows the responses according to the number of participants.

*Table 58. Shows Responses of the Program of the Intervention*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	80	100%
No	0	0%
To some but not to everyone	0	0%
Do not know	0	%
Total	80	100%

It is observed that all the participants indicated that they were in a position to recommend the intervention program to other people. The previous evaluations indicated that only one person was not in a position to recommending the program to others, but now he has changed positively. The table below shows the comparative responses in this regard.

*Table 59. Shows the Comparative Response on Intervention Program Propagation*

	Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup>	Yes	67	99%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Yes	80	100%
1 <sup>st</sup>	No	0	0%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	No	0	0%
1 <sup>st</sup>	To some but not to everyone	0	0%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	To some but not to everyone	0	0%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Do not know	1	1%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Do not know	0	%
	Total	68	100%

### Summary

This chapter dealt with the implementation of the intervention program in a chronological and logical manner. A total number of three seminars was done with 18 sessions presenting different subjects. A total number of 80 participants were involved in the implementation program. Two evaluation exercises were done in separate intervals.

The evaluation instrument was designed and used accordingly. The financial challenge was experienced since there was no specific budget for running the intervention program. The intervention was culminated by the couples outing. During the outing renewal of marriage vows was done and the Certificate to that effect was designed.

All the participants were issued Certificates. The following chapter is going to give a summary of the whole dissertation. It will further describe the evaluation method employed in the interpretation of data and the lessons drawn from the data. All the conclusions of the prior chapters will be summarized chronologically and objectively. The lessons learnt during the intervention strategy will be briefly

indicated. A concise list of recommendations in accordance with the findings will be given.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE DISSERTATION

#### **Summary**

The researcher of this project is a minister of religion in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly in Central Zimbabwe Conference. The Central Zimbabwe Conference is located in the middle of the country of Zimbabwe. The Conference consists of two provinces, namely the Midlands and the Masvingo provinces.

The conference has 28 church districts as well as churches with a current membership of 144483. The statement of the problem is divorce among church members in Central Zimbabwe Conference which affects families in the church negatively. The main purpose of the dissertation was to discover the reasons for divorce among Seventh-day Adventist Church members in Central Zimbabwe Conference.

The intervention program, after finding the reasons thereof was developed, implemented and evaluated aimed at minimizing the divorce rate in Central Zimbabwe Conference as a whole, the justification of the dissertation was to restore the marriage institution after seeing that the church members were affected spiritually and socially.

The research confined itself to a study of church members who are in local church membership records aged 18 years and above. Only four churches were selected for the purpose. The Biblical foundations for the marriage institution was

sought. The writings of Ellen G. White were investigated to give supportive information with regards to the marriage institution and the family.

The literature review was taken into account, many authors from different disciplines were investigated through their literature and used in the study. The quantitative research methodology was adopted, questionnaires were designed after identifying the target population. Data was collected, analysed and interpreted.

Consequently, the intervention strategy was developed, implemented and finally evaluated. The evaluation process was based on the quantitative methodology. Furthermore, the evaluation exercise was in two phases. The intervention strategy was informed by the findings from the first survey represented by 178 respondents.

The first phase of the intervention strategy had 70 married people of which 40 were females and 30 were males. The second phase had 80 participants all being married the assumption was that all married people are potential divorcees. However, there were some obstacles explicitly and implicitly inherent in the implementation process. Looking at all the known factors in this regard the intervention strategy was successful.

### **The Evaluation Methodology**

The dissertation uses the quantitative method in the whole research program. The questionnaires were used to collect data accordingly.

**Data on gender.** The collected data in the whole study indicated that women are the majority in the church. They represented 56% of the total number of participants.

**Responses on age.** According to data collected, the age group from 36-45 years was the majority it represents 40% in accordance with the whole group of participants. The conclusion in this regard was that the church is full of young people.

**Responses on the number of years in marriage.** The information which was gathered concerning the years of the participants in marriage indicated that those in the range of 26-40 years were the majority. They represented 33% of the actual figure. The second highest were those in the range of 6-15 years in marriage. It was noted that the large percentage of church member is young in marriage.

**Responses on those who got helped through the intervention program.** In line with the response in this instance 79 of the respondents indicated that they were helped by the intervention program, and they were represented by 99% with regard to the total number of participants. It shows that the intervention program impacted their marriage lives.

**Responses on whether divorce should happen or not.** The majority of the respondents in this question showed that divorce should not be allowed to happen and they represent 98% of the total number of the participants. The outcome was that church members do not like divorce in the church and it should be prevented at all costs.

**Responses on the overall comment of the whole intervention.** In as far as the data collected is concerned 100% indicated that their marriages were strengthened and they were made to understand more about their marriages. The conclusion was that their marriages were enriched one way or the other.

**Responses on the relevance of the lesson presented.** In this regard, all the respondents confirmed that the lessons which presented in the intervention program were relevant, practical and necessary for the welfare of the families in marriage. In actual fact the responses represents 100% of the total number of respondents,

**Responses on the frequency of the intervention program.** In this instance 45 out of 80 participants which stands for 56% indicated that this kind of program

should be conducted monthly. In other words the total number of the participants who advocated for the frequency of the program was 76 out of 80 which translate to 75%. The conclusion in this matter is that people want this kind of program to be conducted regularly in churches.

**Responses on whether the intervention program did minimize divorce or not.** According to responses, 77 of the participants indicated that divorce was minimized. In other words the figure in percentage for those in the affirmative was 96%. As a result the intervention strategy was meaningful and successful. It did meet the participants in their points of need.

**Responses on the rating of lessons presented.** The lesson on human sexuality, scored the highest responses which represents 38% of the total number of the participants. It shows that there is need for church members to be taught about sex as it relates to the Holy Bible and the marriage institution.

**Responses on whether the intervention program can be recommended to others or not.** All the participants which represents 100% did indicate that they were in a position to recommend this, intervention program to others. The outcome which can be drawn from the responses is that couples got influenced in their family life for the better, thus they showed willingness to share with others the insights of the intervention program.

**Responses based on the “OTHER.”** A number of suggestions confessions and admissions were given under the section entitled “other”, in the evaluation questions. It was noted that 13 participants indicated they had planned divorce but because of the intervention program they abandoned the plans. The figure represents 16% in comparison with the total number of participants. Among those who wanted to divorce three did put it in writing that they had since withdrawn the divorce papers

which they had filled prior to the intervention program. The number in this category represents 23% in reference to the entire number of participants.

The most significant thing which happened under the “other” section was the conversion of the three couples. The three couples are those mentioned in chapter five who joined the group after the first assessment. The couples indicated that they needed baptism as soon as possible. They did indicate that they needed such a church which takes care of both spiritual and family life.

However on the negative 24 respondents wrote under the section “other” that the venue for the outing was not conducive in the sense that participants were made to bring bedding and toiletry. They suggested that in the future, a lodge would do better as a venue for outing because the basic needs would be catered for. Couples would be relieved of the hustle of carrying bedding and other essentials because others would be using public transport.

In analysing this section again 97% of the couples indicated that the outing was timely and relevant, some wrote that it reminded them of the early marriage days which they indicated that the outing brought revival and reformation in the area of marriage. The table below shows percentages, the number of participants and the suggestions pointed out. It is so because this section entitled “other” was not entertained in chapter five.

*Table 60.* Shows Suggestion and Comments Based on the “Other” Section of the Evaluation Questionnaire

Response	Number of participants	Percentage
Those who had planned divorce prior to the intervention program	13	16%
Those who abandoned divorce plans	13	16%
Those who withdrew divorce papers due to the intervention program	3	23%
Those who joined the church because of the intervention program	6	8%
Those who complained about the outing venue	24	30%
Those who indicated that the couples outing was uplifting and relevant	78	98%
Total		

### **Obstacles Encountered**

The successful implementation of the intervention program of this nature calls for the overcoming, avoiding quite a considerable number of challenges and obstacles, that are inherent in this kind of study. The obstacles impacted negatively the participants and the facilitators in one way or the other.

On the same note facilitators and participants indicated that, young children were supposed to be taken care of during the sessions. There was no specific arrangement for this aspect since the intervention was specifically for couples and very new in the Conference. The sorting and arrangement of the suitable venue posed a challenge in the sense that the venues were not adequately furnished.

Couples were supposed to sit comfortable during seminars but that was not met. The reason being that there was no budget made for the intervention program. Facilitators were not funded in terms of travel, in fact they sometimes used their

resources to fund the intervention program. The researcher had no specific budget for funding the research and that hindered the smooth running of the study.

There was not enough time for advertising the intervention program that is why some couples missed it because of pre-arranged programs involving couples which could have been taken care of had the advertisement been done adequately. The separation of couples due to places of work also affected the program in the sense that couples could not meet regularly as scheduled. The culmination of the intervention through the outing was another setback because the venue was not appealing but it was just a casual campout sought of. All this was because of the lack of funds or budget. However the local church did provide to a level of its capacity and ability.

### **Success Indicators of the Intervention Strategy**

- (1) Many participants changed their minds about divorce – 13 abandoned their divorce plans.
- (2) A total of 77 participants indicated that the intervention program minimized divorce.
- (3) A complete number of three participants withdrew their divorce papers from the court of law due to the intervention program.
- (4) Participants who totalled 79 indicated that the intervention program must be conducted regularly in churches.
- (5) The total number of six participants accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour without the alter call.
- (6) The whole group of participants indicated that the lessons taught them at their points of need.
- (7) The entire group of the participants agreed without reservations that the this kind of program can be recommended to others without reservations or hesitation.

(8) The total figure of 79 out of 80 participants in the intervention program indicated that they got helped through the program.

### **Lessons Learnt**

First and foremost it was noted that women are the majority in the church in comparison with men. Secondly it was observed that the church at the present moment is full of young people who are young even in knowledge about religion. Moreover it was noted that church leaders should not assume the church members know the fundamental beliefs of the church.

Furthermore, the researcher learnt that preaching and the teaching of lessons and any church program should be informed by the needs of the church at that particular time. In other words needs should inform practice. It was further learnt that the majority of the church members is young in faith so the programs of the church should take into account the fact that the majority do not have the Adventist philosophy of education so the church doctrines should be emphasised more often than not.

Again it was learnt that there are so many perverse teachings about sex and there is need to redirect the church towards proper sex and the sanctity of the marriage institution. Finally the researcher learnt that quite a number of marital conflicts come as a result of failure in communication, so there is a need to teach communication in all its forms.

### **Conclusion**

The problem of divorce in Central Zimbabwe Conference was introduced and the expected outcome after the intervention and the research was done accordingly. In chapter two the subject of divorce was sought and discovered that divorce was

permitted by God through Moses as an intervention program. It was noted that God never commanded divorce because he hates it. Furthermore it was noted that marriage was a lifelong union between a man and a woman.

The writings of Ellen G. White were investigated and concluded that divorce was not in the original plan of God, it came through sin or it was brought by sin. Different categories of literature were reviewed and concluded that divorce was an undesirable element and the other parts of the world are welcoming it and on the contrary the African mindset does not accept divorce and it is regarded as one of the taboos.

It was concluded that divorce is permitted where necessary but it is not part or culture of any society. Chapter four narrated the Ministry contexts as it relates to macro and micro contexts. The research was carried out, data collected analysed and interpreted. The intervention strategy was developed and implemented accordingly.

In chapter five the implementation was described chronological and successfully evaluated. The participants were met at their points of need that was shown by the evaluation instrument through the responses given by the participants. The overall assessment indicated beyond doubt that divorce can be minimized at any given time in measureable terms.

### **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that further research be done on this subject in Central Zimbabwe Conference since this one is the first in the region, culture is dynamic so there is need for further research in order to take care of the cultural changes in the future.

2. It is recommended that pastors be trained in sexology so as to help the congregations in the area of sex since it is one of the contributory factors to divorce discovered in the research.
3. It is recommended through church Growth studies that family matters be an integral part of the curriculum, because it has proved to be meaningful especially among couples.
4. It is recommended, to marriage officers that thorough counselling be done to the parties to the marriage before solemnization. It is so because some do not realise that marriage is a lifelong union that is why they divorce at will.
5. It is recommended through the Education system that the element of faithfulness be emphatically taught from Early Childhood Development school. It is so because unfaithfulness among couples has proved to be the chief cause of divorce particularly in Central Zimbabwe Conference.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Evaluation Form

#### Questions Asked

**1. What is your age?**

- (a) 18-25 years
- (b) 26-35 years
- (c) 36-45 years
- (d) 46-55 years
- (e) 56-65 years
- (f) 66+ years

**2. What is your gender?**

- (a) Female
- (b) Male

**3. How long have you been in marriage?**

- (a) 0-5 years
- (b) 6-15 years
- (c) 16-25 years
- (d) 26-40 years
- (e) 41-55 years
- (f) 56+ years

**4. Have you been helped in your marriage through this program?**

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Very much
- (d) Do not know

**5. What can you say about divorce?**

- (a) Must not happen
- (b) Must happen

- (c) Must not be prevented
  - (d) Must not talk about it
  - (e) Other please specify
- 

**6. What can you say about this program?**

- (a) It has changed my mind about divorce
  - (b) It has strengthened my marriage
  - (c) It has helped me to understand more about marriage
  - (d) Other please specify
- 

**7. What can you say about the lessons?**

- (a) Relevant
  - (b) Irrelevant
  - (c) Practical and necessary \
  - (d) Other please specify
- 

**8. How often should this program be conducted?**

- (a) Must be done every month
  - (b) Must be done once per quarter
  - (c) Must not be done at all
  - (d) Must be done to young adults only
  - (e) Other please specify
- 

**9. In your own opinion do you think divorce has been minimized by this program?**

- (a) Yes
  - (b) No
  - (c) In a big way
  - (d) Do not know
  - (e) Other please specify
- 

**10. Which lessons did you like most?**

- (a) Communication
- (b) Marriage institution

- (c) Financial management
- (d) Conflict management
- (e) Divorce signs
- (f) Other please specify-----

**11. Can you recommend this program to someone else?**

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) To some but not to everyone
- (d) Do not know

## APPENDIX B

### Questionnaire

#### Questions Asked

**1. What is your gender?**

- (a) Female
- (b) Male

**(2) What is your age?**

- (a) 18-25 years
- (b) 26-35 years
- (c) 36-45 years
- (d) 46-55 years
- (e) 56-65 years
- (f) 66+ years

**(3) What is your education level?**

- (a) Primary school level
- (b) Secondary school level
- (c) College level
- (d) University level
- (e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**(4) What is Your marital status?**

- (a) Married
- (b) Divorcee
- (c) Widowed
- (d) Single
- (e) Separated
- (f) Single-parent never married

**(5) Taking everything together, how would you describe your marriage?**

(a) Very happy

Happy

(b) Bad

(c) Very bad

(d) Do not know

**(6) Do you think that the Bible provides all the answers for a good marriage?**

(a) Strongly agree

(b) Agree

(c) Disagree

(d) Strongly disagree

(e) Neither agree or disagree

**(7) Did you ever think that your marriage might be in trouble?**

(a) Never

(b) Yes, but not within the last 2 years

(c) Yes, within the last 4 years

(d) Yes, within the last 7 months

(e) Yes, within the last 4 months

(f) Yes, within the last year

**(8) Have you ever thought of getting a divorce or separation?**

(a) Never

(b) Yes, but not within the last 6 years

(c) Yes, within the last year

(d) Yes, within the last 6 months

(e) Yes, within the last 7 months

**(9) Has your spouse ever suggested the issue of divorce?**

(a) Never

(b) Yes, but not within the last 3 years

(c) Yes, within the last 2 years

(d) Yes, within the last 6 months

(e) Yes, within the last 3 months

(f) Yes, within the last 9 years

**(10) Do you regularly have good conversations with your spouse when you talk as good friends?**

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Disagree
- (d) Strongly disagree
- (e) Neither agree or disagree

**(11) How often do you experience the following with your spouse:**

**Fights with accusations, criticisms and name calling?**

- (a) Never
- (b) Once in a while
- (c) Frequently
- (d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**(12) How satisfied are you with your marriage?**

- (a) Completely satisfied
- (b) Satisfied
- (c) Not very satisfied
- (d) Not at all satisfied

**(13) When a couple is considering a divorce it is better to seek counselling first, how do you value the idea?**

- (a) Very good idea
- (b) Good idea
- (c) Very bad idea
- (d) Bad idea
- (e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**(14) According to your own opinion, what causes divorce?**

- (a) Age difference
- (b) Unfaithfulness
- (c) Interfaith marriage
- (d) Sexual deprivation
- (e) Money issues
- (f) Separation
- (g) Poverty
- (h) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**(15) Have you ever sought counselling from a marriage counsellor or pastor?**

- (a) Yes

- (b) No
- (c) Yes, regularly
- (d) Seldom
- (e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**(16) If your spouse divorces you today, what can you do?**

- (a) Accept it
- (b) Do not accept it
- (c) Challenge it
- (d) Do not know
- (e) Neither agree nor disagree
- (f) Other \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

**Renewal of Marriage Vows Certificate**

**Central Zimbabwe Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church**

**Certificate of The Renewal of Marriage Vows**

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Renewed their marriage vows at \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_\_

day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2016.

Signature of \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of \_\_\_\_\_

parties to the \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses to the \_\_\_\_\_

marriage vows

marriage vows

**Signature of the**

**officiating Minister**

\_\_\_\_\_

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## VITA

**Name:** Dumisani Ncube

**Background:** I was born on June 8, 1966 in Kwekwe, Zimbabwe and raised in the same area. I was raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Faith by parents who were married until the father passed away but the mother is still alive. I was baptized in the Adventist Church in 1982 and became a Christian thereof.  
I attended Adventist and non-Adventist schools in terms of education, from primary school to university.

**Marital Status:** I got married to Siphon Ncube who comes from Lower Gweru, Zimbabwe. We have five children, namely Bonganinkosi, born in 1993, Senzilenkosi born in 1997, Bonginkosi born in 1999, Sisasenkosi born in 2004 and Siphephenkosi born in 2016.

**Education:**

1983-1986 High School Certificate from Mkoba High School, Gweru, Zimbabwe  
1996-1999 BA in Theology, Solusi University, Zimbabwe  
2006-2009 Adventist University of Africa Masters in Leadership  
2013- 2017 Doctor of Ministry Student, AUA

**Ordination:**

1998: Ordained and currently hold Ministerial Credentials from Central Zimbabwe Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

**Experience:**

1988-1991 Literature Evangelist, Zimbabwe  
1992-1995 District pastor CZC  
1999-2001 District pastor CZC  
2002-2003 Stewardship Director CZC  
2004-2008 Executive Secretary CZC  
2009-2011 Ministerial Secretary CZC  
2012- 2014 Executive Secretary CZC  
2015-present District pastor CZC

2013-2015 DMin class secretary

2016 DMin class vice president