

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry  
Emphasis in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE:   STEMMING INTERFAITH MARRIAGES IN REMERA CHURCH,  
          EAST CENTRAL RWANDA CONFERENCE**

Researcher: Karangwa Naphtal

Faculty Advisor: Sampson Nwaomah, PhD

Date completed: July 2016

Marriage influences various dimensions of living, including physical, mental, health, economics, well-being, happiness in the home and future of children.

Therefore, it must carefully arranged in order to maximize its good. However, the mixing marriage of today is an obstacle to the blissful pleasure of the family. The young people of Remera Church in East Central Rwanda Conference are among people involved in interfaith marriage. As a result, some members leave the church and others lack the partners. Marital conflicts come as a result of interfaith marriage and the children suffer the consequences. The impact of wrong choices in this affects the earthly life and could be the origin of loss of eternal life.

This study intended to give a guideline that would change the behaviors of the young people of Remera Church and of entire churches in Rwanda in the matter of marriage. The Bible teachings and principles from the writings of Ellen G White must be the guide during this critical time when marital choices are made.

Through the process of interviews with young people of Remera Church, Adventist spouses of interfaith families, some church elders of Remera and some pastors of East Central Rwanda Conference the researcher was able to find out the causes and consequences of interfaith marriage. Financial factors are the major cause of interfaith unions, but the external attraction is another factor. Additionally, the misconduct of some Adventist young women is still another reason. Insufficient knowledge of Biblical principles governing people during the choice of a partner causes the young people to exchange their eternal life for worldly pleasure.

The young people of Remera Church need more education on Biblical principles that guide the Christians in the time of dating. Church elders and other leaders of the church are required to provide more effort to guide the young people in the way of the Bible.

Marriage is a tool of union between families and is a symbol of relationship Christ has with His church. He wants His church to always be holy; in return for Christ to be the leader of the house, the married must fulfill the holiness of faith. Young people are an important asset that the church needs to care for, so the family education must be supported from all levels of the church to sustain them. Likewise, further research is needed to find out in a broader perspective the reason of interfaith marriage.

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

STEMMING INTERFAITH MARRIAGES IN REMERA CHURCH,  
EAST CENTRAL RWANDA CONFERENCE

A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Karangwa Naphtal

February 2017

**This work is licensed under Creative Commons 4.0**

### **Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike**

**You are free to:**

- **Share** — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- **Adapt** — remix, transform, and build upon the material

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

**Under the following terms:**

- **Attribution** — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
- **Noncommercial** — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.
- **Share Alike** — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.
- **No additional restrictions** — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

**Notices:**

You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

No warranties are given. The license may not give you all the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material.

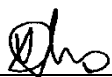
STEMMING INTERFAITH MARRIAGES IN REMERA CHURCH,  
EAST CENTRAL RWANDA CONFERENCE

A dissertation  
presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Ministry

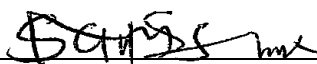
by  
Karangwa Naphtal

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor: Sampson Nwaomah, PhD

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader: Tom Ogal, DMin

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

AUA Main Campus

Date: February 2017

Dedicated to the young people of Remera Church and spiritual leaders of the  
Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Rwanda

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	xii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	4
Statement of the Purpose .....	5
Justification for the Dissertation .....	5
Delimitations .....	6
Definition of Terms .....	7
Methodology and Procedures .....	8
Expectations .....	10
2. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION .....	12
The Origin of the Marriage Institution .....	13
Marriage in the Old Testament .....	14
Suitable Helper .....	14
Leaving, Cleaving, Being one Flesh .....	15
Leaving .....	15
Cleaving .....	16
Being one flesh .....	16
Family Model for Generation .....	17
Created to the Image of God .....	17
Fall of the First Family .....	18
Prohibited Marital Practice among God's People in the Old Testament .....	19
Mixture of Righteousness and Unrighteousness .....	19
God's Punishment .....	20
The Bible Covenant .....	21
The Marriage Covenant .....	22
Holiness of Marriage .....	24
Isaac's pattern .....	25
Samson's lesson .....	27
Instructions about Marriage in Israel .....	28

Endogamy in the Old Testament .....	28
Prohibition as a divine authority.....	29
Joshua’s instructions to Israel.....	30
Preservation of God’s People in the Old Testament .....	30
Ezra’s Covenant with Israelites on Guilty of Intermarriage .....	31
Faithless Kings and Interfaith Marriage in the Old Testament.....	32
Solomon. ....	32
Ahaziah.....	33
Ahab. ....	33
Marriage in the New Testament .....	35
Jesus and the Institution of Marriage in the New Testament.....	35
Paul and Institution of Marriage .....	36
Interfaith marriage in the writings of Paul. ....	38
Unmatchable people.....	39
Marriage in Ellen G. White Writings.....	41
Marriage is Honorable .....	42
Parents’ Responsibility in Marriage.....	43
Ellen G. White Perception of Interfaith Marriage .....	44
A Happy or Unhappy Marriage.....	44
Compromising Beliefs.....	45
Summary of the Chapter .....	46
3. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	48
Marriage in Scripture .....	50
Marriage and Future Hope.....	51
Factors Influencing the Choice .....	52
Personality despair.....	53
Financial factor.....	53
Family factor. ....	54
Educational factor.....	54
Physical appearance.....	54
Important Factors to Consider in Marriage.....	56
Age factor.....	56
Faith factor. ....	56
A fervent Christian.....	57
Marriage and Parents Support .....	58
Contemporary Religions Views on Interfaith Marriage .....	61
View of Islam.....	62
View of Catholic Church.....	63
View of Orthodox Church .....	63
View of Seventh-day Adventist Church.....	64
Adventist Position on Interfaith Marriage.....	65
Interfaith Marriage and Its Challenges.....	67
Implication of Interfaith Marriage .....	70
Vital Factors in the Choice of a Partner.....	75
Loss of the Enjoyments of Heaven .....	78
Summary of the Chapter .....	79
4. DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE.....	82

Logical Framework.....	83
Description of Macro Context.....	86
Rwanda Historical Background.....	87
Rwanda Social Political System.....	91
Religious and Culture Background.....	92
Description of Micro Context.....	93
Kigali Historical Background.....	93
Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist in Kigali City.....	95
Appropriateness of Study.....	97
Research Design and Instruments.....	98
Type of Research and Rationale.....	98
The Field Research.....	99
Population and Sample or Participants.....	100
Sampling Procedures and Selection.....	100
Instrumentation.....	101
Presentation and Discussion of Findings.....	102
Interview with the Young People of Marriageable Age.....	103
Analysis and Evaluation of Data.....	105
Interview with Interfaith Families.....	105
Analysis and Evaluation of Data.....	108
Interview with Church Elders and Pastors.....	109
Analysis and Evaluation of Data.....	111
Presentation and Description of Findings.....	112
Discussion of Findings.....	114
Designing of Intervention.....	114
Limitations.....	115
Summary of the Chapter.....	115
5. NARRATIVE OF INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION.....	117
Participants' Background.....	118
Program Implementation and Evaluation.....	120
Seminars with the Young People of Remera Church.....	123
Details of the First day of the Seminar.....	124
Marriage covenant.....	124
One body.....	125
Endogamy in Israel.....	126
Suitable helper.....	126
Open discussion.....	127
Figures of the first seminar.....	127
Second Day of Seminar.....	128
Important qualities to consider before entering marriage.....	129
Figures for the second seminar.....	134
Third day of the Seminar.....	134
Consequences of interfaith marriage.....	135
Figures for the third seminar.....	137
Seminar with Educated Young People.....	137
Figures of the educated young people.....	139
Individual Meeting with Targeted People.....	139
Figures of the unchanged people.....	140

Indices after Seminars .....	140
Results after Research Implementation.....	144
Summary of the Chapter .....	148
6. FINAL EVALUATION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	151
Final Evaluation.....	151
Summary .....	152
Conclusion.....	157
APPENDICES.....	162
A. QUESTIONNAIRES .....	163
B. MANUAL DOCUMENT FOR TRAINING.....	164
C. SECOND SURVEY.....	184
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	185
VITA.....	191

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Logical Framework Matrix .....	85
2. Number of Respondents in Interview .....	102
3. Response of the Interview with the Young People of Marriageable Age .....	104
4. Interfaith Families Interview .....	107
5. Pastors and Church Elders Responses to the Interfaith Marriage .....	110
6. Demographic Background of Respondents.....	120
7. Number of Participants in the First Seminar.....	128
8. Number of Participants in Second Seminar .....	134
9. Figures of Participants in the Third Seminar .....	137
10. Number of Participants in the Educated Seminar.....	139
11. Number of Participants in the Individual Counseling .....	140
12. Assessment of Knowledge of Bible Principles After Seminars to the Young People of Marriageable age in Remera Church.....	142
13. Respondents Knowledge on Consequences of Interfaith Marriage .....	143
14. Qualities to Consider in Courtship Time .....	144
15. Comparison of Intra and Interfaith Marriage from January to May 2015 .....	145
16. Comparison of Marriages in the Records, Between January to May 2015 and January to May 2016.....	147
17. Comparison of Intra and Interfaith Marriage from January to May 2016 .....	148

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Map of Rwanda .....	92
2. Map of Kigali City.....	95

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KJV	King James Version
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I convey my great thanks to my Lord, for guidance and protection during four years of studies, to the God be the glory. My sincere thank goes to the leadership of Rwanda Union Mission and East Central Africa Division for the financial support during the studies.

I would like also to appreciate the moral and economic support of my dear wife Niyindorera Drocella. To our lovely children, Irasubiza K. Senior, Igiraneza K. Brian and Ihirwe K. Bliss who suffered throughout these studies. My appreciation goes also to my parents for encouragement and prayers, May God bless you.

However, my due thanks go to the Adventist University of Africa and the academic staff, especially those of Theological Seminary. My very profound gratitude and appreciation expressed to my supervisor, Doctor Sampson Nwaomah for his sacrifice, assistance, and effective advice he provided for me with an invaluable atmosphere that enabled me to work confidently and successfully.

Many thanks to my colleague's officers of East Central Rwanda Conference and then after of West Rwanda Field for sacrifice braves showed in my absence and support the world of God. May the good Lord enlarge their talent.

I can't forget the lecturer of research for her insightful advice, guidance, and constructive critiques throughout this work. God bless you all.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church is called to accomplish God's mission to the entire world in order to reduce sin effect, and to reconcile humanity back to God. In order to achieve perfect reconciliation, God sent his beloved son to restore the relationship broken by Satan to all creation and to show the world the path His father intended his children to follow.

The mission of Jesus started with few disciples in Jerusalem and Galilee and expanded after his ascension. Jesus had told his disciples that they would be His witnesses from nearer places to the end of the earth. God's mission must be done by those who have accepted to be His disciples. God chose to use sinful people for his mission. He chose a man as an ordinary person, but who believes in Jesus to accomplish His mission and to restore the relationship interrupted by Satan. God's messengers have taken the word of God to various parts of the world, including Africa.

The two Seventh-day Adventist missionaries David Elie Delhove and Henri Monnier arrived in Rwanda in 1919; they stayed at Kirinda near Gitwe, where another mission station of Lutheran protestant missionaries was. They were planning to start an Adventist mission at Kirinda. However, after a few months the Protestants missionaries who had gone back to Germany because of war came back to Rwanda. The two missionaries immediately left Kirinda and moved to Gitwe where they established their own mission.

In 1921 David Elie Delhove started a mission at the hill of Gitwe in central Rwanda together with Henri Monnier. After starting the Gitwe mission, Henri decided to move to north Rwanda region to start another mission. The mission of Rwankeri was started also in 1921 by the Swiss missionary, H. Monnier. The third mission in Rwanda is Ngoma in west Rwanda near the Lake Kivu neighboring the Democratic Republic of Congo, which was started in 1931 to spread the gospel of salvation in west Rwanda.

It is in this perspective that the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church begun in Kigali city in year 1965 with the purpose of spreading the gospel in the capital city of Rwanda. A Field was organized in 1965 then reorganized in 1984 to accomplish the purpose of the Lord. But the church itself cannot accomplish this great task, if its families are not in good standing to be involved in evangelism.

As it is well-known the church is family based. As a nation is the mirror of its communities, the church is a reflection of its families. The aim of the church is to develop Christ-like character in the families, to equip, to protect and provide them with standards required by God. Christian character is built in the families; therefore the church is a replica or simply an extension of the family. The church is founded on the family unit.

Remera SDA Church was planted in 1984 to achieve the work of the Lord in the area. It was not the first Adventist Church in Kigali, but followed others, such as, Nyamirambo which is situated where the headquarters of the conference was formerly located, and many others.

Remera is a large cosmopolitan church with many people coming from different parts of the country to worship there every Sabbath. The registered members are 1,680 composed of about 235 families; including married people working in

Kigali while their families are outside of Kigali, and 630 single people of different categories. The membership of this church comprises of various categories of people, including government cabinet ministers, members of parliaments, high ranking soldiers, business people, people working for non-government organizations and also those from the private sector. The young people are a mixture of educated and none educated, rich and poor, employed and non-employed.

These young people meet every Sabbath separately with the married for Sabbath school lesson program. Other occasions of meeting for the young people of this church include family ministries program, and Adventist Youth activities organized by the church but many of them do not attend because of lack of interest. However youth seminars concerning biblical principles and spirit of prophecy counsels governing marriage are not regular.

Financial contribution of these young people for church development, ministry development, or for evangelism is not quite tangible even though many of them are employed. Married people contribute more than 70% of the whole church income, while the contribution of young is not significant compared to their number.

The impact of the church to the surrounding community is based on the evangelistic campaigns conducted in the last years that brought many people to Christ. Another area of impact is based on the materials and financial contribution, especially to the needy people in the community, where they support students for scholarship and health insurance to the poor families.

According to Seventh-day Adventist Church manual, leadership of the local church changes every year, and is based on the number of church members. In 2016 Remera Church was headed by 16 church elders, including two ladies and two single young men. It has 72 deacons and deaconesses among them fifteen youths.

According to the number of the young people in this church, the number of the young people in leadership would be more than what they have today. This shows how the youth are not given much concern despite the fact that most of the regular members are youths. The church pastor has seven other churches to care for within Remera District, which is somehow overwhelming because each church needs to have its own pastor if funds are available.

The duty of the church requires ordained pastors and church leaders to go in various places to execute church duties. The researcher has been ministering in this church while he served as an executive secretary of the conference on several occasions, performing worship services, conducting business meetings with church elders and pastors but also officiating weddings.

However, the young people in this church have a problem of marrying outside of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Eight percent of the young people of Remera choose to go to other denominations to look for partners. Marrying outside one's faith is contrary to the biblical teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is an abomination to God. This problem pushed the researcher to conduct a study in this church in order to find out the reasons behind this custom, reduce this problem and look for its durable solution. Proper acquaintance of the researcher with this church gives him sufficient ground to carry out this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Remera SDA Church is growing rapidly, and it is blessed to have many young people. However, some of the Adventist youth marry to people of other churches and denominations. As result of this mixed marriage, some members end up leaving the church and some youth of this church lack of partners. Marital conflicts are also very common because of difference in belief. This sometime attempted to

follow the customs against God or leads to divorce. The conflicts experienced by interfaith couples often extend to their in-laws. In this context, interfaith marriages create more conflicts than they bring happiness to couples directly involved, and the community at large.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation was to develop guidelines that would change the behavior of the youth people of Remera Church in matters of marriage. Through Bible teachings and principles from Ellen G. White and other writers; highlighting important factors to consider when a man or woman reaches the crucial time of dating. The findings through interview helped the research to find out the causes of interfaith marriage, immediate and long-term consequences of marriages between people of different faiths.

After seminars and teachings, the researcher evaluates the results before and after implementation to see the change among the young people of Remera Church. The results are shared with the leaders of the church to incorporate them in addressing the causes of interfaith marriages, and making a follow-up. The results are also shared with the pastor in charge of this church, with the conference and Union leaders for access and adoption by other churches.

### **Justification for the Dissertation**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church as remnant is a unique and special church, it differs from other churches to the various reasons; it is the only church that respects all God's commandments and that has the testimony of Jesus. However, its uniqueness must be manifested in honoring God's instructions as it is written in the Bible.

Marriage is one of the rites that must distinguish the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the other churches and denominations in its all procedures.

Marriage influences and affects life both in this world and in world to come; therefore a serious commitment is needed before making the decision. Marriage is a fulfillment of God's plan for humanity. Strong families make up a strong church. A harmonious family atmosphere is a foretaste of eternal joy. The quality of family life has impact on both the earthy family and eternal life. However many young people are forfeiting their well-being by choosing to get married to people of other faith. Consequently they lose both the joy for the earthy family and the hope for the future. Some do so with the hope of converting the other to the Adventist faith, unfortunate this is not always the case because in some instances the Adventist partners end up by leaving the church.

God commanded the Israelites not to marry from nations that worshiped the idols. He says "They will turn your sons away from following me and serve other gods" (Deut. 7: 4). This command is valuable today as it was in the time when God instruct Israel people and must be applied in God's remnant church.

Therefore, the young people of the Remera Church in the East Central Rwanda Conference need to revisit Bible instructions concerning marriage because a good number of them are losing their hope through interfaith marriage. This study is intended to awaken their consciousness by using examples from the Bible, instructions from the writings of Ellen G. White and other reliable Christian books during their time of dating.

### **Delimitations**

Although many other Adventist Churches in Rwanda are facing with the challenge of interfaith marriage, this study will be limited to the findings from the young people of Remera Church even though other peoples concerned by the problem were interviewed to enhance the survey. It is addressing the reason why some youth

in this church choose to get married to people of other faiths, while Seventh-day Adventist as remnant church is called to respect God's instructions. However, this research does not address all churches in Kigali city or married members and children of Remera Church, because it concentrates on people of marriageable age of this church.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Ammonites:** "The ancient people who lived East of Jordan river and are described in the Bible as enemies of Israelites."<sup>1</sup>

**Amorites:** "Amorites are associated with Transjordan and the kingdom of Sihon, centered at Heshbon, and Og centered at Ashtaroth and Edrei."<sup>2</sup>

**Canaanites:** "A Semitic-speaking people and their territory, principally in Phoenicia. Their racial affinities are at present uncertain."<sup>3</sup>

**Girgashites:** "These are supposed by some to be the same as the Gergesenes ( Matthew 8:28 ), who lay to the east of Lake Gennesareth; but they are placed on the west of Jordan (Josh 24:11), and others take them for a branch of the large family of the Hivites."<sup>4</sup>

**Hittites:** "These people were descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan and occupied the mountainous region about Hebron, in the south of Palestine."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence T. Lorimer, "Ammonites," *Encyclopedia Americana International Edition (EAIE)* (New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1994), 1:748.

<sup>2</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, "Amorites," in *Harper's Bible Dictionary (HB-D)*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (New York, NY: Library of Congress, 1985), 27.

<sup>3</sup> J. D. Douglas and D. R. W. N. Hillyer, "Canaanites," in *New Bible Dictionary* (Downers Grove, IL: Wood Inter Varsity, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Adam Clarke, "Verse by Verse Bible Commentary," *Study Light*, accessed February 1, 2014, <http://studylight.org/commentary/deuteronomy/7-1.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, "A Commentary, Critical, Practical, and Exploration on the Old and New Testament," *SACRED*, accessed February 1, 2014,

**Hivites:** “An early inhabitant of Syrian and Palestine, named as distinct from the Canaanites, Jebusites, Perizzites, Gergashites and Amorites.”<sup>6</sup>

**Interfaith:** Having different faith and religion

**Jebusites:** Resided about Jerusalem and the adjacent country. ”<sup>7</sup>

**People of the book:** “ahl al-kitāb, are people belonging to a religion in which a book was revealed as the Torah or Bible.”<sup>8</sup>

**Perizzites:** That is, villagers, a tribe who were dispersed throughout the country and lived in unwalled towns.

### **Methodology and Procedures**

This study use qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting and analyzing data, to identify internal and external factors causing interfaith marriage, to understand origin of the problem more completely, in order to found appropriate and adequate solution of the problem.

The chapter 1 introduces the research and presents the overview of the study. It gives the general composition of the study, describes the problem under investigation and its background, its relevance to the field, assumptions, limitations and expected findings.

Chapter 2 presents the theological foundation of the study. Example of family and marriage taken from the Old and New Testaments are use in this dissertation

---

<http://www.sacred-text.com/bib/cmt/jfb/deu007.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> J. D. Douglas and D. R. W. N. Hillyer, “Canaanites,” in *New Bible Dictionary* (Downers Grove, IL: Wood Inter Varsity, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Henry P. Davis, “Bible Study Tools: Passionately Proclaiming Uncompromising Truth,” *All Communion with the Nation Forbidden*, last modified 2014, accessed February 6, 2014, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/deuteronomy/7-1-compare.html>.

<sup>8</sup> John L. Esposito, “The Oxford Dictionary of Islam,” *Oxfrd Islamic Studies*, accessed February 6, 2014, <http://www.oxfrdislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e74>.

process as patterns. It illustrates God's plan on marriage and instructions God's people would consider as the guidelines to follow for secured and protected marriage according to the Holy Scriptures. The writings of Ellen G. White are proposed as guidelines to the young people during their time of dating, and also to direct their relationships. This would help them to begin the dating process with consciousness and end with confidence. The reading of these writings is recommended during the time of dating to help the young people of marriageable age to make a good choice.

Chapter 3 deals with the contemporary literature review; whatever areas related to the problem of interfaith marriage are thoroughly investigated. The literatures talking about social factors are considered as principal materials because young people tend to be abusive towards one another in relationships. Today financial status has become a principal factor in the selection of a partner.

However, this does not determine the success of a marriage. The literatures of moral issue are important document that indicate faith as important factor in the choice of a marriage partner. Seventh-day Adventist Church literature and other Christian and secular materials are considered as well.

Chapter 4 narrates the situation of interfaith marriage in Remera Church. On the basis of theological and theoretical the researcher conduct a study among the youths of Remera Church to discover the problem why some of them decide to marry from other denominations, while there are potential suitors who are Seventh-day Adventist. The pastor and church elders are interviewed as the advisors of the young people and interfaith families are interviewed also to reveal the consequences of interfaith marriage in the family involved in.

Chapter 5 describes the methods the researcher use to solve the problem of interfaith marriage in the youth of Remera. Seminars are conducted to enhance the

thinking of the youths on the choice of partners and their future perspectives on marriage. The seminars also aimed to improve the youth's understanding of Bible principles governing marriage, God's purpose for marriage, consequences of interfaith marriage in the life of the partners, to the larger family, and their destiny.

After completing the seminars with young people of this church, a follow-up program is organized and supported by local church leaders in order to intensify the work done and verify the changes in the minds of these youth. After six months another survey is conducted to find out the outcomes of the program.

Chapter 6 concludes with a concise summary of the whole dissertation, description of the final evaluation of the study, explanation of the methods used in the research, and the conclusion drawn from the analyzed data gathered from the young people of Remera Church, from pastors, church elders of the church and from members of interfaith families.

### **Expectations**

It is expected that implementation of this study will help the church of Remera and other churches in Rwanda to lead young people to always ask for God's intervention, because a good wife/husband is a gift from God. It helps young people focus on shared religious beliefs rather than focusing on wealthy and physical appearance.

Its implementation also stimulates the young people to consider parental and church counsels before choosing a life partner. Warn the youths on the consequences of dating through social media. Help young people to consider long term effects, such children religion rather than focus only on mere pleasures. Reduce the number of the young people of the Remera SDA Church marrying to non-Adventist members. Make the Remera Church a model for other churches within East Central Rwanda

conference. And enhance the academic experience of the researcher, as well as become benefit to the church leadership at large.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In the existence of all individuals, the various stages of life are often marked by ceremonies symbolizing stepping-stone from one stage to another, such as childbirth, adolescence, and marriage. Getting married is like being born again, this may be characterized by better life than prior. Marriage as a cycle of life may be characterized by the blessing of God.

The choice of a partner is an important stage in the life of every human being. Therefore spiritual qualities must be the fundamental factors of choice while the youth comes to the period of dating because the end result of the unification of couples sharing different faith seems to be miserable. Some people involved in interfaith marriage hoping that by mixture in marriage they will change their partners. However the results are not always good, instead of changing him/her, the result becomes unhappy marriage.

From the beginning, God's plan was that marriage should be a permanent union between a man and a woman. However, the reality of today marriage is different with God desire from the creation, misunderstanding in the family has become an issue of dishonorable.

In the God plan the family would a place of rejoicing where parents and children learn to glorify God, where God-given gifts are developed and refined, and where all members learn how to share the good news of salvation with neighbors and friends.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Elaine Oliver and Willie, "Strong Families: How Are Family," *Adventist World*, September

The Bible indicates the marriage as the institution began with the world creation, and from its creation, the enemy had tried all necessary to destroy the family. The Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White have enough advice on marriage and family. The Bible is full of examples of successes and failures in marriage. From Genesis to Revelation marriage is considered a basic right of humanity and a divine institution. Ellen G. White through her writings gives instructions to the youth, on the way to follow while choosing a marriage partner. If the human race would follow the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy instructions on marriage, families and the world would be a place of rejoicing. Therefore, this chapter will focus on what the Bible and Ellen G. White teaching on marriage.

### **The Origin of the Marriage Institution**

The origin of marriage is the creator; after the creation of all things He brought all creatures before Adam to rename them. However, Adam does not have a creature similar to him, and God said "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen 2:18). Then God put him in a deeper sleep "He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh" (Gen 2:21). The Bible says "God brought her to the man" (Gen 2:22). God himself conducted the first ceremony of marriage on the six days of creation in the Garden of Eden when He unites Adam and Eve as husband and wife.

The book of Genesis illustrates the declaration of God in this word: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24). One of the greatest gifts God give to the humanity from the beginning is marriage. This marriage is preserved to the whole generation of all the time. The purpose of God in creating marriage was to give to the humanity the

---

2012, 16.

sense of belonging and joy. Consequently, the enemy of God and man has been trying to attack this institution to diminish the meaning of marriage. However, the marriage is under God protection and the enemy will never succeed to destroy this institution.

### **Marriage in the Old Testament**

In the beginning, God preferred to make a woman from the rib of a man. He had many possibilities to make a helper for Adam but with purpose, He uses Adam's rib to create the first woman. Nichol in the Seventh –day Adventist Bible Commentary describes this creation in these words.

Adam's rib formed the basic material from which his companion was built. The woman was formed for an inseparable unity and fellowship life with the man, and the mode of her creation was to lay the actual foundation for the moral ordinance of marriage. Marriage is a type of the fellowship of love and life that exist between the Lord and His church (Ephesians 5; 32).<sup>2</sup>

### **Suitable Helper**

Eve was an appropriate helper to Adam, she was created with the purpose to complete his husband and help him in whatever needed. The first couple would be a model to the following generations, they love and happiness they had before sin, was the image of what God wanted to the couples of all the time. God planned the first marriage to be the pattern for all future marriage relationships. God wanted Adam to be happy and fulfilled, so He created to him a suitable helper. In Genesis “When Adam woke up from his Friday afternoon sleep, he was absolutely sure that the woman in front of him belonged to him (Gen 2:18-21). Seeing the woman the first time, he exclaimed: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). This is taken as the beginning of family as well as the beginning of Love history.

---

<sup>2</sup> Francis D Nichol, ed., “Fourteenth Year [Genesis 2:22],” in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, Rev. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976), 1:226.

When Eve came from the flesh of Adam, they shared a character, thinking, and faith. Had Eve come from elsewhere, she would have had a different understanding with her husband, and this would affect their relationship. The factor of having the unity and harmony, perception and appreciation between husband and wife is a vital aspect of success in the formed family.

### **Leaving, Cleaving, Being one Flesh**

After God created the earth and the animals, He said, “Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Gen 1:26-27, NIV).

And God said “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen 2:24, KJV). This verse mentions the three things that are essential to marriage: leaving, cleaving and being one flesh.

**Leaving.** Implies the legal and public act of marriage. It calls for both man and woman to stand up and declare before the society that henceforth they will be a unit. It testifies that the man and woman are willing to make a commitment to each other, to live together and to share their future for the rest of their lives. They do not make this commitment secretly so that they can back out if things do not develop as they had hoped.

However, this engagement is to illustrate to the society that, they burn all bridges behind them. They make a statement to their parents and relatives that they begin a new family. When a child arrives at the time of forming a new family, he/she leave the parents’ home and begun the new life with his/her partner. The couple is no longer depending on their parents, hence they began to develop their family

independently, and the parents knew that their children are going to form their family. However, the children must not forget the responsibility of the child to parents, especially when they arrive at the old age.

**Cleaving.** In Hebrew is “Dabaq: דבק the literal sense of “cleaving” is to stick to, to paste, and to be glued to a person.”<sup>3</sup> This indicates the kind of closeness that God planned for marriage. Husband and wife are to be closer to each other than to anything else in the world. Their relationship is to take precedence over their careers, over their hobbies, over their side interest, and other things. Husband and wife are intended to be keenly joined together. If one tries to separate two individual who is glued together you are likely to tear them both. They are also to be closer to each other than to anyone else in the world, parents, friends, business, associates—even closer to each other than to their children. Only God should be closer to a person than the person’s spouse. But there are couples who fail to build their relationship because they are attached to the former friends, to the job, to education, or sport, than to the spouse. Every spouse should learn to leave behind other attitudes and influence for the health and growth of the new covenant of marriage.

The marriage is a mystery only God can explain; there are many secrets a husband and wife share no one else can explain. The value of a person is invaluable, however, a parent accepts to give her daughter in order to fulfill the God commandment to become one flesh.

**Being one flesh.** Describe the physical aspect of marriage. God in His great wisdom sought for some way to symbolize and to celebrate the blending of two lives in the deepest intimacy and companionship possible between human. The almost

---

<sup>3</sup> John Parsons, “Hebrew for Christians,” *Hebrew 4 Christians*, [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Glossary/Hebrew\\_Glossary\\_-\\_D/hebrew\\_glossary\\_-\\_d.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Glossary/Hebrew_Glossary_-_D/hebrew_glossary_-_d.html).

unbelievably perfect answer was the sexual act. Here two individuals could truly merge into one with tenderness and caring. It was the creator's wedding gift to the father and mother of our race. But being one flesh means far more than a physical thrill and release of bodily tensions between any male and any female. It means that two persons share everything they have, not only their bodies, not only their material possession but also their thinking and their feeling, their joy and their suffering, their hope and their fears, their success and their failures. To become one flesh means that two persons become completely one with body, soul, and spirit and yet they remain two different persons.<sup>4</sup>

### **Family Model for Generation**

The purpose of God in creating the first family was to set a model for the generation. This family was the example of how God wanted to mirror His image in the world. The word mirror in Hebrew is *mar'â* meaning magnify, exalt, and glorify. The glorification of God's name would come from the good families that praise God and reflecting his love and character to the planet earth. From the creation the will of God to man was to be a manager of the creature. The Almighty God had given to man a power to dominate the whole creations; the dominion and authority over the creatures were invested in human. However, because of the sin, the authority of man has decreased, and the marriage had collapsed and defeated.

### **Created to the Image of God**

In Genesis 2 the Bible gives a clear picture of how man and woman were created and how God want them to be. In this chapter, the Bible explains that

---

<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Borough Dudley, Peggy Hutchison, and Roger Baxter, *Married and Glad of It* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1987), 29–31.

the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being. In Genesis 1:27, God declares the creation of man and woman, and says “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” To the image of God mean, they shared the character with God. They have influence over animals and birds. God would not create a woman if a man was not created. From the first chapter of the Bible, women are afforded an important place than anything else. As it is mentioned above, a woman is created in the image of God, just as the man was created too, although there is a distinction between male and female, but they hold a common status to be created both in the image of God. The distinction between man and woman generate the complementarities between them.

God himself states that man by himself is not sufficient, is uncomfortable, is insecure, is incomplete, and unfulfilled. These indicate the value and necessity of women in the life of man and highlight the values of a woman in biblical view. God’s purpose in creating a woman and giving her to man, was a testimony that alone Adam could not enjoy the intimate prosperity, relationship, fellowship and happiness of oneness.

### **Fall of the First Family**

Satan in the form of snake convinces Eve that God has lied to her and her partner Adam concerning the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He convinces her to eat the fruit of the tree. This is often described as the fall of humanity and origin of sin. By this act, sin entered the world for the first time. However, God has said to the first parents, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die (Gen 2:16-17). The problem comes when Adam and Eve disobeyed the

order of God and eat the fruits of the forbidden tree. From that time, the enemy of the family has arrived at his target of defeating marriage. However, the enemy has not overthrown the marriage as it was his objective because the marriage is protected by God.

### **Prohibited Marital Practice among God's People in the Old Testament**

Even though there was no reporter to the act of the first marriage, through scripture God tells us how all began. The Bible says that marriage was established by God and begun from the week of creation while God completed the creation of heaven, the earth, and the entire creatures. The creator of marriage has the principles that should govern the marriage.

If God had left us without instructions about marriage after establishing it, then marriage could be regulated according to personal will, but He has not left us in the dark. In His revelation to a human being through the Holy Scripture, God has revealed His will regarding the nature and function of marriage. If a Christian wants to live in accordance with God's will, he must study and respect Biblical principles governing marriage.<sup>5</sup>

### **Mixture of Righteousness and Unrighteousness**

From the time of Adam and Eve the descendants of the first parents knew the requirements of God governing marriage, the matrimonial union between the people who obey Him and those who rebels to Him was not accepted. Every son and daughter of Adam would follow these instructions. However, the Bible says

When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose (Gen 6:1-2).

The unification with unfaithful and infidel people of before deluge would be a

---

<sup>5</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Biblical perspectives 4990, 2001), 12.

warning for the descendants of the Noah, however, even today the lesson learned from them are not valuable to the Christians in the present day.

According to John Wesley, “The sons of God are those who were called by the name of the Lord, and called upon that name, married the daughters of men, those that were profane, and strangers to God. The posterity of Seth did not keep to them as they ought, but intermingled with the race of Cain: they took those wives of all that they chose, and they chose only by the eye not by believing faith.”<sup>6</sup>

### **God’s Punishment**

God became angry with those people because of what they had done and said: “My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years”(Genesis 6:3). All the time God is not happy to His people who mingle in the forbidden marriage, the weakness of the human being in matters of unification to those who detest God is not justifiable.

The indication of the intensive pain of God to the marriage between pure and impure is found in Genesis “The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time” (Gen 6:5). The origin of this unfaithfulness of the people was the mixture of forbidden marriage. “Lord grieved that he had made the man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain” (Gen 6:6). Interfaith in marriage is a sin God hates much because it fazed people to their God. So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created and with them, the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground for I regret that I have made them” (Gen 6:7).

---

<sup>6</sup> John Wesley, “Genesis,” in *Complete Published Phil Rindner Online Publishing, Inc. [Power Bible CD]* (Bronson, MI: Matteson Street, 1999).

There is no excuse for going against God's will because from the beginning the righteous people proved the actions of being faithful to God. Therefore there are no excuses for the today's people to go contrarily to His will. Ellen G. white said:

This nation would follow Abel's example of obedience. Men might have worked out the will of God. They might have obeyed His law, and in obedience, they would have found salvation. God and the heavenly universe would have helped them to retain the divine likeness. Longevity would have been preserved; and God would have delighted in the work of His hands.<sup>7</sup>

The bible has norms to the marriage instructions; mixture with people worship idols is abominable to God. His is always unhappy of marriages between holy and unholy nations; Bible gives warning regarding the people choosing a partner who is not committed to God.

### **The Bible Covenant**

The Bible indicates two kinds of the covenant; God with man and man to man. The scriptures contain several covenants God made with men like the covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham as mark between God and Him (Gen 17:11); the covenant of becoming the father of the nations (Gen 17:4); the covenant to give to Israel as a nation the land of Canaan (Ex 6:4); the covenant of rainbow made with the people of Noah's time to never again destroy the earth by flood (Gen 9:13-16); the Ten Commandments as words of covenant (Ex 34:28); the blood of covenant for salvation and forgiveness of sins (Mt 26:8).

The covenants between two men are also biblical; the covenant between David and Jonathan found in 1 Samuel 18:1-4 is an example of the covenant between a man and a fellow man. This covenant is made through mutual agreement and contains two components: promises and terms. “The promise expresses the

---

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Comprehensive Research Edition., vol. 1 (1953) (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012).

interpersonal commitment of an individual making the commitment. Each pledges to keep the covenant and state what he/she will do. The terms indicate the conditions under which agreement will be fulfilled and the durations of the agreement. Most covenants are accompanied by an oath or vow.”<sup>8</sup> In these days where the signs of the end of the earth are available everywhere, it is quite necessary to understand the marriage as a covenant. Marriage today is taken as a contract between two individuals which is contrarily to the will of God.

### **The Marriage Covenant**

According to the Bible, the covenant of marriage is a personal engagement for life, this covenant is permanent as long as both persons are alive, it cannot be broken; if it's broken it is a personal fail and pain to God. But the contract is between people and is for a short period of time, if the contract is ended, the concerned separate because their covenant is limited.

According to the Bible, marriage covenant is to the husband and wife as well as to God, they pledge the faithfulness, the love and to be loyal to each other. The Bible says “A wife would not leave the partner of her youth and ignore the covenant made before God” (Prov 2:17)

In Malachi 2:14 the Bible emphasizes the need for faithfulness in marriage it says; “Lord is acting as the witness between you (husband) and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.” The covenant of marriage is based on love; Paul stated that in Ephesians 5:28, 29. Husband and wife ought to love each other as long as they alive, He continues to describe that love in this words “Love is patient, love is kind. It

---

<sup>8</sup> Word Search, *7 References Library Software, Preacher Outline and Sermon Bible: Genesis* (Austin, TX: Leadership Ministries, 2005), 12.

does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Cor 13:4-7).

Marriage is like a house. If it is to last, it needs a solid foundation. The bedrock upon which the foundation of marriage must rest is an unconditional, mutual covenant, which allows no external or internal circumstances to put asunder the marital union that God Himself has established.<sup>9</sup>

God has planned the covenant between man and woman to be eternal that is the reason why the prophet Malachi 2:14 reminds about breaking the covenant with the wife of thy youth. However, because of the sin entered the world, the people have changed the will of God and establish the contract in marriage. Another problem arises when partners do not share their possessions at the time of marriage because it is legally accepted or culturally encouraged that they separate their finances and possessions in a time of covenant and some countries have constitutions that allow it. At that time the real problem this couple faces is a lack of understanding of the complete exchange and mutual sharing of everything they have for the rest of their lives.

The intimacy in a marriage is deeper, is an intimate relationship only a husband and wife would experience. Therefore the marriage is beyond the contract two people can agree on. In a mysterious sense, the two would become one—not only physically but spiritually as well. “When Israelite arrived at the Promised Land, the Gibeonites who were an inhabitant of the promise land tricked the Israel to enter into covenant with them”.<sup>10</sup> However, this covenant was not accepted by God, because

---

<sup>9</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Regnerus, “Is Interfaith Marriage Always Wrong, given That the Bible Teaches Us

they would not become one spiritually.

### **Holiness of Marriage**

The Bible is full of examples of right marriages and mistaken marriages in the life of humanity. When God called Abraham in Genesis 12:2 and promised him to become a great nation and become a blessing; Abraham continued to obey God in his ways. In Genesis 14:17, when he comes back from “defeating the Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him”, Abram obeyed God in offering Him, in Genesis 14:18-20, “Abram gave to Melchizedek, the priest of God most high, tithe of everything”.

However, Abraham did not be faithful to God in acts only, but also in marriage.

In Genesis 24:3-4, Abraham asked his servant not to get a wife for his son Isaac among the Canaanites. Henry comment of Genesis 24 says

In life, there is no concern of greater importance to ourselves, to others or to the church of God than marriage. It is, therefore, ought always to be undertaken with much care and prudence, especially with reference to the will of God, and with a prayer for His direction and blessings.<sup>11</sup>

These instructions were observed by the patriarchs like Abraham and Isaac while they selected the wives to their children. Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, and told him “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women” (Gen 28:1, ESV).

In the Old Testament, the Israelites were required to marry with people of same faith. The prophet Nehemiah reminds the Israel people the promise they have with the Lord. “We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the people around us or take their daughters for our son” (Neh 10:30); these rules and regulations

---

Not to Be 'Unequally Yoked?," *Bible and interfaith*, June 2013, 62–63.

<sup>11</sup> Mathew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Genesis to Leviticus*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 2009), 112.

were not Israel initiative, because all commandments come from God, and through His prophets, He communicated to His people.

Any mistake committed in marriage brought consequences to the family, their children, even to their grandchildren. “The consequences of his own marriage with Hagar, and of the marriage connections of Ishmael and Lot, were before him. The lack of faith on the part of Abraham and Sarah had resulted in the birth of Ishmael, the mingling of the righteous seed with the ungodly.”<sup>12</sup> The Bible is a guide to the life of a Christian, mistakes committed in the past would help the people of today to redress their ways. The experience of Abraham from his marriage with Hagar would be the example to all generations. The practice he experienced became to him a lesson that helped him to be careful of the future. When he wanted to choose a wife for his son Isaac, he considered the former experience and date from the righteous people.

The servant of God, Abraham was instructed about the holiness of marriage. This warning should be considered as important information from the heavenly father to all generations. “It declares that the rights and happiness of this relation are to be carefully guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Both Abraham and Sarah distrusted the power of God, and it was this error that led to the marriage with Hagar. God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations, but his faith had not been perfect.”<sup>13</sup>

**Isaac’s pattern.** In Genesis 24, Abraham insisted on the non-Canaanite wife for his son Isaac. This was not a racial preference, but a spiritual consideration. “The Canaanites worshiped Baal and Asherah” (Deut 7:3-5). Therefore, the father of Isaac

---

<sup>12</sup> Ellen G. White, “Patriarchs and Prophets,” Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 175.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *Daughters of God*, complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 28.

does not want his son to deviate from the way of righteousness, because of the wife who does not have customs to obey God.

Isaac was not regarded as a merely pious candidate for matrimony, but as the successor of the promise, who must, therefore, be kept from any alliance with the race whose possessions were to come to his descendants, and which was ripening for the judgment to be executed by those descendants.<sup>14</sup>

The example of Isaac would be a sample to the new generation. His family was characterized by obedience to God and God gives to the family of Isaac the divine benedictions. From the time of the patriarch, the marriage decision was not only for a concerned person, it was a family issue. In many countries the children especially a daughter belongs to the family. Therefore she cannot take a decision on marriage without the approval of the whole family.

It was customary in Hurrian society to consult the bride before completing the marriage plans (Genesis 24:58-60). Also, the brother took the lead in giving his sister in marriage. Note that Laban, Rebekah's brother, was the principal negotiator who represented the family rather than Bethuel, her father (Genesis 24: 50), or her mother (Genesis 24:53, 55). Another view is that Bethuel was simply too old, infirm, or was under his wife's control, as Rebekah later helped Isaac when he arrived at the old age. The description of the family farewell also reflects Laban's leadership; Rebekah demonstrated her faith in Abraham's God by decisively choosing to leave her family to marry Isaac.<sup>15</sup>

The story of how Rebekah became Isaac's wife illustrates much about spouse selection. The story begins with Abraham, the father of all people of faith. Abraham did not allow his servant simply to wander around the countryside looking for a pretty woman for Isaac. Instead, he sent him to a particular place, to a particular group of people. Abraham wanted to ensure that his new daughter-in-law had certain qualities, including spiritual compatibility with Isaac. Therefore the considerations of spiritual matter are essential in the time of looking for a friend for life. "Christians

---

<sup>14</sup> Thomas L. Constable, "Exegesis of the Book of Genesis," *Sonic Light*, 198, accessed February 2, 2015, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

must marry within the Christian territory”.<sup>16</sup>

**Samson’s lesson.** When Samson was born, God made it clear that Samson was to be a Nazarite and would one day take the Nazarite vow. This was God's way of marking people who were completely devoted to him. Some of the basics of the vow included not cutting your hair, not drinking wine or even eating grapes, and not going near anything dead.(Num 6:1-21.)

Along with all his super strength Samson had a super weakness. He made a lot of bad choices when it came to the women he dated and married. In Judges 14:1-3 Samson meets a Philistine girl, the daughter of his worst enemy. And despite his parents' protests, he insists on marrying her.

Later in Judges 16:4, Samson starts dating another Philistine named Delilah. In a behind-the-scenes twist, his new girlfriend is secretly paid off by the Philistine Mafia to discover the secret to his strength. Eventually Samson gives in and reveals the secret. The Bible in Judges 16:16-17 says "with such nagging she prodded him day after day, until he was tired to death. So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother’s womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.

That was all she needed. In Judges 16:18-18 when Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Come back once more; he has told me everything.” So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him and his strength left him.

Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether

---

<sup>16</sup> Don Odunze, *Successful Family Living* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel House, 1993), 2–3.

he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life. Christianity ought to have a controlling influence upon the marriage relation, but it is too often the case that the motives which lead to this union are not in keeping with Christian principles.<sup>17</sup>

Samson's life teaches to young people to be careful during their time of selection of partner, the will of God must be followed in order to avoid the consequences of disobedience.

### **Instructions about Marriage in Israel**

From the time God call Abraham and promised him to be a great nation, He continued to care his generation. While Israel people was in Egypt they do not have the written instructions about marriage, because there was no a prophetic voice for Israel in the slavery of Egypt. However, the time has come and God send Moses to rescue His people from Egypt to the Promised Land, God wants these people to be an example to the surrounding nations. God had promised Israel to become selected and blessed people if they follow the principles and rules given to them. Between those regulations they were also about marriage, and how they can behave in the matter of matrimonial.

**Endogamy in the Old Testament.** Marriage has different customs according to the region, religions countries, and culture.

Endogamy is the custom of marrying only within a group, such as a clan. This practice is contrasted with exogamy, marriage outside the group. Certain groups like Jews Orthodox practiced endogamy between them, as an inherent of their religion and tradition.<sup>18</sup>

God exhorted the Israelites not to intermarry with other nations; this was

---

<sup>17</sup> White, "Patriarchs and Prophets," 563.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence T. Lorimer, "Endogamy," *Encyclopedia Americana International Edition (EAIE)* (New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1994), 340.

because He wanted them to be a holy nation. The surrounding people had not learned to worship the true God and to observe His commandments. Indeed God's purpose of forbidding the union between His nations with others was for His knowledge and will to be known and followed from one generation to another. The reason of practice of endogamy in Israel was to transmit to their customs to their children and Israel would remain a faithful community which obeys God. "This endogamy was supported by both sociological and theological considerations, which biblical writers sometimes enunciate with great vigor."<sup>19</sup> This demonstrates the importance of abstinence of mixing between the believers and those who don't accept God's instructions.

God's idea while refusing his people to marry outside of their tribes and religions, was to prevent them from being corrupted by those pagan people. "Through intermarriage with these people the integrity of Israel's faith could be undermined and ultimately destroyed. This was the supreme biblical argument for endogamy and against exogamy."<sup>20</sup>

**Prohibition as a divine authority.** The Bible prohibition is a divine authority; God said in Leviticus 18:5 "Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD." And in Leviticus 18:30, He said "Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the abominable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile you with them. I am the LORD your God."

The theological reason for the prohibitions is because the forbidden behavior would link Israelites with the Egyptians, the land the Israelites had left, and the Canaanites, whose land the Israelites came to possess. The moral corruption practiced

---

<sup>19</sup> B.H. Endogamy Throckmorton and George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (IDB)* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:281.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 281–282.

by the Canaanites had so dishonored the land that they were to be possessed.

**Joshua's instructions to Israel.** Joshua doesn't encourage such forbidden marriage, he wrote in Joshua 23:12-13 "For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you, and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. But they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you."

Israelites have acquired such behavior and the land in which they were going to occupy, had been defiled and vomited by God. Union with Canaanites had become a great crime against God. Through its polluting influence, Israel had contaminated the relationship with God and had resulted in a divine sentence to Israel community in general.

### **Preservation of God's People in the Old Testament**

Moses, the servant of God, had warned Israel by clear words about the marriage of their descendant. He wrote in Deuteronomy 23:2. "No one born of neither a forbidden marriage nor any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation." Through Moses God had prohibited the descendants of Jacob from cohabitation with the nations who possess the land, because God knew the problem of intermarrying with them to Israel community. Likewise, if they mingle with them the consequences would come fast.

In Judges 3:5-7, the Bible says "and the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and

served their gods. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.”

### **Ezra’s Covenant with Israelites on Guilty of Intermarriage**

God has warned His people not to befriend and mix with the people of the land because they were polluted by the corruption; by detestable practices and filled with an impurity from one end to the other. Further in Ezra 9:12 He reminded Israelites people the instructions of God where He says; “Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance” (NIV).

The Prophet Ezra was a ready scribe in the laws of Moses, after came from Babylon, the Israel people together with the priest came to Ezra and they tell him about the abomination practice Israelites did with the people of the land including marriage. “They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons and have mingled the holy race with the people around them” (Ezra 9:2).

When the prophet of God listened to this he rent his garments because of that unfaithfulness and asked this question to God: “Should we again break your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you had consumed us so that there would be no remnant or survivor?” (Ezra 9:14, NKJV). The Israelites make a covenant before God to send away all non-Israelites women and their children (Ezra 10:3). Ezra put the priests, Levites and all Israelites under vow to send away non-Israelites women and their children (Ezra 10:5). The whole assembly responded with a loud voice: “You are right! We must do as you say (Ezra 10:12).

The above sketch from the life of God's people is intended to point out the consequences of not obeying the Lord's commandments. In the same way to show what danger the people of God would have in forgetting the sacred vocation of their race, through marriages with nations and people of other faith.

### **Faithless Kings and Interfaith Marriage in the Old Testament**

The Kings was the super persons selected by God to lead His people; they would be an example in everything they do because the people would follow their models. Especially the Israel kings were called to be different from other kings because they were leaded special people of God, but also they were anointed to lead these people in truth and in righteousness. However, some Kings of Israel have gone contrary to the will of God, they betrayed their honor and profaned their holiness by the marriage with the wives who were not Israel and who worshiped idols

**Solomon.** In his youth, Solomon loved the Lord; he showed this love by worshiping Him and by walking in the statutes of David his father; in which were the statutes of the Lord, or which he exhorted him to walk in and follow. Therefore, even though King David was faithful to the Lord's instructions, his precedent king Salomon married the foreigner's women including the forbidden nations.

They were from nations which the Lord had instructed the Israelites this, "you must not intermarry with them because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods. Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love" (1 Kings 11:1-2). But after that Solomon married non-Israelite women, these wives turned his heart to the worshiping of false gods "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (1 Kings 11: 4).

During the revival of Nehemiah, he warned the Israel about marriage guidance to their children and said: “And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves” (Neh.13:25-27). This emphasis and prominence were to underline the preservation of relationship in marriage between the chosen nation and irreligious people.

**Ahaziah.** When you related through marriage to the family not obeying God you became like them and follow their customs. When Ahaziah was King in Jerusalem he related in marriage to the house of King Ahab, who was corrupted because of his wife who worshiped Baal. After this relation in marriage, Ahaziah has become also a worshiper of false gods and broken the relationship he had with the God of heaven. The Bible says “He followed in the ways of the house of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was related by marriage to Ahab’s family” (2 Kgs 8:27).

God has made a covenant with Israel be a holy nation; He has set apart this nation to glorify His name. The dwelling of God among this nation was a sign of the love God had for them. The sanctuary set up among them was a tangible sign of His presence He said, “It is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it” (Ps 132:14); but by marrying the foreigners wives they profaned this holiness.

**Ahab.** In 1 King 16, the Bible gives the chronological origin of the king Ahab. He was the son of the king Omri who did evil in the eyes of the Lord and become sinner more that the kings who reign before him. Is one of the kings who provoked the anger of the Lord because of his vanities and idols worship? However, the marriage of Ahab and worshipers of Baal Jezebel is a result of his father who was also

the worshipers of idols.

“Ahab married to Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the Zidonians and went and served Baal and worshiped him.” (1Kgs 16:31). It was not the custom of the king of Israel to marry the wives of pagan people. This was the first time the king of Israel associated by marriage to the pagan's people. Consequently, Ahab becomes proverbial for wickedness. “Her father was the high priest of the Baal. Jezebel's priestly origin may account for the queen's fanatical devotion to spreading false religion in Israel”<sup>21</sup> The nature of human is formed from what he/she always do. The personality of Jezebel was miserable due to the human sacrifices she offered to the idols of her father. “Jezebel was violent and had sanguinary character. She accounts for her great devotion to the gods of her country, and for her determined efforts to establish their impure rites in her husband's kingdom.”<sup>22</sup> After their marriage the king Ahab has become also a servant of idols. The Bible says in 1 Kings 16:33 “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” The Ahab's unfavorable deeds were not only the heredity from his father but also the wrong selection of a wicked wife.

Jezebel introduced into Israel many kinds of witchcraft the word making its debut in the Bible. Jezebel had a stable of 850 prophets in her service; 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah ate at Jezebel's table (1 Kgs 18:19). She is the first queen persecutor against the prophets of God.<sup>23</sup> (2 Kgs 9:22).

God would have been with Ahab if he had walked in the counsels of heaven. But he did not do his. He married a woman given to idolatry. Jezebel had more power over the king than God had. She led him into idolatry and with his

---

<sup>21</sup> Francis D Nichol, “Jezebel versus the Spirit of God [1 Kgsgs 16:31],” in *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, Rev. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976), 2:810.

<sup>22</sup> J. A. Macdonald, *Pulpit Commentaries* (WI:USA: Rio City, 2001), 37.

<sup>23</sup> Victor Yap, “Birds of a Feather Flock Together,” *Epreaching*, accessed October 28, 2014, <http://epreaching.blogspot.co.ke/2007/05/ahab-and-jezebel.html>.

people.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, the Old Testament illustrates marriage as a covenant between a man and woman, but the covenant must not be made blindly but first and foremost the marriage must be a matter of obedience to God. The Old Testament clearly indicates the will of God in matters of marriage and indicates the consequences of those who go contrary to the instructions of God. Shecaniah addressed Ezra and says “we have married foreign women from the people of the land, but even now there is a hope for Israel in spite of this. All Israelites decided to send away all foreigners wives and their children according to the counsel of the Lord. The chapter ten of the book of Ezra illustrates the list of those married the foreigner’s wives, who sends away their wives and their children (Ezra 10:1-44). Likewise the leaders and kings also failed to respect God covenant in marriage and the consequences affected the whole nation.

### **Marriage in the New Testament**

With regard to marriage, the New Testament follows the Old Testament and does not develop a new form of marriage. This is not an exception because some Old Testament teachings and institutions are continued in the New Testament, such as creation, the Decalogue, and the Sabbath.

### **Jesus and the Institution of Marriage in the New Testament**

Jesus at the very outset of His ministry, participated in a wedding (John 2), by participating in this institution of marriage has given approval and blessing to the marriage. In addition, Jesus reference to marriage in various places is linked to the creation account. There are also parables illustrating diverse aspects of marriage; the

---

<sup>24</sup> Nichol, “Jezebel versus the Spirit of God [1 Kgsgs 16:31],” 2:1033.

seriousness of adultery in Matthew 5:27-23; divorce in Matthew 19:1-12, and about wedding garment Matthew 22:1-14.

Jesus restored the creation view of marriage as a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman. He answered and said unto them and says, “Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and the two shall become one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt 19:4-6). Mark also says the same thing in Mark 10:6-9. Many biblical instructions affirm marriage and seek to correct problems which tend to weaken or destroy the marriage covenant.

Jesus also described the message of greatest commandments as a message of love. In these verses, the Bible says: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:38-39).

However, every disciple of Jesus must apply these words to his life. Not only in the matter of evangelization but also when choosing a partner for life. In every action of life, the honor of God must take the first place. It is inauspicious that even Christians today are led by emotional needs and pursuing the worldly mode of romance during their dating time.

### **Paul and Institution of Marriage**

Paul the apostle dealt with marriage and related in various aspects. Paul is one of the writers of the Bible who wrote about marriage, however, his writings must be thought with attention. In one hand he supports the celibacy and to another hand sustains the marriage. Some teachings of Paul seem to support intermarriage, and other teachings condemn intermarriage. Therefore it is necessary to study the

teachings of Paul with wisdom in order to understand it properly. In his letter to the Corinthians, he had said:

If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. If a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him (1 Cor 7:12-13).

Here Paul is ordering husbands and wives not to leave their unbeliever spouses if they want to remain with them. In verse 16, he explained the hope of salvation to the interfaith couples and says, "How do you know if whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?" Here he mentioned the role of each to the salvation of the other. However Paul says I am not the Lord.

Likewise, in the second book to the Corinthians he came again to the marriage but in another angle and says "Do not yoke together with the unbeliever. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness" (2 Cor 6:14, NIV). In this verse, he is not in favor of the union with two people of different beliefs. Nevertheless, if you associate the teaching of Paul with other passages of the Bible, it is not supporting the matrimonial union between two people sharing different beliefs.

To Paul, the relationship of wife and husband should be done in accordance with the scripture. This can help the husband and wife to walk in the spirit of submission and love (Eph 5:21-33). The wife again is expected to submit herself to the authority of the husband out of obedience and love for her Lord. Therefore their focus is not only to their husband but also to the Lord. A husband to be the head does not mean to be superior to wife, but Paul wants to establish order at home. The parallelism of submission and love between husband and wife is a symbol of Christ and the church. He is the head and has authority over his church, as the church

submits to her Master Jesus. It is same as the wife must submit to her husband.

Paul in Ephesians 2:25-29 speak of this kind of love as a command not optional; a husband is required to love his wife as Christ loves His church. This is an order not negotiable, so the creator of man knew the capacity of love man has, to that it is not difficult for a man to manifest such love to his wife because within him there is love. This agape love comes from the heart accompanied with the will and unselfish of a husband who loves his wife. In additional, for the husband to accomplish the required love, he must die to self in order to give unconditional love which comes from above.

This command supports the everlasting nature of the family, because Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, illustrates love as “patient, kind, without envy and boast. It does not dishonor others, not self-seeking, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts always hopes always perseveres” if all these characteristics of love are found in husband's mind it can be easy to him to obey God's command without hesitation and the wife can submit to the husband and accept his authority as the head of the family.

Finally, the love the husband manifests to his wife must be the same as that he has for himself that means he has to treat her as he treats his own body, by feeding her, clothing her, nourishing her and as long as they live. This figurative counsel of Paul has deeply influenced the appreciation of marriage in Christian history.

**Interfaith marriage in the writings of Paul.** Paul in his letter to the Corinthians he told the wives that “they bounded to their husband as long as they alive. But if a husband died she is free to marry anyone else she wishes but only in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39). In this situation Paul wanted to remind the people about the

second chance of marriage; if the first marriage was not according to the will of God, now the second chance must be done in accordance with the law of God. No doubt the restrictions laid upon the ancient people of God contain a lesson for all periods; and the recorded results of forbidden marriages among the Jews would prevent the serious evils which often result from the union between a Christian and unbeliever today.

Unbelievers are those people whom while they professed Christianity still attended the idol feasts and worshiped there. They do not believe in God but in what they worship. Perhaps those are people who had adopted Christianity hypocritically. The Bible recommends not unifying with such person. Not to associate with him/her in any manner. Neither to have no intercourse or fellowship with him of any kind nor to do anything that would seem to acknowledge him as a brother.

For some writers, it does not even allow eating at the same table with them because of different conviction and faith. This refers to the intercourse of common life, and not particularly to the communion. The true Christian was whole to disown such a person, and not to do anything that would seem to imply that he regarded him as a Christian brother. Therefore if the Bible interdicts the relationship of any kind with such person, how much more can be terrible to unite with him in marriage?

**Unmatchable people.** Believers and unbelievers are different in their manner of life, their desire, their preferences, and their believing. In 2 Corinthian 6: 14, two things separate these two people from one part to another. One has righteousness, which means he is the lover of holiness and determined for its fuller possession. The other one has iniquity, because of his nature, his heart is alienated from God, he has preferred to love the sin and walk in it, though possibly external may seem different.

One has the light, illumined by the Holy Ghost, shone upon him by the Light

of the word; characterized by knowledge of the truth he/she is a child of the day. The other because of the choice he/she is characterized by confusion, has rejected or ignores the true light and become subjects of mistakes.

Paul clearly shows the distinction between these two people by their harmonization and commonalities in 2 Corinthians 6:15. One is in Christ, and he is members of Christ body, he has decided to be His follower. The other is a disciple of the enemy, the child of the darkness. In verse sixteen, the manner in which each internalizes Christ in his life makes a distinction between them.

This distinction is based on their characters and compoment, one fever the worship, he is surrendered to God; he is a temple of Holy Spirit and is always depend on to the will of the Lord. Contrarily the pagan is a sinner, he never cares about God guidance he drinks the sin like water. God and devil are different masters. How can such opposites as these be united? Why should righteousness seek an alliance with iniquity? Can light and darkness walk together? “Can Christ and Belial be on terms of concord? How can temples of God and temples of vilest idols be brought to an agreement?” (1 Cor 6:15).

Before having any relationship, it is better to see beyond the present and see ahead of time the result of this relationship. Any friendship has an impact either positive or negative that is why the inquiry is necessary before taking a further step in this relationship. Paul warned the Christians how to behave to people of different faith in different angles.

***In religious fellowship.*** Every Christian who worships in a church, most of the time chooses a friend or partner within that church. However, before choosing a friend particularly a wife or husband, it is necessary to inquire and ask intervention from the father in heaven to come in help during the important time of dating.

The apostle Paul had occasion to warn the Corinthians against fellowship with idolaters. People may be attracted by a religious community in which the truth is not found, but soon or later the consequences came, the truth is greatly obscured or distorted.<sup>25</sup>

Most of the time while preparing for marriage

approval is asked of the earthly father, but the heavenly Father is too commonly forgotten altogether. Marriages too often are not made in heaven, and that is why they have so little heaven about them, the ill-assorted union does not lead so much to Paradise as to misery and the divorce court.<sup>26</sup>

***Dangerous union.*** The consequences of the union with people of different faith, especially in marriage has miserable results. Some of these are loss of peace, loss of holiness, loss of everything most prized ones, and all follow the unequal alliance. Some marry in order to convert, but the easy way is to convert people before marry them. “The peril applies to all cases of unequal yoking. The evil generally triumphs because the good has robbed itself of power by taking a false step.”<sup>27</sup>

***Union expressly prohibited by God.*** The word of God is clear: “Come out from among them, and be separate, said the Lord, and touch no unclean thing” (2 Cor 6:17).” This is a divine order people have to respect. The divine arrange must not replace by the human wisdom. The purpose of God every time is to rescue his people from the danger of disobedience. He expressly prohibited his followers to unite in marriage with unfaithful people who desire to follow world instead of following God.

### **Marriage in Ellen G. White Writings**

Ellen G. White is one of the writers talked about the marriage; her writings are full of the advices that can help everyone who desires to have a peaceful home. In her

---

<sup>25</sup> E. Hurndall, “Unequal Yoking,” *Bible Hub*, accessed December 10, 2014, [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/homiletics/2\\_corinthians/6.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/homiletics/2_corinthians/6.htm).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> F. F Bruce, *The Book of 2 Corinthians*, Pulpit Commentary on the New Testament (Washington, DC: AGE Software Rio, 2001), 34.

many books, she warned the young people how they can select their partners for life with many prayers. She counsels the married on how they can have good families.

However, she always remind about shared faith, and same belief. Her counsels had helped many families who followed them, in the time of dating and in their homes.

Ellen G. White confirms the peace that covers the home while the union is between the same faith by saying:

The blessing of God is in the home where this union shall exist is as the sunshine of heaven. It is the Lord's ordained will that man and wife should be linked together in holy bonds of union, under Jesus Christ, with Him to control, and His spirit to guide. God wants the home to be the happiest place on earth, the very symbol of the home in heaven. Bearing the marriage responsibilities in the home, linking their interests with Jesus Christ, husband and wife may share happiness in this union that angels of God command.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, Ellen White insists on attention everyone should make and said:

Before giving her hand in marriage, every woman should inquire whether he with whom she is about to unite her destiny is worthy. Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish love. Then soul will be knit with soul, and the two lives will blend in harmony.<sup>29</sup>

These two people live together in peace and different souls of the couples become one. Their house will be a solution to the people's problems and blessings to everyone.

### **Marriage is Honorable**

Marriage is one of the ceremonies that gather many people, of the large family as well as the friends of the families. In the time of the wedding, the bride and groom

---

<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1991), 130.

<sup>29</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimony for the Church*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 5:362.

are honored by the participants, but also they are honored by the heaven if their marriage is in conformity with God order. God celebrated the first marriage. This institution has for its originator to the Creator of the universe. That is why marriage must be honorable by every person; marriage is God's gift to human generation and some instructions are set to guide this institution.

White wrote about the wedding Jesus attended in the Cana of Galilee and the miracle He performs to illustrate the value He gives to the marriage.

He who gave Eve to Adam as a helper performed His first miracle at a marriage festival. In the festal hall where friends and kindred rejoiced together, Christ began His public ministry.<sup>30</sup>

This indicates the importance of the marriage; the Bible does not reveal many festivals Jesus attended when He was on this earth. However, He valued marriage and compare it with the relationship he has with the church himself as the bridegroom and the church is a bride.

### **Parents' Responsibility in Marriage**

Parents should never lose sight of their own responsibility for the future happiness of their children. Isaac's respect to his father's judgment was the result of the training that had taught him from his childhood to live a life of obedience.

In ancient times the parents generally made marriage engagements, and this was the custom among those who worshiped God. Isaac, trusting in his father's wisdom and affection, was satisfied to commit the matter to him.<sup>31</sup>

The parents are wise and are trusted people; they have a responsibility to raise their children in accordance with the will of God. The children have the right to ask devices to their parents even in the time of looking a partner. It is the responsibility of

---

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 26.

<sup>31</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarch and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1890), 172.

the parents to direct their children to the right person who is Christian and who will lead the family to God.

The experience of Abraham in mixing with people who feared God and those who feared Him not had become an alert to him for the future time. The Christian today must learn from the experience of other in order to prevent the future crisis. However, the actual problem is the children who took their decision without consulting the parents or other Christian leaders to guide them in their choice. "Even among professed Christians! Young people of today often feel that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted a matter that neither God nor their parents should in any way control."<sup>32</sup> However, their future illustrates the wrong decision they have taken. They would consult the source of knowledge, and the wise people who are experienced to guide their directive for future of their family.

### **Ellen G. White Perception of Interfaith Marriage**

In the life of all human being, marriage is an important action man can think and plan before taking a decision. The scriptures counsel to the Adventist young is to marry with an individual of common faith because it prevents their home from a crisis of misunderstanding.

#### **A Happy or Unhappy Marriage**

The effects of a wrong decision affect even the innocent people, who did not have any role in the action. The first to be affected by the deceitful marriage are the children of the family. Likewise is affecting the well-being of the parents as well,

---

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christian Education*, complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 229.

even though they are responsible for action.

The young people would recognize the consequences of the wrong decision in marriage. Some enter into marriage without inquiring of the results of this action.

White affirms the troubles that come because of this decision. She says

It is from the marriage hour that many men and women date their success or failure in this life, and their hopes of the future life. I wish I could make the youth see and feel their danger, especially the danger of making unhappy marriages.<sup>33</sup>

Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will not advance his plans in this direction without the knowledge that God approves his course. He will not want to choose for himself, but will feel that God must choose for him.<sup>34</sup>

### **Compromising Beliefs**

Every Christian who becomes romantically involved in marriage with non-Christian is compromising his/her belief. Ellen G. White consistently discourages against marriage between the believer and the non-believer, and further cautions against uniting with fellow Christians who have not accepted the truth of this matter.

The happiness and prosperity of the family always depend on the relationship between the spouses, however, the families that not sharing the same understanding of the way to follow in their faith; they are difficult to walk together. Therefore, it is good to agree on the direction before taking the journey. When the married do not agree to the belief, they have diverged even if they are in the same home.

If there is any subject which should be carefully considered, and in which the counsel of older and more experienced persons should be sought, it is the subject of marriage; if ever the Bible was needed as a counselor, if ever divine guidance should be sought in prayer, it is before taking a step that binds persons together for life.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> White, "Patriarchs and Prophets," 39.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ellen G. White, *Message to the Young People* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1890),

Marriage is a stage of life every person thinks about it even before it happened, from the adolescence the majority of young people begun to guess how their family will be. However, they forget the most needed, which is to inquire the divine intervention in every step of marriage.

The ultimate purpose of God in creating marriage was to unite the people who will have a better life in this world and who can prepare their descendants to meet the requirement of God's word and to become the heritage of eternal life. However, the marriage between the people of different faith has become a handicap to the fulfillment of the divine plan. The Christian life is only possible if the couple put together their effort to accomplish the will of God and characterized by the common goal of inheritance of eternal life. "For these reasons, the Church strongly discourages marriage between a Seventh-day Adventist and a member of another religion and strongly urges its pastors not to perform such marriages."<sup>36</sup>

### **Summary of the Chapter**

Marriage, as instituted by God in the Garden of Eden, is one of the institutions established from the beginning to be the origin of reproduction and the fulfillment of the earth. The Bible states the marriage as a covenant between husband and wife, only death can separate them. For the marriage to be successful, each of the partners must fulfill his/her requirements including dying to self, obeying God's commandments, giving up independent living for the good of the other, laying down his/her life for the other, and placing the interest of his/her partner over his/her own.

Old and New Testament, as well as Ellen G. White, support the marriage in

---

445.

<sup>36</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990), 147.

which the partners are Christians who fear and obey God. This helps them to have the same understanding of faith and to raise their children in harmony with the divine will. Marriage is a tool of union between families and is a symbol of relationship Christ has with His church as Bride and Groom. It is important to know that God created man and woman with equal worth but different roles and responsibilities for complementarities of couples in marriage. Therefore before taking the decision of marriage each one must take time to pray and ask God to choose for him/her, a partner for life of the same faith, who respect the Bible and wish to be guided by the Holy Scripture in order to have a good family on earth but the family which will enter the kingdom of heaven.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Marriage is a significant event in the life of every person. The Bible presents marriage as an important stage of life. It is appropriate for every young person of marriageable age, to think of who will be his/her companion for life. This event involves all members of the family because consequences of marriage affect the family at large. Since choosing a partner is a precious decision in the life of every individual, this decision should be a careful process through series of steps. Some factors must be considered during the time of choosing a spouse such as faith of whom you are planning to marry; his/her appearance, social class, financial status, educational background, characteristics, and relationship if they are matching with the will of other half.

The selection of a partner is an important step in the life of young people. This stage must be done with attention, with vision, with kindness and with intensive prayer. The young people today are busy with social media and are where they getting their habit, they do not have time to read the Bible and other inspires books. Ellen G White's suggestion is to carefully investigate the one whom plan to marry with and see if he/she will contribute in happiness or inharmonious and miserable. This question would be asked before further decision. "Will this union help me heavenward? Many young men and women close the history of their religious

experience and usefulness during the alliance of marriage and become lost to Christ.”<sup>1</sup>  
A sincere analysis is needed for every young man and woman to study someone who is going to be his/her partner and ask adviser to the wise people of the church and of the family before the final decision.

Therefore in this chapter, the focus is to study the fundamentals factors leading to interfaith marriage and aspects of partner selection on one hand, and which advice the Holy Scripture, the writings of Ellen. G. White and other writers give on the other hand. The researcher assesses the contemporary view of other religions on interfaith marriage, effect of marriage based to the selection of spouse, and the reason why selection today is founded on materials, professionals, occupational, and external appearance rather than internal qualities appreciated by God.

Many reasons have been suggested to explain the rise of interfaith marriages, such as globalization and increasing secularization. Young people may grow up with neighbors of different faiths and cultures, they come across more at school, university and work, and they travel more widely than their parents did. In addition, they may be less involved in organization of religion, and even if they do belong to one, they may question both its rules and the authority of religious teachers and leaders.

However, interfaith marriage is not confined to young people; more mature couples, including those who are marrying for a second or third time, may have partners of a different faith. Religious leaders and families are troubled because they loss the young people from their faith communities for the reason of marriage.

---

<sup>1</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 65, 66.

## Marriage in Scripture

Every Christian believes the Bible as source of knowledge and guide for traveler of heaven.

The Bible is the word of God, which is powerful and life-transforming, it is known that those who are willing to be seriously engaged by scripture will increasingly know and understand God's will for marriage and the family.<sup>2</sup>

The scriptures confirm marriage as divine institution, they validate as an important ceremony in the lives of human beings. Marriage, however, began with God. "It was established by God at the beginning of human history when He "created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). As the Creator of marriage, God has the right to tell us which principles should govern our marital relationships."<sup>3</sup>

The Old Testament illustrates the marriage as foundation for the family. "God creation of Eve demonstrates that God's plan for Adam's marriage"<sup>4</sup> Many verses of the Old Testament and New Testament talk about marriage and point out how the marriage should be. The Bible reveals the characteristics of a good partner, responsibilities of each person in the family and the role of a husband and wife in the family (Eph 5:22-33).

The scripture illustrates marriage as permanence covenant between partners. The Bible in Mark 10: 9 say "Therefore what God joined together, let no one separate". The insistence of the scripture about permanent live between the couples, it's an evidence of how the married must be patience in whatever happens in their live. The study of the character of the partner is necessary to minimize the

---

<sup>2</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger and David W. Jones, *God Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (New York, NY: Library of Congress, 2010), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Kostenberger and Jones, *God Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 25.

consequences that may come after marriage. However for the home to be durable it requires forgiveness between partners, because each is mistaken, so to forgive one another is one of the secret of success in the home.

Paul in Hebrew 13:4 says that “Marriage must honor by all, and must be kept pure.” The members of the family must be part of marriage engagement, because the husband or wife who is coming to the family will be one of them, and must be respected as it is God order; if the new couple are not supported by the large family, the newly member fail to achieve the purpose of the family.

The Bible support marriage of people share the same understanding of belief, it was not God’s desire to unite two people who cannot enjoy the goodness of the scripture together in the family. It is in the home that most of the life is lived and the place where Christian teachings are carried out.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore the Bible never supports the marriage between people of different religion, because God knew that the joy of the family may be disturbed by different understanding of faith.

### **Marriage and Future Hope**

From the beginning Lord created the human with freedom of choice; every individual would decide how to use this freedom. “Therefore the people would use their liberty to choose good over evil, right over wrong, virtue over vice.”<sup>6</sup> As the scripture is eternal, marriage is also eternal for those who believe in God. Marriage is the source of joy, the beginning of a new life between the married but also place where members of the family learn to serve God.

---

<sup>5</sup> Annie Cressman, *Marriage and the Home* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel House, 2005), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey R. Holland’s, “Faith, Family, and Religious Freedom,” *IDS*, accessed March 28, 2015, <https://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/faith-family-and-religious-freedom?lang=eng>.

Home must be a place where a husband and wife share together the word of God every day, to strength their relationship with Him. The secret of success in the family is a regular prayer meeting at home; if the family is not sustained by God it cannot persist. In Jeremiah 29: 12, the Bible assures the Christian to call upon to God. “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.” Always God answer to the prayer request of His children, but when a family does not have the same understanding of God’s word, they cannot pray together, and they destination is divergent.

Most of the time when members of the family share different faith, it become hard to worship together, and it’s rare to have the hope for the future. “Edenic model shows that God ordained marriage must be an intra-faith relationship”<sup>7</sup> Marriage is the only holy ritual that can exist in the human live; and it can be an obstacle for the future of the whole family if it is not well managed. Therefore for the families to have hope for the future, they must share the same faith and the same direction of hereafter.

### **Factors Influencing the Choice**

Successful and happy marriage must be a principle idea of every person involved in marriage.

Any marriage involves the joining of two totally different people, but there should be some distinct similarities as well: common interest, common hobbies, common faith or similar political views.<sup>8</sup>

A normal person would not neglect such important things. Some people marry for spite, however the wise decision of marriage it necessary because it affects not

---

<sup>7</sup> Koranteng-Pipim, Samuel., *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 490, accessed November 10, 2016, <http://www.drpipim.org/worship-aamp-church-growth-contemporaryissues-48184-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music-past-and-present.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Myles Munroe, *The Purpose and Power of Love and Marriage* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2002), 69.

only the couple but the entire family suffer the consequences of wrong decision, especially the children.

The marriage covenant ought to be built upon love. Paul in Ephesians 5:28, 29 and Titus 2:4 confirm this love. “Therefore husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. The husband must care and feed his wife as Christ does for His church.” Such love enables husband and wife to accept each other unconditionally, to share in each other's pain and failures, to rejoice in each other's victories and accomplishments.

This love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres”<sup>9</sup>. Therefore since marriage may be likened to a house which needs a solid foundation to stand, “the bedrock upon which the foundation of marriage must rest is an unconditional, mutual covenant, which allows no external or internal circumstances to put asunder the marital union that God Himself has established.”<sup>10</sup>

But today certain factors influence choice of a partner for marriage. These are according to the will and condition of each person; this is where everyone must have wisdom. Some of these factors are the following.

**Personality despair.** This deal with the natural characteristics of an individual; a husband or wife need to understand the personal character of his/her spouse. These characteristics include personality type, dressing habits, likes and dislike, attitude to life, level of aggressiveness, assertiveness, and ambitions.

**Financial factor.** Today, finance has become the principal factor in determination of a partner. The valuable materials possession of an individual,

---

<sup>9</sup> Department of Family Ministries Seventh-day Adventist Church, “Divorce and Remarriage in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Divorce and Remarriage Study Commission Report,” *Family Adventist*, last modified 2012, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.family.adventist.org/home---divorce-and-remarriage-in-the-seventh-day-adventist-church---divorce-and-remarriage-study-com.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 28.

plentiful amount of resources, the accounts in the Banks have become basic factors of good spouse, but this is not the factor that determines the success of marriage. “From a considerable evidence of the role of economic factors in family relationship formation, societal economic downturns are associated with increases in divorce and separation.”<sup>11</sup> In the Christian way the genuine love and spiritual qualities must be the first and fundamental factors of choice.

**Family factor.** The family consideration, has becomes also a central deliberation by many people because of world economic and life situation of today. A Christian lady can remain at her parent’s home lacking anyone to marry because of their poverty, while a non-Christ rich lady may have a problem of choice because of many boys suggesting to marry her.

**Educational factor.** An individual’s status or achievement in life is largely determined by the level of education and skill acquisition. “Marriage which is essential aspect of human life is also influenced by education and skills.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore education background consideration in these last days has become one of the major factors of choice in many societies. Today either educated or non-educated people desire to marry educated ones than Christian, and most of the time the result for such families are divorce after few days of marriage.

**Physical appearance.** One of the foremost factors of choice for many persons looking for marriage partner is physical appearance. The physical attraction of the opposite sex is considered as principal factor of choice. The external appearance

---

<sup>11</sup> Oladeji D. Ariyo, “Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Mate Selection among Adolescents of Reproductive Age in Nigeria,” *Questia*, accessed May 22, 2015, <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-3606168861/socio-economic-factors-influencing-mate-selection>.

<sup>12</sup> Lasiele A. Yahaya, *Marriage, Sex and Family Counseling: Choice of Spouse* (Ilorin: University of Unilorin Press, 2008), 68.

especially to the ladies has become important element of attractiveness. “The idea that physical beauty is the number one criterion on which to base the choice of a wife even pervades the thinking of some young men of Seventh-day Adventist faith.”<sup>13</sup>

Beauty is a gift from God; indeed, it is necessary to inquire “Is beauty related to happiness in marriage?”<sup>14</sup> Beauty is one of the most precious gifts that a woman brings to a man, but men must not be attracted only by the external look, and forgets to consider the inner splendor. However in the book of Proverbs 6:23-26 the Bible warns young men not to be attracted by evil women. Where it says:

For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the ways to life. Keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife; do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes. For the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life.

“The first principle that proverbs give to men, therefore is to be on their guard when confronted with physical beauty of a woman.”<sup>15</sup> What proverbs tell the young men is that a man should not allow his flesh alone to do the choice. “Instead of considering physical attraction it is wise to give at least some thought to Christian character and focus on those women who give the evidence of fearing God.”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, every reasonable man and woman would protect himself and the family by avoiding the attraction of external beauty and will, but desire above all God guidance.

The fundamental mistake the son of God made in marrying the son of men in Genesis 6:1,2 was not that they admired beauty; admiration of beauty itself is not commendable, their error was they admired physical beauty only. They

---

<sup>13</sup> Harold Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1966), 78.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Richard D. Phillips and Sharon L. Philips,  *Holding Hands: Holding Heart* (Phillipsbourg, NJ, 2006), 93.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

trusted their eyes rather than their brains in selecting their wives.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, a Christian man and woman are advised to choose not only by eye but also by spiritual choice.

### **Important Factors to Consider in Marriage**

Every person before planning marriage set the criteria for the partner; however, there are factors a Christian person may consider before engagement in marriage.

**Age factor.** Age is an important factor but many people forget to consider. However, it should be considered in marital choice. Even though some people do not accept age as barrier to marriage but the fact remains that a big age gap could be a source of marital conflict.

**Faith factor.** The most and very important in choice of marriage should be faith because marriage involves daily interaction, fellowship, mutual understanding and planning. Obviously, this can be severely undermined if the two people concerned share different faith. Some may enter into marriage thinking that they will change the other partner in the cause of marriage, but the result becomes unhappy marriage.

Religion is an essential part of a believer's life in influencing the adherence behavior. "This aspect is of vital importance for the success of married life as religious beliefs imply a philosophy which determines our life style."<sup>18</sup> For instance, what an individual does, says, wears, eats, and drinks may be determined by his/her faith. "Therefore, in order to promote marital harmony and stability, it is better for the husband and the wife to share a common faith. This arrangement would prevent

---

<sup>17</sup> Harold Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 82.

<sup>18</sup> Julian Melgosa and Annette D. Melgosa, *To Couples: Enjoying a Stable, Lifelong Relationship* (Madrid, Spain: Safeliz, 2012), 29.

unnecessary conflict and give the children a common focus.”<sup>19</sup>

Maliki Agnes Ebi in her survey found out that “religion is one factor that is considered important. It is important for individuals who desire to marry to have the same religious belief since differences in religious belief may be a disruptive force in their marriage life, while religion could be a binding force to hold marriage.”<sup>20</sup> This indicates the important of faith in the decision of marriage.

Some factors are necessary as sign for the permanence in marriage. “Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church.”<sup>21</sup> So the closeness and good relationship at home is an indicator of good relationship the people have with their creator.

**A fervent Christian.** One of the vital factor to look in a partner is a passionate person who love Jesus, a zealous person who is fervent believer committed to the church activities and enthusiast Christian.

Christian courtship should provide for religious activities together. Such activities may include attending religious service. They may include participation in shared faith activities, cooperation in mission volunteer and Sabbath school programs, and cooperation in other church functions.<sup>22</sup>

Many people consider materials as important factor in the house; however, the most important is a devoted Christian spouse. The materials may come due to the effort of the members of the family, but a really Christian spouse is precious than gold. The Bible supports this in Proverb 19:14 “House and wealth are inherited from

---

<sup>19</sup> Yahaya, *Marriage, Sex and Family Counseling: Choice of Spouse*, 65.

<sup>20</sup> Maliki Ebi, “A Determinants of Mate Selection Choice Among University Students in South-South Zone of Nigeria” (presented at the Paper Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 1994), 171.

<sup>21</sup> Oliver and Willie, “Strong Families: How Are Family,” 16.

<sup>22</sup> Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 102.

parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord". So a partner of good character is valuable than anything else in the house because many families are wealthy but they do not have peace in their houses because of partners who are not fervent Christians.

### **Marriage and Parents Support**

Christian young people should give an important consideration to the parent's advices regarding how to choose a life friend. They must understand the counsels of the parents about which qualities are to be considered before taking final decision of special friends.

If more young people would trust their parents' judgment more and their own youthful inclination less, there would be fewer disappointment in marriage. Christian young person should respect the counsel of his parents in this most important decision of life.<sup>23</sup>

They have to consider these counselors not only because the judgment of parents are more mature and more conservative, but also because the parents may be trusted to be wise enough than these young people, and they can derive their motives from a sincere effort to prevent their sons and daughter from the problems of the future.

Young men and women sometimes manifest great independence upon the subject of marriage, as though the Lord had nothing to do with them, or they with the Lord, in that matter; and that it was purely a matter of their own, which neither God nor their parents should in any wise control.<sup>24</sup>

The independence and freedom of choice to the young people is necessary, but some issues need counselors because of the importance of them.

As you grow older, it's natural for you to want to become more independent and make more of your own decisions, but when it comes to serious and consequential decisions, its wise ideas to talk to someone who has more life experience than you do. Some experts at life are a member of the clergy, a

---

<sup>23</sup> Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 30,31.

<sup>24</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, complete Published Ellen G White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 1:142.

parent, or an expert in the particular field you're concerned about.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, instead of considering what people see outside as physically beauties they need to consult their parents to balance their desire with parents' aspirations.

One circumstance in which a young person must use his own judgment in preference to the counsel of his/her parents, is when the parents are not completely informed of some defect in the friend's character.<sup>26</sup>

Some people neglect parents contribution and attracted by external factors, however they are not as necessary as inside character of persons who have been raised in Christian home and educated to honor and fear God by the parents who honor and fear God. Consequently, more important, more beautiful, more vital and central of important factor to consider would be Christian character of same faith.

Every human is fallible and mistaken. A young person, because of his poor or mistaken choices, should consult a senior person who is wiser than him before making decisions he is uncertain about. So the assistance of parents is needed for children to make desirable decisions.

As a person grows older, it is natural for him to learn to make choices and know how to become more independent, but when it comes to serious and consequential decisions, its wise ideas to talk to someone who has more experience. Some experts in life are leaders of the church, teachers, parents, or an expert in the particular field you're concerned about.<sup>27</sup>

Today, because of what some young generation called development, they consider their parents and other old people behind the progress and dislike their insistence. They don't consult them even on serious matter regarding their special friendship.

---

<sup>25</sup> Lincoln E. Steed, *Winning: A Drug-Free Tomorrow* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2000), 79.

<sup>26</sup> Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 32.

<sup>27</sup> Steed, *Winning: A Drug-Free Tomorrow*, 79.

They do not to realize that parents have a just basis for being concerned in the future of their sons and daughters. Having the advantage of longer experience and broader perspective, parents desire to protect their children from the consequences of hasty decisions.<sup>28</sup>

As it is required in the commandments of God, children must obey their parents for them to live long. Eph 6:1 also says “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”. Children may come when the parents called them, they may go where they send them, they must do what they are asked to do, but they should not do what they are forbidden to do. However, all these would be done cheerfully from a principle of love. “It is clear that the relationship between a young person and his parents, as he/she reaches the logical time for marriage, is an important relationship”<sup>29</sup> The advices would be directed by a good spirit and consent between parents and children, in order to reach the object with approbation. Therefore for this reason young people would be accountable for all the consequences that may come after neglecting the advice of their wise parents and prudent old people.

The realities prove that the interfaith marriage is practicable in every society; either Christian or pagan. Whatever reason behind the word of God has never allowed the interfaith relationship in the people of God. God knew that such marriage will have the negative impact to the home made, to their family as well as to the society in general. Even though the reality shows that consequences are frequent to the interfaith families than monogamous family, the exceptions are available to the interfaith couples who are well in their domestics and each of them is faithful to God. Most of the time all depends on the covenant they have made concerning their family relationship.

---

<sup>28</sup> Harold Shryock, *Happiness for Husbands and Wives*. (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1946), 21.

<sup>29</sup> Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 34.

Whatever the case, experience has proved that interfaith marriages are generally unhappy with lower rates of marital satisfaction, and often more unstable, with particularly high divorce rates when certain religious combinations are involved.<sup>30</sup>

That is the reason why the advice to the young people is to marry within the church than to go outside the church. It is difficult to raise children who practice two different faiths. The children are confused on which faith to be part of, not because they have chosen to be in that state, but because their parents do not look beyond the present life to consider their destiny. Therefore, the wise advices of the parents are quite necessary before the children suffer to the consequence of incorrect decision.

### **Contemporary Religions Views on Interfaith Marriage**

The role of the religion in the life of every person in the world is inevitably. The majority of the people all over the world have the religions or denominations they worship in. “Religious diversity is increasingly affecting and changing everything. If people want to take diversity and religious commitment seriously, then there is a need for comparative beliefs.”<sup>31</sup>

The understanding of interfaith marriage is different according to religious persuasions, some religions prohibit mixed marriage. Others seem to oppose inter-marriage but allow it with some conditions or with some limits. Several religions have left this issue vague; others allow it entirely but with some requirements. This undetermined situation of marriage in different denominations seems confusing to the uniformity in matters of interfaith marriage.

---

<sup>30</sup> William H. Willimon, “Interfaith Marriage: A Reality Check,” *NCBI*, accessed March 28, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7573787>.

<sup>31</sup> Francis S.J Clooney, “Offerings on Interfaith Dialogue: Religious Diversity and Comparative Theology,” *Harvard Divinity School Office of students life*, May 2014, 6–8.

“Different denominations have diverse understanding on marriage, interfaith marriage, family and the vow of engagement during marriage ceremony.”<sup>32</sup> The understanding of interfaith marriage is different according to the belief or denominations. Some denominations allow interfaith marriage and obligate requirements to the couple. Other denominations allow their members to freely marry from other faith. However few religious denominations strictly prohibit their members to marry from other faith.

### **View of Islam**

The Muslim people are very strict to their faith. Islam is one of the denominations which are not flexible to their belief. Especially the Muslim girls are strict to their faith, she cannot accept to marry to another denomination even though she does not have a Muslim man. However, some exceptions are remarkable where one can find a Muslim who marries a non-Muslim.

According to a broad consensus religiously sterile, a Muslim woman is formally forbidden to marry a non-Muslim man regardless of his religion, while a Muslim man is allowed to get married to a non Muslim woman, mainly a Christian or a Jew, considered by the Islamic schools as “People of the Book. Allah says: “Do not marry idolatresses till they believe; and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatress even though she would please you; and do not marry idolaters till they believe, and certainly a believing slave is better than an idolater, even though he would please you. These invite to the Fire, and Allah invites to the Garden and to forgiveness by His grace, and makes clear His revelations to mankind so that they may remember.”Qur’an 2:221.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Stuart M. Matlins and Arthur J. Magida, *How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook* (Andover, MA: Skylight Publishing: Sunset Farm Office, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Admin, “What Does Qur’an Say about the Interfaith Marriage?,” *Asma-Lamrabet*, last modified 2013, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.asma-lamrabet.com/articles/what-does-the-qur-an-say-about-the-interfaith-marriage>.

## **View of Catholic Church**

The Catholic Church is large church in all over the world, sometime is difficult to control all members of the church, even in the case of marriage. The Catholic members are ones of the church members marry more to the other churches.

However, the Catholic Church has rules that guide their members in the marriage matter.

According to the interview with a Catholic priest; the Roman Catholic Church requires permission for mixed marriages, to any unions between Catholics and baptized non-Catholics, but for Orthodox or protestant baptized member, such marriages are valid, though illegal, without this specific permission. Previously, the baptized non-Catholic partner had to agree to raise the children as Catholics, but under current rules only the Catholic spouse must promise to do so.<sup>34</sup>

## **View of Orthodox Church**

The view of Orthodox Church in the matter of different faith marriage is common as for many Christian churches, to them “marriage is a sacrament of union between man and woman, who enter it to be mutually complemented and to propagate the human race.”<sup>35</sup> However their belief accepts marriage as tool to facilitate the spiritual journey in the family and every member of the family contribute for spiritual development including the children of the family. For these reasons, “Orthodox Canon Law discouraged intermarriage of any type. Moreover, faithful Orthodox who chooses to intermarry forfeited their sacramental privileges.”<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless the conditions of marriage between Orthodox regular member

---

<sup>34</sup> Priest of Nyamirambo , Saint Chrles Lwanga parish of Nyamirambo, interviewed by the author, Kigali , 05 March 2015

<sup>35</sup> Matlins and Magida, *How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook*, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, “Interreligious Marriage Questions –FAQ,” *Goarch*, accessed February 22, 2015, <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese>.

and member from other church must be fulfilled before the marriage take place.

According to the belief of Orthodox Church,

interfaith marriage is acceptable if their wedding take place in an Orthodox Church, and the non-Orthodox Christian partner needed to be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and water, and the couple needed to agree to try and raise their children in the Orthodox Church.<sup>37</sup>

After all the orthodox church do not accept the interfaith marriage, because when a person baptized in the church, is no longer member of the former church but of new church.

### **View of Seventh-day Adventist Church**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian, a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church.<sup>38</sup>

Religion affiliation is a most important consideration for those contemplating marriage. Families that worship together usually stay together. According to the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, the Seventh day Adventist Church believes that marriage was divinely created. “However the Church recognizes that it is the prerogative of each individual member to make the final decision relative to the choice of a marriage partner.”<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, “Interreligious Marriage Questions –FAQ,” *Goarch*, accessed February 22, 2015, <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese>.

<sup>38</sup> Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1988), 294.

<sup>39</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*,

In addition it is clear that if a person decides to choose a partner from other church, he/she must aware that “the Seventh-day Adventist pastor, who has covenanted to uphold the principles outlined above, should not be expected to perform the marriage. If a member does enter into such a marriage, the church is to demonstrate love and concern with the purpose of encouraging the couple toward complete unity in Christ.”<sup>40</sup> The Seventh - day Adventist Church teaches its members to marry within their church, where a husband and the wife have the same understanding of scripture. The similarity in belief is the foundation of hope for eternal life.

### **Adventist Position on Interfaith Marriage**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church position of interfaith marriage is similar to Biblical advices on matter of union between people of different faith. The Seventh-day Adventist fundamental Belief explains the commitment of marriage and its parallelism, and says:

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian, a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith.<sup>41</sup>

Marriage reflects the image of Jesus as husband and church as wife, their union require both of them to be holly. Therefore the Adventist members must be holly to God’s commandment before they married.

The Seventh-day Adventist annual world council of Bangalore in 1993, the closing statement clearly explains the about interfaith marriage and clearly arrive to

---

148.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Fundamental Belief* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990), 22.

the action of marriage between two people in different faith. The statement is

Adventist Ministers should not perform the marriage ceremony if they feel that the couples are incompatible. Ministers should never perform any wedding that they believe is violating the principles of God's kingdom. Let us continue to teach the principles so important for a happy marriage.<sup>42</sup>

God has planned the covenant between man and woman to be eternal, but the results of today's marriage is different from God's plan. Many congregations have accepted the union between partners of different faiths, and this accelerates the rate of divorce all over the world. "The intimacy in a marriage is more than a contract. In a mysterious sense, the two become one not only physically but spiritually as well. Marriage is not a merely social or biological construct, but an icon of the union between Christ and the church. Both husband and wife is held accountable to the community for the marriage itself."<sup>43</sup> So this intimacy would be eternal as it was God desire when He created the first family to be the model of all generation.

Marriage covenant is a covenant of faith because no Christian spouse knows for sure how their marriages are going to work out. What spouses can know for sure is whether or not they have solemnly committed themselves to God for a lifelong covenant partnership in which they shall belong together as long as they both shall live.<sup>44</sup>

There are decisions a person can take for himself for their life of partnership according to his will, but the desire of living in harmony with the will of God imply other factors; remember marriage is not part time covenant, the Bible instruction require the married to be together as much as they are still alive.

The Bible and the spirit of prophecy are full of advices and instruction about interfaith marriage, from Genesis to revelation the Bible does not allow the children

---

<sup>42</sup> J. David Newman, "Marrying No-Adventist," *Ministry Magazine*, February 1994, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Regnerus, "Is Interfaith Marriage Always Wrong, given That the Bible Teaches Us Not to Be 'Unequally Yoke?," 62–63.

<sup>44</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 42.

of God to be mixed with the worshipers of idols, and the unfaithful people of this world. The voice of God through Ellen G. White also refutes and warns those who are in the way to heaven, not to mix themselves with those who do not have willing to follow God's commandments. "A family of Judah had connected themselves with the enemies of God, and the relation had proved a snare to the people. Many others also united in marriage with the heathen."<sup>45</sup> White makes more clarification where she said: "Many who profess to love and fear God choose to follow the bent of their own minds rather than take counsel of Infinite Wisdom."<sup>46</sup> In this perspective the people neglect the good time to request from God, rather than to be directed by their minds. The problem is that even in the Christian churches they are not inquiring from God and are following their own ideas.

Therefore, the covenant of permanent life and success between partners can only be done by a partner of common faith. God wants marriage to endure and the family to fulfill the divine plan. While the member of the family are bound together by the same faith, their home has high chances to be happy than those sharing different values and ways of life.

### **Interfaith Marriage and Its Challenges**

The way in which a concept is defined strongly influences its use in research. Many people define interfaith marriage on the basis of their interest. Faith can be a belief or cognitive leading to the conclusions of the minds; feeling or affective emotions of the hearts. Interfaith marriage is union in marriage between two persons share different faith.

---

<sup>45</sup> Ellen G. White, *Southern Watchman: Heathen Plots*, complete Published Ellen G White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 61.

This part discusses the interfaith marriage, its understanding and challenges, especially with focus on the Seventh-day Adventist Church belief which discourage its members from being united in marriage with the members of other faith. However, if is that what about the Adventist members who marry outside;

if an SDA minister did not conduct the wedding for an Adventist marrying a non-Adventist, would Adventists be comfortable with a Buddhist priest conducting the marriage service for an Adventist?<sup>47</sup>

Interfaith marriage has become a normal practice in different religions and denominations; the culture of marrying between people of different faith becomes practice even in the Adventist Church. However “it is a dangerous thing to form a worldly alliance. Satan well knows that the hour that witnesses the marriage of many young men and women closes the history of their religious experience and usefulness. They are lost to Christ.”<sup>48</sup>

Even though many people are involved in this kind of marriage, implication of it comes soon or later. Some teachings of Paul talk about marriage of unbeliever. But Paul specifies when this is acceptable “if any of brothers has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.”(1 Cor 7:12). And in this verse Paul’s emphasis is to prevent the divorce. Similarly the husband may not divorce his wife if he receives the message of salvation while living together.

The Bible limits this condition to when both the husband and wife are still alive. “The point of the illustration is that death and death alone releases a person from the bond of marriage.”<sup>49</sup> Paul says “A woman is bound to her husband as long as

---

<sup>47</sup> Koranteng-Pipim, Samuel., *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church*, 482.

<sup>48</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 66.

<sup>49</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 25, 26.

he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free marrying anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.” (1 Cor 7:39,). “Paul’s illustration sheds light on his view of marriage as a lifelong covenant which can be terminated only by death.”<sup>50</sup> Indeed since the seekers after God join the church, some may already be married and the spouse not wishing to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That person who accept the Adventist message may not divorce his spouse because is non-believing spouse or of other faith.

When the young single Seventh-day Adventist is contemplating marriage, the church position is in same line with what God instructed the Israelites, they must not go out of their belief. Marry within the Faith/Beliefs is rule given by God to those who choose to be His people. “God intended marriage to be as permanent as Christ’s relationship with the church.”<sup>51</sup> If a young person is rose in a Seventh-day Adventist family, it is expected that he/she had been made aware of those dangers by his family as it was same for Israel family. The children of Israel would taught by their parents the will of God to their nation.

However, since all persons have freedom to choose even the partner in marriage, the church advises his members to follow scripture. Each individual has the right to makes the choice according to he/she is will, but reap and consequences of that decision comes later when a person begun to experience the benefits or consequences of good or wrong decision.

---

<sup>50</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 26.

<sup>51</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, 149.

## Implication of Interfaith Marriage

Interfaith marriage has implication to the family of those involved. The formed family itself suffers the consequences of that decision within, because of different religious practice. ‘In intermarriage where partners follow separate religions, strong faith differences can complicate ordinary relationship issues and discord. Under stress, tolerance can erode, particularly if one religious approach is upheld as right, true, or morally superior’<sup>52</sup> “When marital partners are from different religious background, mutuality of understanding and negotiating differences pose a greater challenge.”<sup>53</sup> Lack of freedom of worship to some and sometime paganism are some of the challenges. To the large family the pressure of their in law and other relatives require raising their grandchildren in the faith they accept, may disturb the relationship of the married. “Interfaith couples can be reluctant to talk about the challenges because they fear hearing their spouses say I told you so”<sup>54</sup>

The churches suffer to the decision of the young people who decide to marry other faith. For the church to gain a member it requires effort, when a member goes outside of the church due to marriage it’s a loose of soul. The faithful young women of the church lack Adventist to marry them, while young men gone outside of Adventist Church.

Therefore the concern of the church is to limit union between partners that do not share a common faith, because interfaith marriage pose serious problem for the people involved, their family as well as their religious communities. Marriage

---

<sup>52</sup> Froma Walsh, “Spiritual Diversity: Multifaith Perspectives in Family Therapy,” *Family Process*, 2010, 339.

<sup>53</sup> Patrice E. Heller, “The Influence of Religious and Ethnic Differences on Marital Intimacy: Intermarriage versus Intra-Marriage,” *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 242 (April 2000): 241–252.

<sup>54</sup> Willimon, “Interfaith Marriage: A Reality Check.”

involving a common faith in Jesus Christ, present a fair number of problems and difficulties. Interfaith marriage presents more complicated issues before and after marriage. Riley demonstrates the consequences of interfaith marriage and affirms as origin of divorce and more risk. “In her survey in 2001; 35,000 respondents found that people in mixed-religion marriages were three times more likely to be divorced or separate than those who were in same-faith marriages.”<sup>55</sup>

The engagement of marriage should be meditated carefully before taking final decision, because marriage is an engagement of all life. However some “instead of promising faithfulness to each other “till death do us part,” they pledge to remain together “as long as we both shall love.”<sup>56</sup> Both the young man and the lady should carefully examine their conscience and see if they can unite with each other as long as they still alive.

### **Raising Children in Interfaith Family**

After marriage God provides benediction of children because the Bible in Psalm 127:3 says: “the sons are heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him.”

Religiously heterogamous families may be disadvantaged compared to religiously monogamous families. Religious participation may be lower among members of heterogamous families due to a secularizing effect of these unions, and differing religious beliefs within a family may result in conflict. Therefore, children in these families may not gain benefits associated with religious participation and may be exposed to increased levels of conflict, which may negatively affect their well-being.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore raising children in the family is an important issue to consider in the formed family. “Perhaps an even greater challenge than that of achieving a

---

<sup>55</sup> John Flynn, “The Consequences of Interfaith Marriage,” *Zenit*, accessed June 27, 2013, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/the-consequences-of-interfaith-marriage>.

<sup>56</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 31.

<sup>57</sup> Richard J. Petts and Chris Knoester, “Parents’ Religious Heterogamy and Children’s Well-Being,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46 (2007): 374.

satisfactory relationship with one another, is the challenge intermarried couples face.”<sup>58</sup> Consider the importance of children in the family, raising children is more complex than marriage itself.

Differences that initially attracted partners may over time become contentious, particularly in raising children. Families of origin may exert pressures for the spiritual development of grandchildren in line with their faith convictions. Other couples who have viewed religion as unimportant in their lives may find that one or both partners feel strongly about the religious upbringing of their children.<sup>59</sup>

For the interfaith couples the major problems is when children come. The religious teachings they will receive and the spiritual practice they will be taught. Therefore “It is important for interfaith couple, before getting married, to discuss their expectation for raising children in a particular spiritual or religious tradition.”<sup>60</sup>

This prevents the problem misunderstanding between married, even though it is not proper solution to the interfaith marriage, because the effects of wrong decision come soon or later.

We believe that children are a heritage from God and blessing from His hand. We are therefore accountable to Him for raising, shaping, and preparing them for a life of service to His kingdom and to humanity.<sup>61</sup>

However, it is the responsibility of the parents to educate the children from their childhood to serve God in their live and to serve others.

Interfaith conflicts commonly arise in early parenthood over decisions regarding rituals such as circumcision, christening, or baptism. In many cases, nonreligious couples decide to postpone decisions and let children choose their

---

<sup>58</sup> Egon Mayer, *Love and Tradition: Marriage between Jews and Christians* (New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1985), 245.

<sup>59</sup> Walsh, “Spiritual Diversity: Multifaith Perspectives in Family Therapy,” 339.

<sup>60</sup> Mary K. DeGenova, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families*, 7th ed. (New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 2008), 155, [www.departments/marriage/interfaith/faq/interreligious-marriage-questions-fqa](http://www.departments/marriage/interfaith/faq/interreligious-marriage-questions-fqa).

<sup>61</sup> “Impressionable Minds: The Value of Bearing and Raising Children,” *Family* (August 2002): 2–4.

spiritual path as they develop.<sup>62</sup>

Children from parents sharing different faith would prepare to explain to their children which part they will belong, either to the side their mother religion or to their father. In every society, religious identity gives the position to stand on, and religious ceremony to celebrate, but also approach to collaborate with colleagues coming from different religion. Religious identity gives connection or disconnection with other children and acceptance in the children society.

Some parent of interfaith marriage when the children and they do not have an agreement on the faith of the children “they were referred for consultation with a pastoral counselor who dealt with interfaith issues.”<sup>63</sup> The parents have responsibility to help children to know that they are not just part of a neutral religion, because the neutral in belief is not a religion.

The children are left to find their own way to follow, because in religious exploration they do not even have landmarks on the journey. While children grown up they will need to have faith to be part of, even if they choose to follow a faith tradition different from the one in which they were raised, the parents will be responsible for their deviation because of their mixed belief. In different culture some ceremonies mark the stage of the children like giving name for childhood and confirmation of confession for adulthood.

In different religions and cultures adulthood ceremonies come at different ages. In adolescence stage, many traditions celebrate a child's personal commitment to the faith. Young people can experience these rituals as affirmations of themselves as well as of their faith. A gathering of those who love them and support them and hold them to high standards will be a secure memory as they enter difficult years. Relatives will tell stories about their baptism or confirmation and will want that serious and joyful ceremony for

---

<sup>62</sup> Walsh, “Spiritual Diversity: Multifaith Perspectives in Family Therapy,” 339.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

each child in the family.<sup>64</sup>

To the society where the practice of this culture is required, when a child arrive in adolescence, a person to express his/her belief, for the children from the interfaith family it is a shame to say that they don't have doctrine or faith, while for adolescents from the parents of same faith they enjoy to declare their heritage of faith learnt from their parents.

Religious beliefs can cause either conflict or harmony. Different faith can also cause greater conflict between family members, but also between parents and their children. When married couples agreed on religious convictions, they are more content with their marriage and have a lesser chance of divorcing or experiencing abuse. The prayer is a one of the action that unites the couple,

most, prayer originates in the family and is centered in the home, from blessings before a meal to bedtime prayers. Almost all pray for their loved ones' well-being. Prayer may serve varied functions: to express praise and gratitude; sustain strength and courage; seek wisdom and guidance.<sup>65</sup>

When children disagree with their parents on religion, the time of worship is affected. more conflicts arise in the family, and there's a greater chance that the children will act out this tension in incorrect ways. Most of times parents' religious beliefs have a great impact on children, because they do not know which religion they can take part, and the children reject what their parents believe and model. But if children agree with their parents' on religion, then it is much more likely that the child will not get into trouble and will have a strong faith in the future.

According to John Riley in her book shows the consequences for the children.

A 2006 survey showed that 37% of those raised by parents of different religions reported weekly attendance at religious services, compared with 42%

---

<sup>64</sup> Sparrow F. Alden, "Let's Talk about Interfaith Families," *UUA*, accessed July 2, 2014, <http://www.uua.org/sites/live-ew.uua.org/filesdocuments/aldensparrow/interfaithfamilies.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> Walsh, "Spiritual Diversity: Multifaith Perspectives in Family Therapy," 341.

of those raised by parents with the same faith. In fact, Riley recommend, religious leaders to advice people to marry within the faith, both for the preservation of the faith and the long-term stability of their marriage.<sup>66</sup>

Therefore, to protect the children to the consequences of religion confusion and to the neutrality of faith religious leader need to emphasize on issue of interfaith marriage more completely.

### **Vital Factors in the Choice of a Partner**

In the life of people, the choice of a partner is highly important and a careful moment to everyone; it is the time you can lose your destiny, your vision and even your life. Some young people when they are at this point, they begin to think about the difficult problems in the world, especially economics problem and based their ideas on a person who will be a response to wealth matter. “With the increasing religious diversity in the United States, interfaith marriages include unions no just between and among Christians and Jews, but also union between Muslim, Buddhists, Hindus, pagans and those of many other spiritual belief.”<sup>67</sup>

Whatever, the factors a young person would consider during the time of dating would be more sensitive than earthy profits. “Every conscious husband and wife should measure their marriage by the unchanging standard of the principles found in God’s word”<sup>68</sup>

There is an important factor every Christian must consider before the final decision. The partner would be a person who will help the family to develop the intimacy with God, and who will contribute in the following God more. Ellen G

---

<sup>66</sup> Flynn, “The Consequences of Interfaith Marriage.”

<sup>67</sup> DeGenova, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families*, 155.

<sup>68</sup> Munroe, *The Purpose and Power of Love and Marriage*, 63.

White warns the young people not to consider only visible aspects but to “Weigh every sentiment, and watch every development of character in the one with whom you think to link your life destiny.”<sup>69</sup> This requires a time to observe the one that prefers to marry, study his/her character, and ask the people who know him/her well about his/her discipline. The choice of a partner is an important step in the life of a person, so it must be taken with more prudence and attention. Most of young people engage in marriage without consciousness and regret their decision later. Before any step toward marriage, an intense examination must be done carefully to see if this person will bring a good chance in the family to love more God.

### **Consequences of Wrong Decision**

Both OT forbid ancient Israelites from marrying non-Israelites even today the Christian believers are prohibited to unite with a spouse of different belief. God said to ancient Israelites “You shall not make marriages with them, giving your daughters to their sons, or taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn away your sons from following me, and serve other god” (Deut 7:3-4 RSV).

Differences in spouses’ religious beliefs may lead to increased levels of marital conflict. Religiously heterogamous couples may be more likely to have fundamental disagreements. Indeed, religiously heterogamous marriages are less stable than religiously homogamous marriages. In addition, religiously heterogamous couples may not have the same resources for handling conflict as same-faith couples. In religiously heterogamous families, parents may attempt to advocate for their own religious beliefs. This may result in family conflict that has a negative effect on children’s well-being.<sup>70</sup>

The order is given to the people of God when they came from Egypt to the Promised Land. In the time of Ezra when he came from Babylon, he reminded the Israel the instruction of God concerning the marriage with other nations (Ezra 9:1, 2,

---

<sup>69</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 44,45.

<sup>70</sup> Petts and Knoester, “Parents’ Religious Heterogamy and Children’s Well-Being,” 376.

12; Nehemiah 10:30). This command was steel valid at the end of Old Testament.

This indicates how this command was important in the Old Testament.

A wise strategy is for young people to marry within their own religion group. Even minor differences, such as two protestant denominations within Christianity, create the potential for dissatisfaction. Such small differences can contribute to the lack of total unity in the marriage. Religious compatibility allows for an easier flow of communication and understanding. And, of course it eliminates the thorny issue of what religious identification the children will have.<sup>71</sup>

The Israelites sinned against God because of marrying foreign wives; the leader of Israel such as the king Salomon disobeyed Lord and deceived Israel to worship idols (1 Kgs 11:1-8). The king Ahab because of his wife who was the idols worshiper she had lead Israel and the king Ahab to follow Baal and Asher (1 Kgs 16: 31-33). In the book of judges, Samson, decided to disobey God's instructions by making a covenant with a philistine's wife who was in the forbidden nation. His parents tried to restrain him but for nothing and decided to unite in marriage with Delilah. His parents asked him "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your kinsmen, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" and Samson answered to the "Get her for me; for she pleases me well" (Judg 14:3). By consequence his eyes are gouged out because God has left him.

"Interfaith marriages are not ideal and must, therefore, be discouraged."<sup>72</sup>

These examples point out how it is a great mistake to unite in marriage with the people who do not obey God. Christians are forbidden from marry non-believers (2 Cor 6:14-15). Ellen G. White advises in her many book, and show the consequences

---

<sup>71</sup> Odunze, *Successful Family Living*, 12.

<sup>72</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Church and Marriage in Eastern Africa* (Nairobi, Kenya: The AMECEA Research Department, 1975), 224.

of marrying from different belief. To her it is even better not to be married than to link yourself with somebody who can deceive you to follow divine instructions. Today most of people are world ambitious they don't care about Jesus; to unite with such kind of person, it's to choose earth than heaven. Another fearful observation from White is that the majority of those who engage in world interest finish by disobeying God. Just as the Israelites did in disobedience to God in the Old Testament "Hundreds have sacrificed Christ and heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons"<sup>73</sup>

Young women and men should know that it is wise and better to escape to mingle with pagan people, is to open a way for enemy. The young people of the church must know that it is a mistake to mingle with people of others faith by marriage because the enemy always wants to put them in a corner they cannot escape. Marrying without God approval it is a great mistake in their life and the second chance in marriage it's a dream that cannot be realized easily.

### **Loss of the Enjoyments of Heaven**

Heaven is reserved for everyone, but some decided not to struggle to receive salvation just because of wrong choice. One of the areas where people begin to lose their hope is in marriage. Marrying unconverted person is running away to the salvation. Many people through marriage have exchanged their joy of heaven, the earthy value. How comes people replace and substitute the eternal enjoyment by choosing those who have refused the love the Lord?

Before such important decision every person must ask himself:

Will not an unbelieving husband/wife lead my thoughts away from Jesus? Is he/she not a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God? Will he/she not lead

---

<sup>73</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 66.

me to enjoy the things that he/she enjoys?<sup>74</sup>

If the person does not accept the Jesus as the savior before accepting another person; this love will be vain. The true happiness comes from heaven not from home; the children's of God will find pleasure in praising God, not in enjoying the earthy wealth. In whatever they do, they have to put God first. "Unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God."<sup>75</sup> If young men or women want to form a home where Christ will reign, their covenant must involve the creator of the family.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

From the Old Testament, the union with the person of another faith was forbidden; this commandment was given to Israel in the wilderness when they become a nation. Leaders, Kings and nation of Israel sinned against the Lord by marrying non Israelites. The teachings of Paul emphasizes that it is better to remain unmarried than to form a family on dangerous ground with someone who is an enemy of Christ and who will lead you away from Christ.

The teachings of Seventh-day Adventist Church on marriage are based on the teachings of the Bible. The commitment of marriage is to God as well as to the spouse; therefore this commandment would be made between people sharing the same faith. Interfaith marriage poses serious problems in the family after marriage, such as misunderstanding, divorce and paganism. So marriage engagement must be processed carefully and prayerfully because it is a decision for life. Marriage is part of God's plan for humanity; reason why it must be valued and respected. The secret of

---

<sup>74</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 67.

<sup>75</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ Centered Home*, complete Published Ellen G White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 259.

remaining faithful after marriage is based on choice of Christian partner of good character.

The Seventh-day Adventist young people are advised to be careful when choosing a marriage partner. External attraction has become an important factor of choice, but is not a primordial aspect at all. The young people are advised to be careful during their time of dating because many of them lose their hope for the future, when unconverted heart follows body desire instead of considering internal beauty of a converted person. A good spouse is different from the external appearance.

Christians are called to make a difference; this must also be demonstrated in their family through patience, kindness and modeling for community. Through daily fellowship with Christ the young people will learn to be taught and guided by the Holy Spirit. Man and woman should be admirable for their strength of faith and good character, but many men and women are without hope and without God in the world because of lack of vision. Their judgment has gone wrong and bases their factors of choice on worldly things instead of accepting advices from faithful parents and the creator of the family.

There is evidence linking, and strong correlation between religion, success and happiness in all phases of individual life. Today many families are unhappy because of unity with diversity in faith. The counsels from the Bible, spirit of prophecy and other writers would be enough for young people to know which way to follow; but it has become a common practice for young couple where each partner has a faith different from the other to decide to drop the active practice rather than to maintain the true faith.

Successful and happy marriages are becoming rare because of interfaith

weddings. The numbers of the divorces in the family are growing day after day, and the church and government do not have the solutions.

When two individuals get married, they combine their families; their wealthy, they share their joys, their happiness and their problems. Interfaith marriages definitely contribute to the complexity of combining families. On the other hand, when two come together in Holy matrimony they become the foundation of future generations and model for future home. However true and faithful love reigns where Christ is in control, the married love in harmony, their souls praise the Lord, the Angels are welcomed in the home and Jesus takes the first place in the home.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE

Good marriages do not just happen because one was fortunate to marry the right person. Successful and happy marriages are built on more than passion. They are built on principles. The scriptures provide the best guidelines and principles for a healthy marriage. God's principles for healthy marriages as found in his word are never outdated. They are just as applicable today as they were to ancient Jews.

This chapter described the ministry context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Remera, where the study was undertaken. This chapter also discusses interfaith relationships in this church and further identifies factors that lead to interfaith marriages and the current situation in this church. After analyzing the causes and results of the interfaith marriages, an intervention is developed to help the young people to take measures for the future of their families.

This chapter is linked with challenges related to issues, such as, prompted baptism for marriage reason, and marriage just after a partner converts from another denomination that has different teachings and beliefs as compared to those held by the Adventist Church. These marriages may be characteristically similar to those of interfaith marriages since the new convert do know much and may not have accepted the Seventh-day Adventist faith willingly. Consequently, these newly formed families that lack proper biblical foundations may provide ground for non-practicing Christian families.

Chapter two of this work engaged in a critical theological discussion of

interfaith marriage, from theological, historical, social and cultural contexts through typical examples from the Bible and by Ellen G. White writings. And chapter three introduced the Christian literature, and popular literature that talk about interfaith marriage and marriage in its different aspects by different people and churches. But in a particular way in this chapter, the researcher focused on the reality on the ground at Remera Adventist Church. This ministry project is designed to educate the youth of Remera Church about the qualities of a good spouse since many of them consider finding good partners outside the Adventist Church.

The young people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are many. In facts in some churches, they outnumber the adult members. However, these potential resources are not properly cared. The involvement of some church elders of Remera had put emphasis on comprehension of the marriage problem. Furthermore, this church is to be a model to the surrounding churches after the implementation of this project and used by other churches in the Conference as a reference in the harmonization of the marriage.

### **Logical Framework**

Logical framework of log frame is method that helps to plan systematically the development of the project and structuring the objectives to attend. Logical frame work is defined as “an approach to analytical process and set of tools used to support objectives-oriented project planning and management, to structured and systematized analysis of a project or program idea.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Flores the advantages of using the logical frame work is “brings

---

<sup>1</sup> European Integration Office Government of the Republic of Serbia EU Integration office, “Guide to the Logical Framework Approach: A Key Tool for Project Cycle Management,” *EVROPA*, last modified 2011, accessed August 22, 2015, <http://www.evropa.gov.rs/Evropa/ShowDocument.aspx?Type=Home&Id=525>.

together in one place a statement of all the key components of intervention. It presents them in a systematic, concise and coherent way, thus clarifying and exposing the logic of how the intervention is expected to work. It provides a basis for monitoring and evaluation by identifying indicators of success, and means of quantification.”<sup>2</sup>

The logical frame work should be thought of as an aid to thinking. It allows information to be analyzed and organized in a structured way, so that important questions can be asked, weaknesses identified and decision makers can make informed decisions based on their improved understanding of the project rationale, its intended objectives and the means by which objectives will be achieved.<sup>3</sup>

In this dissertation, the logical framework is used as tool of timing structure, for understanding what intervention objectives and goal the research can take for the research, the verification indicators, and the means of verification and assumption of research. It also used to know the purpose of the work, the output of the researcher and activities that helped the researcher to arrive to the objectives purposefully.

---

<sup>2</sup> Julia Flores, “Performance Assessment Resource Center,” *Evaluation Series No. 1: The Logical Framework*, accessed August 21, 2015, [http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/883/evaluation\\_series\\_n\\_\\_1\\_LF\\_PARC.pdf](http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/883/evaluation_series_n__1_LF_PARC.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Government of the Republic of Serbia EU Integration office, “Second Edition.”

*Table 1. Logical Framework Matrix*

Objectives/Goal	Verifiable indicators	Means of Verification	Assumption
1.Goal: Young people in Remera Adventist Church helped to have stable families	1. Indicators Reduce the numbers of interfaith marriage from current 8% <sup>4</sup> to less than 5%	Number of marriage to non Adventist Actions of church and conference	Adventist youth changes their mind on marriage
2.Purpose Strategy developed to help the young people of Remera Church and of the whole Conference to follow the Bible principles and advice from the Spirit of Prophecy during their time of courtship	2.Indicators Increase the number of Adventist marriages from 92% recorded in 2015 to 95% in 2016 among the youth of Remera Church	Compare marriages in church records between January to May 2015 and January to May 2016 Compare the number of interfaith marriage from January to May 2015, and January to May 2016 within Adventist youth of Remera Church (use manual for application)	The Remera Church and the Conference support the project
3.Output Survey Manual developed to teach the young people of Remera Church Seminar prepared and implemented Continuous seminars led by the church elders Assessment and evaluation seated	3.Indicators Statistics Manual prepared Seminar prepared and conducted Elders conducted seminars to assess and evaluate the improvement	Data analysis Manual Seminars Elders seminars Number of evaluations	Reducing interfaith families The useful manual set Preparation of activities at the church
4.Activities Interview Young people Interfaith families Church elders Pastors	4.Input Young people Church elders Pastors interreligious families Experienced family of 20 years of marriage Family of 10 Years of marriage Newly family in marriage. 10 young persons People of marriageable age from 21 and above September 2015 preparation of manual		

*(table continues)*

<sup>4</sup> Emmanuel Ndengeyinka, *Remera Church Record*, Statistics report of 2015 (Kigali, Rwanda, 2015).

*Table 1 (continued). Logical Framework Matrix*

Manual Set up a manual on Biblical teaching of marriage Establish active living seminars Run individual counseling Establish continuous education Conduct regular seminars	Using biblical principles of marriage, the writings of Ellen G. White, and other writers I prepared the manuals to be utilized during the seminars October 2015, active living seminars Meeting the young people of Remera Church. October individuals counseling Individual meeting with the	
and meetings	targeted people From November continuous education Continuous emphasis on biblical principles governing the choice of partner to the youth.	Adventist youth of Remera Church responds positively to the program

### **Description of Macro Context**

Rwanda, where the researcher is implementing the study, is a small country in East Africa. It is a country of steep mountains and is called the land of thousands of hills, deep valleys cover almost the whole country and many lacks. Lake Kivu in the west is the largest lake in Rwanda. The northern part of Rwanda is characterized by the highest mountains including volcano Karisimbi the highest volcano with 4,507m, is the highest point of Rwanda. The country is known for the Volcanoes National Park as the home of mountain gorillas and golden monkeys. It is bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west, Tanzania to the east, Uganda to the north, and Burundi to the south.

With the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Rwanda has been able to make important economic and structural reforms and sustain its economic growth rates over the last decade. Rwanda's long-term development economy goals are formulated in term Economy Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS). The overarching

goal of the EDPRS is growth acceleration and poverty reduction through four thematic areas: economic transformation, rural development, productivity, youth employment, and accountable governance.<sup>5</sup>

## **Rwanda Historical Background**

The Rwanda traditional political power was characterized by interdependence of the political, military, social and economic. From the time Rwanda political ideology had four pillars: the kingship conceived in terms of theocracy; the monarchy (King and Queen Mother); conquest which aimed at expanding Rwandan territory; and patriotism which was constantly inculcated in the population. All institutions reinforced the political organization and the King's authority as well as that of his representatives in a unitary, yet decentralized State.

Rwanda has undergone deep changes in all aspects of social life since the arrival of Europeans at the end of the 19th century. Those changes occurred at the level of the very nature of its political institutions and that of their functioning.<sup>6</sup>

Captain Hans Ramsay, chief of the "*Udjidji station*", established political relations with the Court of Rwanda on March 22, 1897, in a peaceful way. On November 15, 1907, the physician Richard Kandt (*Kanayoge*) became the first civilian colonial governor of Rwanda (Resident); he established the capital of the colonial authority at Kigali.<sup>7</sup>

One of the major consequences of this new administrative framework was the end of the traditional monarchy. The process which led to the end of the traditional monarchy started with the arrival of Belgians in the country and their introduction of a set of measures that targeted it, which resulted first in its deconsecrating. This means the abolition of the right to life and death (1917), in other words the end of the judicial power of the King (Mwami), of

---

<sup>5</sup> Admin, "Rwanda Country Overview," *World Bank*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/rwanda/overview>.

<sup>6</sup> Rwanda Parliament The Senate, "Political Pluralism and Power Sharing: Theoretical Overview and Qualitative Analysis of Rwanda's Experiences," in *Senate Research Book* (Kigali, Rwanda: Rwanda Parliament, 2010), 60.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 64.

the declaration of the so called freedom of religion (July 1917) that put an end to the monopoly of the traditional religion and established that of Catholicism, the abolition of the King's power to appoint or dismiss chiefs and notables at will (1923), the abolition of "ubwiru" and "umuganura" institutions (1925), and finally the removal of King Musinga (1931).<sup>8</sup>

The reform known as the "*Mortehan Reform*" abolished the trilogy of traditional chiefs and created the "*chefferie*" and the "*sous-chefferie*". By abolishing the three chiefs, the colonial authority wanted to rationalize the political functions since it was convinced that the traditional structure fostered chaos.<sup>9</sup>

It was not easy for the local authority to deal with the Europeans authorities which jurisdictions were split and juxtaposed. The objective of the local administration was to manage the country in compliance with European concepts of administration. The reorganization was completed at the end of 1933. By that date, there were 65 chiefs of provinces, each exercising authority on an average of 5,500 taxpayers, and 1,043 sub-chiefs counting each an average of 343 taxpayers. The regrouping continued but at a less intensive rhythm: in 1938, there were 56 chiefs and 860 sub-chiefs; in 1947, 51 chiefs and 625 sub-chiefs; in 1959, 45 chiefs and 559 sub-chief.<sup>10</sup>

The new indigenous staff of the colonial administration was trained in the school for chiefs' sons who were opened in Nyanza in 1919. The first cohort of 30 young chiefs' sons graduated in 1923 and two years later, 58 former students from Nyanza were appointed to administrative positions. The pupils of Nyanza understood the message and from 1928, they became massively catechumens. In 1936, 78% of chiefs and 84% of sub-chiefs were Catholic, while only 18% of the population had

---

<sup>8</sup> Rwanda Parliament The Senate, "Political Pluralism and Power Sharing: Theoretical Overview and Qualitative Analysis of Rwanda's Experiences," in *Senate Research Book* (Kigali, Rwanda: Rwanda Parliament, 2010), 66.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 68.

converted to this religion.<sup>11</sup>

The chain of command was as follows: governor- territorial administrators- chiefs to sub-chiefs. Chiefs and sub-chiefs were answerable to the King only as a formality according to customary constitutional law, but in reality they were answerable to the European administration.

The appearance of new ideas of democracy and independence, come out when the colonial system began to be challenged by local people. After World War II, it's when United Nations Organization (UN) recognized the right of African countries to lead by themselves. Colonies and trust territories had to be prepared for self-determination and independence. "But in the years 1950s, the political evolution of Rwanda was judged by the UN as being slow. Observations made by various UN visiting missions are unanimous on that point. It was in that context that the ten-year plan was developed to respond to the pressing demands from the UN."<sup>12</sup>

At the time when the socio-political and economic demands of Rwandan elites became more pressing, "the colonial authority believed that it had enough time to prepare the country for autonomy and independence. Van Bilsen recommended a 30-year plan for Belgian Africa at the end of which its territories would accede to independence."<sup>13</sup>

During the month of March 1960, while a UN mission was on a visit to Rwanda, the looting of the Tutsi's property, the burning of their houses, murders, etc., resumed and spread throughout the whole country. The same scenario happened again on the eve of parliamentary elections (1961) and of

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>12</sup> Plan Décennal pour le Développement économique et social du Ruanda-Urundi, Editions Visscher, Bruxelles, 1951. A critical analysis of the plan has been made by C.Kageruka, *Analyse et critique du Plan Décennal pour le développement socio-économique du Ruanda-Urundi (1951-1961)*, Mémoire, Butare, 1999, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Van Bilsen, *Vers l'indépendance du Congo-Belge et du Ruanda-Urundi*, Bruxelles, 1958, Father Van Wing proposed the independence in 1974, 164.

independence (1962). The transition from colonial power to a republican regime took place in that context of violence and tensions.<sup>14</sup>

Under the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic, there were three elected legislatures respectively in 1961, 1965 and 1969, until the dissolution of the National Assembly following the coup d'état of July 5, 1973. Thus, in 1973, when President Kayibanda wanted to seek another mandate, he modified some articles of the constitution without meeting any opposition. During the coup d'état of July 5, 1973, the High Command of the National Guard Juvénal Habyarimana dismissed Gr. Kayibanda from his functions of President of the Republic; it banned political activities and dissolved the national assembly.

The monolithic aspect of African political regimes changed with the national conferences (in Benin, Mali, and Congo), the liberalization of the press and the setting up of multiparty systems. Rwanda was also forced to open up to this democratic contagion.<sup>15</sup>

These colonial changes disrupted the fabric of Rwandan society and caused serious crises whose consequences are still visible. The apex of this practice took place between January 1993 and April 1994. The draft agreement on the rule of law had been signed on August 18, 1992, the one on power sharing on January 9, 1993. From that moment, the restrictions became more numerous and bothersome, acts of violence and demonstrations increased against the Arusha negotiations. Since the end of 1993, the Hutu extremists pursued two objectives: to push the President to delay the setting up of the Arusha institutions and to prepare the Tutsi genocide, by distributing weapons to militias, while maintaining a climate of tension marked by calls for the massacre of the Tutsi and opposing Hutu.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> The Senate, "Political Pluralism and Power Sharing: Theoretical Overview and Qualitative Analysis of Rwanda's Experiences," 84.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>16</sup> A very tense social climate which is described by General Romeo Dallaire in his book, *J'ai*

## **Rwanda Social Political System**

The 1994 Genocide against Tutsi had devastating effects on the Rwandan social fabric, the economy, the institutions and systems, the human capital and infrastructures such as schools and hospitals. Over a million people were killed in less than three months by the dictatorial regime in place using state institutions and organs.

In this context, consolidating peace and security became a pertinent challenge and required tremendous efforts. The response required a combination of strategies such as effective measures to resolve conflicts in society and a broad set of programs to encourage the rule of law, justice, unity and reconciliation.

After overthrowing the genocidal regime, the RPF voluntarily called upon other parties and factions of existing parties in Rwanda which were not involved in genocide to join hands and form a broad-based Government of National Unity and a Transitional National Assembly.<sup>17</sup>

The principle of power-sharing was also reflected in the Legislative Assembly. The fundamental law provided for seventy (70) seats in the Transitional National Assembly which were divided among the political parties.<sup>18</sup>

One of the pillars of post-genocide Rwandan politics has been initiating and consolidating people's empowerment in determining and fully participating in social, political and economic matters affecting their lives. The decentralization process has paved the way for grassroots empowerment and participation; people elect their leaders at village, cell, sector, and district levels; when the leaders fail to live to the electors' expectations they get sacked.

The post genocide politics in Rwanda have defined its political aspirations.

---

serré la main du diable. La faillite de l'humanité au Rwanda, Libre Expression, 2003, 225.

<sup>17</sup> The political parties such as MRND, CDR and "Hutu Power" factions of the then existing political parties in Rwanda which were implicated in the Genocide against Tutsi were excluded from this arrangement.

<sup>18</sup> Arusha IV, art.60.

While multi-partyism makes political parties the only key stakeholders of political life, the political pluralism as experienced in Rwanda has included and expanded to other categories of the population as key actors and “shareholders” of political power. Rwanda’s political culture based on Rwanda’s context and experiences and driven by the Rwandans’ will in search for social cohesion, national development and prosperity is the leading politic in Rwanda today.

The following map is presenting Rwanda political map.

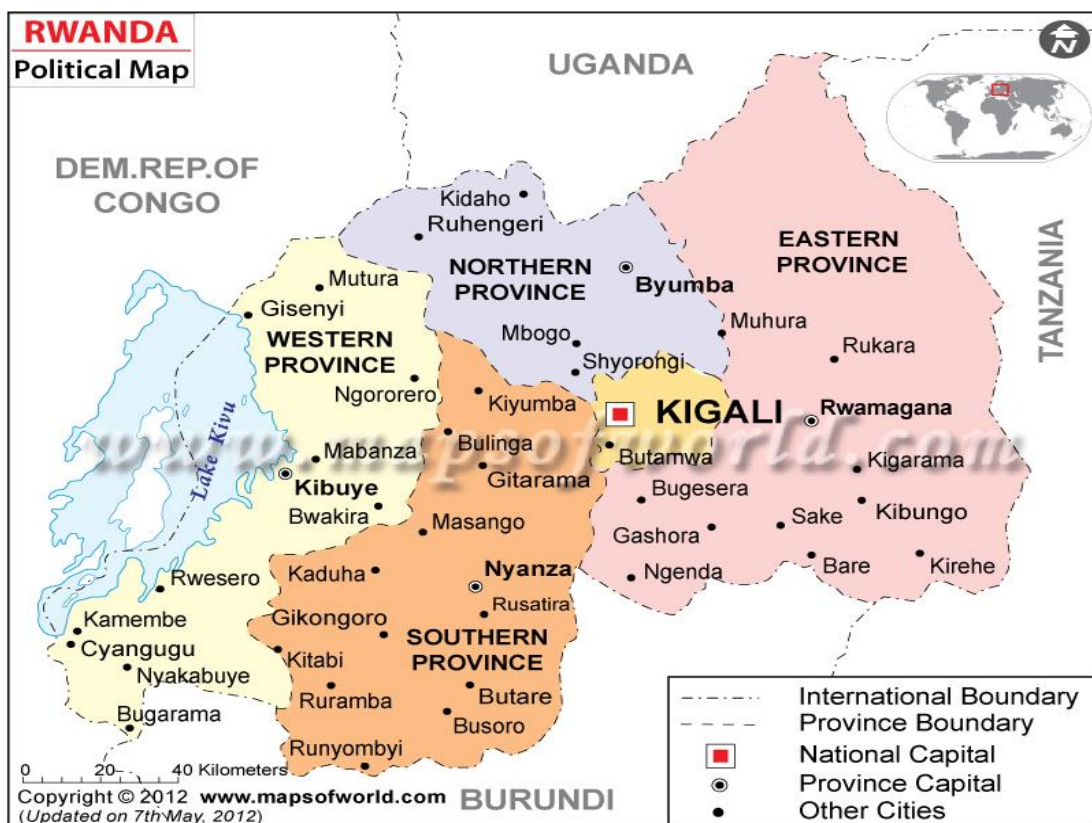


Figure 1. Map of Rwanda

### Religious and Culture Background

Rwanda practices religious liberty; every churches and denomination give their message freely. The Seventh-day Adventist Church had preached its message in all parts of the country and is developing in Rwanda. "The national statistics of 18

August 2013 presented Adventist members as 12, 2% of the whole population in Rwanda" <sup>19</sup> However, the interfaith marriage is one of the issues the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Rwanda are facing. This is similar to other churches and denomination. In order to eradicate this problem, it requires strategies and methods to instruct the young people of marriageable age to follow biblical principles and counsels from the spirit of prophecy during their dating time.

### **Description of Micro Context**

Kigali city where the researcher implemented the study is founded in 1906, Germanys as colonial people appointed Dr. Richard Kandt as the first imperial resident governor for Rwanda. He chose Nyarugenge hill in Kigali as the site of the capital because of its central location in the country.

### **Kigali Historical Background**

In 1907, administration of Rwanda was declared independent. The following year, the administrative center for Rwanda happened to be in Kigali. By 1909, only around 20 shops had been built. On the present site of Nyarugenge market and were mainly owned by Indian traders. Kigali eventually developed into a significant commercial center because of its central position. It became a transit center for commercial activities between Bukoba and Kigoma (in Tanganyika, now Tanzania) via Bujumbura and also between Kisangani in DRC and Kampala in Uganda.<sup>20</sup>

This development attracted many business people to move from various places of the country and come in Kigali. During the Second World War the Germans went

---

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, "Rwanda Religions," *Index Mundi*, accessed July 10, 2016, <http://www.indexmundi.com/rwanda/religions.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Godfrey Ntagungira, "The History of City of Kigali," *New Times*, accessed June 28, 2016, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2011-05-20/97496>.

back home and after the War, the Belgians colonial maintained Kigali as the administrative center for the whole country. Kigali is situated in the natural region called Bwanacyambwe in the time and today called Kigali city.

Originally the city occupied the hills of Nyarugenge and Nyamirambo, which covered an area of about 200 hectares at the time of independence. Today, the city stretches from the center: towards the east, covering the hills Kacyiru, Kimihurura, Nyarutarama, Remera, Kanombe and Kabuga. Southbound over the slopes of Mount Rebero, Gikondo, and Kicukiro.

Toward the west over the slopes of mount Kigali, on slopes of Kabusunzu hills and Kimisagara. Finally, to the North, it reaches the slopes of Mount Jali and the hills of Gisozi and Gaculiro. Kigali has grown from a population of 6000 people in 1962 (when Rwanda gained its independence) to approximately 1 million inhabitants today. The city got a master plan designed and based on research and analysis of a wide range of background conditions and a technical aspect which is expected to pave the way for both local and international investors. Kigali leadership plans to create a city that is a symbol of the Rwandan culture and that serves as an example for modern Africa.<sup>21</sup>

Today Kigali city is a growing rapidly and is an attracting city with many attracting infrastructures. Kigali city is the smallest province in Rwanda but more populated with 1.132.686<sup>22</sup> according to the statistics of 15 August 2012.

---

<sup>21</sup> Godfrey Ntagungira, "The History of City of Kigali," *New Times*, accessed June 28, 2016, <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2011-05-20/97496>.

<sup>22</sup> Admin, *Fourth Population and Housing Census, Rwanda*, Thematic Report (Kigali, Rwanda: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012), 10.

Figure 2 below shows the map of Kigali city.<sup>23</sup>

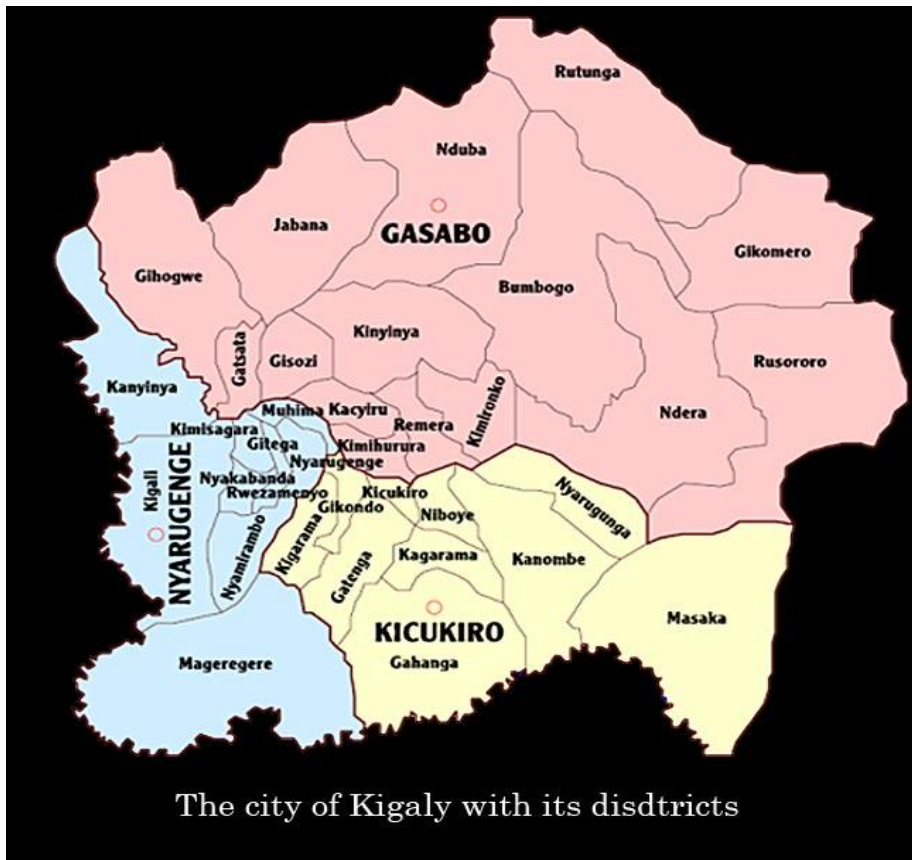


Figure 2. Map of Kigali City

### Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist in Kigali City

The mission of Seventh-day Adventist Church began in Kigali city in 1965, with few churches and few members. From that time to today the SDA Church in Kigali city has witnessed tremendous growth.

It is presently constituted by 21 church districts comprise 137 churches only in Kigali city. The Seventh-day Adventist has the second highest membership in Kigali

---

<sup>23</sup> Admin, "Kigali City Map," *Google*, accessed July 10, 2016, <http://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+kigali+city&newwindows=&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=uni v&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiOh-yIt-3NAHXJ7hoKHZIV AbsQ7 AkILA&biw=938&bih=619>.

after Catholic Church., In Kigali city, the “Adventist membership in 2014 was 54,918.”<sup>24</sup>

Remera Church is started in 1984, is located in Kigali city province in Gasabo government district, Remera Sector in Rukiri cellule in five kilometers from Kigali city center. The pastor of Remera Church leads also other five churches, but his is assisted by sixteen church elders and one permanent secretary. Remera is one the largest Adventist Church in Kigali city. It has 1,835 members. However to the effort of members of this church the membership increase every quarter, the average of baptism to a quarter is 50 members, this brings in the church 200 people every year. Due to its location, it hosts many meetings of the Conference and of the Union. It is considered as the center of influence due to its central place and its capacity to accommodate a large member of people. The number of young people is significant in this church and there is great need to consider them.

The interfaith marriage is one of the problems Remera Church had faced in previous days; some of its youth marry other faith. As the result of these interfaith marriages, some members end up leaving the church and the marital conflict increase in the families because of the different faith. The conflicts experienced by these couples often extended to their large families. Some young people of this church lack the spouses because those that would marry them decided to marry outside. The females are more vulnerable because in Rwandan culture a daughter waits patiently someone who came to request the marriage.

The average number of the young people of Remera Church marrying outside of the church is 9%, compare to 91% of intra-faith marriage. “In the year 2015, the

---

<sup>24</sup> East Central Rwanda Conference, *Statistical Report*, Third Quarter (Kigali, Rwanda: East Central Rwanda Conference, 2014).

number of young people of this church married to the non-Adventist was 8%, compare to 92% married within the church.”<sup>25</sup> The preceding year of 2014, the “number of interfaith marriages of Remera Church was 9% and 91% of the marriages was intra-faith.”<sup>26</sup> This has had some dire consequences to the children and even the whole family because interfaith marriages generally created more conflicts than happiness to the couples and the community at large. However, the passion of the researcher is to find out reasons behind these interfaith marriages and address them with biblical principles in order to reduce this number of young people marrying outside the church.

### **Appropriateness of Study**

The churches are made by the families, when the families are good, the churches also become good, and therefore it is necessary to prepare the good marriage in order to have good churches. Marriage influences various dimensions of life, including physical, mental health, economic well-being, happiness in the home, and the future of children therefore due to the impact of marriage in regular life it was necessary to instruct the young people to base on Bible principles during their dating time.

The marriage is a step the majority of people pass by, however, due to its importance to the person himself, the families of both spouses, the church and to the society in general, the marriage must carefully prepared to avoid the effect that may come to the prompted decision. Many young people are getting lost from the Adventist family and sometimes this loss could from eternity. Adventist parents and

---

<sup>25</sup> Ndengeyinka, *Remera Church Record*.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

families worry about their children marrying out of their religion. They are sure about the consequences of disobeying God's commands and rejecting the Truth. They may be afraid that interfaith marriages take their children and grandchildren away from God's way. They can also be anxious that the religious and differences practices between the couple are so great such that the marriage itself may be unstable or unhappy.

Marriage has an implication to the life of people involved, and it affects the well-being of the family due to the personal impact of marriage and it can be obstacles for eternal life preparation. The choice of a partner may be the origin of success or failure in all life, therefore this study help to save the life of young people in Rwanda losing their life through interfaith marriage.

### **Research Design and Instruments**

The researcher has used the process and methods of interviewing the selected people of different categories such as young people of Remera Church as a place of implementation, the interfaith families as experienced in interfaith marriage, church elders and pastor as the people responsible for youth education. These people are used in order to arrive at the effective solutions of problems. Through the collection, analysis and interpretation of data better solutions may be found that can help the Remera Church and the whole conference to overcome the problem.

### **Type of Research and Rationale**

This study uses qualitative and quantitative methods as a procedure for collecting and analyzing data to identify internal and external factors and to qualify the problem by numerical data in order to understand the research problem more completely. This study sought to identify factors that determine spouse selection among young people in Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rwanda, specifically in

Remera Church, Remera district in East Central Rwanda Conference. A sample questionnaire (Appendix A) was used as for data collection. The researcher formulated the questionnaire for the interview of young single persons, interfaith families, pastors and church elders. The rationale for the integration of methods is to enhance adequate literature research and field work.

### **The Field Research**

The field research was done in two stages. The first stage included a survey of the young people of Remera Church focusing on their understanding of marriage and interfaith marriage. The preliminary survey included collecting data of their views about marriage in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, about marriage in the Bible, the initial counsels of their parents, and their own thought about interfaith marriage. The principal reasons for interfaith couple's interview were to reveal differences in the quality of marriage life between intra-faith and interfaith marriages, consequences of interfaith marriage and the freedom of fellowship after interfaith marriage. The church elders and pastors also answered some questions as leaders in charge of youth education and their advisers.

In the second stage, the issue of interfaith marriage was focused and discussed in seminars, individual meetings with targeted people, and individual counseling sessions. Since this research program was taken up in the background of interfaith marriages, the study started with young people of Remera Church and how they considered the instructions of the Bible concerning marriage. A glance at the Biblical passages on interfaith marriage provided the Biblical input. Therefore, the official view of the church on interfaith marriage was also incorporated in the study. Since the targeted group of the study was young people, their responses were more valuable in the research and others came to enhance the survey.

Problems in many families came as a result of their composition and their nature. The ultimate concern is that when a person accepted interfaith marriage, it could lead to the end of his or her faith in God. Therefore, much consideration should be given to the Biblical perspective and principles on marriage. The discussions offered a fair treatment to the way of understanding the successful marriage. The responses of the young people of Remera Church, the interfaith families, church elders, and pastors provided the way to follow for counseling.

### **Population and Sample or Participants**

In the year 2015 when the researcher conducted the study Remera Church had 630 young people. Nevertheless, all this number may not be interviewed. “The legal marriage in Rwanda a man or a woman younger than 21 cannot marry except for grave reasons, the researcher selected 20 young people within the age bracket of 21 – 40 years old according to the government law of Rwanda”<sup>27</sup>, and all of them were members of this church. The categories of these young people included educated and non-educated, employees and nonemployees, people from the village and those born in Kigali city. In these categories of people both gender were considered.

### **Sampling Procedures and Selection**

Twenty young people, male and female were interviewed; five Adventist members of interfaith families, three church elders, and two pastors were interviewed. A set of seven questions (See Appendix A) were orally administered to each respondent and data recorded.

---

<sup>27</sup>Imbonezamuryango, December 1992, “the New Legal Marriage age” In Rwanda, Presidential Decree No. 102/05 of March 13, 1992 executed Law No. 42/1988, which was not enforced after its passage in October 1988. Its principal provisions relate to civil marriage. Only monogamous civil marriage is recognized by law. Civil marriage is the voluntary union of a man and woman. A man and woman younger than 21 cannot marry except for grave reasons

The interviewees were allowed to include new information that seemed necessary for the research. The method used to execute this project was a combination of methods which is Biblical, sociological, and gender based. Stand on the quality of research; I realize that a number of steps would be essential to determine the teaching approach of interfaith marriage.

The researcher interviewed five people married from different faiths, but one spouse is an Adventist. The researcher includes people from interfaith families to reveal the problem the interfaith couples experienced and the consequences of this kind of marriage. Three church elders of Remera Church are also interviewed as the people responsible for redressing the situation and adviser of the young people of Remera Church. Two pastors of the conference are interviewed too as experienced people in leading the young people, and responsible for their future consequences. The mixture of responses from all these categories of people provided to the researcher enough information that helps to redress the situation of interfaith marriage in Remera Church.

### **Instrumentation**

The information's are gathered to indicate the gravity of the problem of interfaith marriage in Rwanda, generally and in Remera Church particularly. These data helped the researcher to analyze deeply the problem of interfaith marriage in this church, and to provide an adequate solution. The interview with the selected people among the young people of Remera Church, the selected couples in the interfaith families where one spouse is an Adventist, some church elders of Remera, and some church pastors of East Central Rwanda Conference provided enough information.

The collection of data is done in September 2015. Every Wednesday afternoon, the researcher meets the selected young people to the Remera Church. To

the interfaith families' members, the researcher organized an appointment at home or in the office. To the church elders, the appointment was Saturday evening after sunset program. The pastors are interviewed during the Conference meeting.

### **Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

In the process of finding a solution to the problem of interfaith marriage in Remera Church, the researcher gathered the data from the people concerned by the problem of interfaith marriage by thematic form. In this section, he has put together the data collected and analyzed them before proposing the solutions of the problem.

In order to gather adequate data, and to have the reality of the problem, the researcher interviewed the people of all categories who are involved in interfaith marriage. Two pastors representing 6,7% are interviewed as people responsible for all members youth included. Three church elders of Remera Church, equal to 10% as decision makers of the church, and answerable to the act of interfaith marriage of the church. Five families of the Adventist members involved in interfaith marriage equivalent 16,6% as witnesses of the consequences of this marriage. Male and female young people of Remera Church 20 in total equal to 66,7% as people concerned by the problem. Table 2 below presents the respondents.

*Table 2. Number of Respondents in Interview*

Category	Number	Gender	Percent	Number of Questions
Pastors	2	All male	6.7%	7
Church elders	3	2 Males/ 1 Females	10.0%	7
Interfaith families	5	3 Males/ 2 Female	16.6%	7
Young people of marriageable age	20	12 Females/ 8 Males	66.7%	7
Total	30	30	100%	

Some of the interviewees showed some spiritual immaturity in their responses because some are influenced by their background and behaviors. But many of them gave the realistic responses which help the researcher to arrive at the conclusion.

The Bible in Proverbs 3:6 says "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." To have a better family every person need the advice from the source of knowledge. All other counsels obtained from people without God's guidance are in vain. The interview with the young people of the marriageable age of Remera Church has clarified and given more light about the reason behind interfaith marriage in this church. The discussion has demystified secrets of the partnerships with people from other denomination and lays the ground for follow-up discussions and seminars.

### **Interview with the Young People of Marriageable Age**

In Remera Church there are many young people of different age, but the interview the researcher made was appropriate for the young people from 21 years old to 40 years old. The years of marriages according to the constitution of Rwanda are from 21 and above. Therefore, it clear that the findings from the young people are more considered that other because they are people concerned by the interfaith marriages. The table below is presenting the findings from those young people.

*Table 3. Response of the Interview with the Young People of Marriageable Age*

Discussion Questions	Responses
Why do some young people prefer to marry outside the church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Financial factors of some Adventists who preferred to go out of the church hoping to find a better life with more money.</li> <li>-Physical attraction is another factor influencing many people, especially the young boy to go outside the church.</li> <li>-Misconduct of Adventist girls who behave like worldly women instead of acting like educated and converted people cause the young boy to go outside of the church.</li> </ul>
Do the young people consider the Biblical Principles of Marriage during Dating Time? Does he/she still faithful to God after married outside of SDA Church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-It is wise to consider the biblical principles before taking decision of marriage and ask God intervention during dating time</li> <li>-The spiritual aspect it is an important element to consider</li> <li>-Consideration of long-term effect during dating time is also necessary.</li> <li>-Some of the tools like social media the young people using today must be avoided during dating time</li> <li>-It difficult if not possible to remain faithful to God after married outside of the Adventist Church.</li> </ul>
Which church should he/she attend after marrying as person from another denomination?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-It all depends on the influence of each other, and who needs to follow other when the lady decides to follow the husband she goes to his church.</li> <li>-Similarly, when the man found a lady who is committed to her faith, He abandons his church and joins the wife.</li> <li>-Another option they can agree also to remain where they are after marriage, and that each remains faithful to his side.</li> <li>-However crossing over to other denomination may not be possible for Adventists who know the truth, but instead may choose to remain neutral and rest at home. Therefore he/she can decide neither to worship in the Adventist Church nor to follow the partner and the future of her life become confused</li> </ul>
What would be the church for children in interfaith marriage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The children become confused about which church to attend since they wish to follow the directives of both parents.</li> <li>-In some cultures, the husband dominates all matters and children are obliged to follow him.</li> <li>-However, because children spend the most time with their mother, she can inculcate her belief in them.</li> <li>-Even though the influence of one of the parents may attract the children when the moment comes for them to make personal choices they can decide to be following one parent or to go to the church of their choice.</li> <li>-Children follow the father's church because of his domination at home.</li> </ul>
What are the important factors young people would consider during dating time? And what are the advantages of marrying outside of SDA Church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Shared religion is an important factor in consideration.</li> <li>-Consideration of parents and church leaders counsels while dating</li> <li>-Today family factors and education consideration has become also factors influencing the choice of young people.</li> <li>-There are no advantages of marrying outside of SDA Church</li> </ul>
Do you think interfaith couples are always as happy as SDA couples are?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-There is more happiness for couples sharing the same faith rather than those sharing the different faith.</li> <li>-The perfect joy comes from God' obedience, and when one abandons God's promises, it is not possible to have perfect joy.</li> </ul>
What do you consider as disadvantages or inconveniences of marrying a non-Adventist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One of the inconveniences of marrying a non-Adventist is the confusion to the attending church.</li> <li>-Unfaithfulness to God is another disadvantage.</li> <li>-Spiritual effect to the children.</li> <li>- Losing hope he had for eternal life because the truth he learned in the Seventh-day Adventist Church cannot be found in another church and the non-Adventist partner cannot strengthen him/her in faith to Christ.</li> </ul>

## **Analysis and Evaluation of Data**

Paganism is dominating in these days, as young people who are not really converted do not consider spirituals aspect to be crucial before they start dating. Sometimes they do not have the guidelines to follow in the time of choosing a partner and still fail to ask for God's intervention in this moment. Therefore it is quite necessary as a Christians to consider scripture instructions during dating time.

To the Christians it is always advisable to look for a partner in the same faith than to be attracted by beauty, degrees, or wealth. The will of God doesn't base on the external. When God sent Samuel to Jesse's house to select a king for Israel, Jesse brought his sons basing on external appearance but God's judged them differently. Men judge by sight, but God does not. The Lord looks at the heart (1 Sam 16:7).

## **Interview with Interfaith Families**

The Psalmist reminds that "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain" Ps. 127:1. The people of God here are taught to have a continual regard to the divine Providence in all the concerns of this life. They must trust in God for the success of the project they are planning to do. The people of God are advised to depend on upon God's desire and not their own plan. The interview with the interfaith families revealed that some people depend on their own desire especially at the time of taking some great decision than to depend on Lord aspiration, and the consequences become terrible than the blessings.

The respondents for this part of the study were Adventists of interfaith couples. To enhance freedom of expression on the merits and demerits of the marriage, each person responded to the interview individually. The focus was an Adventist person in the family. The respondents were requested by the researcher to answer with utmost sincerity and honesty for the profit of the church and for the better

future families in the church and also in order to help other interfaith families that suffer the consequences of such marriages. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to encourage them to express themselves without fear or inhibition. The data collected is presented in the table 4 below:

*Table 4. Interfaith Families Interview*

Responses Discussion Questions	Responses
What are the important factors a person based on in choosing the church to attend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The influence of parents</li> <li>-The place of upbringing</li> <li>-Some areas are dominated by certain churches because of many factors. These factors include               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) places where the missionaries arrived first when they came into a country and the whole area dominated by their message,</li> <li>(ii) Places where the church established their schools influenced the people to join that church because as many children passed through those schools they became converted. But most of the people chose to attend the church based on the Biblical teachings presented in those churches.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
What do you consider to be the principal reason for interfaith marriage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-World attraction</li> <li>-Not being firm in faith</li> <li>-Lack of stability in faith</li> <li>-Educational status of a person which may attract a partner</li> <li>-Fortunes, and wealth of a person</li> <li>-Social statuses</li> <li>-Beauty.</li> </ul>
Why some Adventist marries outside?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual values of faith is the principle reason for interfaith marriage</li> <li>-Giving value to the husbands and to the wives more than eternal life.</li> </ul>
Do you think there are differences in the quality of marriage life between intra-faith and interfaith marriage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-A couple of different faiths may not understand things in the same way.</li> <li>-The difference in habitude is the origin of difference in quality of marriage life between intra-faith and interfaith marriage.</li> <li>-They beginning of their life without common understanding, either in faith and what they like, because the foods they eat, the drinks they take, their habits, and the day they attend worship are totally different according to their faith background.</li> <li>-They begun life with divergence</li> <li>-The intra-faith marriage is far much better than interfaith marriage.</li> </ul>
Have you the freedom to worship as you wish in interfaith family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-There is a lack of freedom of worship</li> <li>-Another common problem is raising children according to the will of God because the children are confused whether to follow their father or of their mother.</li> <li>-It may depend on the family and their relationship; depend on the partner's behavior and understanding; the large family and social influence. In some families one partner allows the other to worship according to his/her own faith while in other families some partners deny their mate's freedom to worship according to the conviction</li> </ul>
What will be the religion of your children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-There is a confusion of children over which religion or denomination to follow</li> <li>-The one who is active and practices his/her faith would definitely influence the children, and they may decide to follow him/her</li> <li>-The best advice to the parents is to lead children by example because they can be attracted by the good deeds of one of the parents and follow him/her.</li> </ul>
If you were to make another choice in marriage would you choose to have an interfaith marriage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-If a person is a true Christian and had the second chance he would not choose to marry from different faith.</li> <li>-It is better to marry from the same faith.</li> <li>-No the interfaith marriage have some bad consequences, however exception may come where an interfaith marriage becomes a tool for evangelism. Adventist members who marry outside and because of the good behaviors influence their new family to become Adventists.</li> </ul>

## **Analysis and Evaluation of Data**

The Bible never supports the marriage with somebody of different faith.

There are no variable reasons that may be valid to marry outside of the faith unless the person is not devoted and faithful to his/her belief. The main problem for the young people is the lack of patience. When a person is ready for marriage, he/she may only think of spouse than anything else. He/she forget to consider the value of faith. The Bible entreats Christians to seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and then other things will be added. But when the value of a husband and wife goes surpasses that for the kingdom, a person may decide to marry outside the true faith.

However there is also an advantage to the couple sharing different faith, when one of them makes a mistake, the other may understand because he /she do not have the light. Therefore it is easier to forgive on this ground. But when both of them know the truth of the Bible and both are Christians of the same faith one may strongly question the consciousness that the other person make the mistake.

Most of the time the problems in the family go beyond the family itself and arrive to their in law. Couples in interfaith marriages and families are challenged by their partners because their programs and faiths are different and are considered disturbances. That is the reason why the family of the same faith is happy and peaceful. The Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White and other authors support the itra-faith marriage than interfaith marriage. "If you want your children to have a particular religious identity, your best strategy is to raise them with that singular identity."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Susan Katz Miller and Jen Chitwood, "Whats It Like Being Both a Conversation with Interfaith Family," *Chron*, last modified August 26, 2014, accessed February 14, 2016, <http://blog.chron.com/sacredduty/2014/08/whats-it-like-being-both-a-conversation-with-interfaith-family-pioneer-author-susan-katz-miller/>.

### **Interview with Church Elders and Pastors**

Pastors and church elders focus group interview is presented in the table 4 below, and it present their general view about the reasons behind the interfaith marriage. Pastors and church elders are keys for interfaith marriage solution because they are in charge of advising these young people and at the same time answer the questions come because of wrong marriage, therefore are also eligible to be interviewed. However all of them are in common sense with the consequences of interfaith marriage.

*Table 5. Pastors and Church Elders Responses to the Interfaith Marriage*

According to your experience, what is the average of people who marry outside of Seventh - day Adventist Church?	<p>-The statistics differ in different places, but on average, it is more than 10%. This may be different from one church to another, but in general, this problem is common to every church in Rwanda.</p> <p>-This may be different from one church to another, but in general, this problem is common to every church in Rwanda. The year 2014 the average of interfaith marriage in Remera Church was 9% and the average for the year 2015 was 8%.</p>
What gender in your experience considers marrying more to the non-Adventist?	<p>-Females are the majority of those</p> <p>-Both gender</p>
What do you think are the reasons for our young people to marry outside the Adventist Church?	<p>-The reasons are different depending on gender, time, area and faithfulness. For city churches and other cosmopolitan areas where members come from different places, people may work together and love each other regardless of their faiths.</p> <p>-In these “modern” times people do not care about God’s command</p> <p>-Ignorance of God’s order</p> <p>-The lack of faithfulness to the young people</p> <p>-The place of work.</p> <p>-They youth are careless to Lord’s commands and this makes them united even with pagans provided they are wealthy rather than with a faithful person who obeys and fears God</p>
Does the church organize the meetings with youth especially for the marriage matter?	<p>-There is weakness on the part of leaders for caring and advising the young people, especially in the marriage matter.</p> <p>-There is a lack of permanent program of instructing the youths, though on a few occasions the church uses some members experienced in marriage matters to educate the youths.</p> <p>-The youths do not participate in these seminars, especially those who are more educated.</p>
Are these meetings regular or occasionally?	<p>-The meetings with youth are not organized on the regular basis, especially because of many programs in the church.</p> <p>-Lacks of interest among the youths discourage the leaders to organize regular meetings.</p> <p>-Lack of attractive program discourages the youths to attend organized meeting.</p>
Do pastors/church elders attend these meetings?	<p>-No because of many commitments and responsibilities.</p> <p>-Most of the time church elders do attend.</p> <p>-Pastors mostly attend such meetings when they are invited as presenters.</p>
Have you materials to use on marriage seminars?	<p>-Materials are insufficient to help the young people.</p> <p>-The available materials are in foreigners’ language and the presenters are not able to understand those languages. While those who are not able to use these languages are the ones who are available to speak to these young people</p>

## **Analysis and Evaluation of Data**

The data from Pastors and church Elders after a careful analysis indicates that there are many reasons to ladies to marry more to the other churches and denominations, such as, in African traditions, it is the man who chooses a marriage partner, and the lady just has to give in. Because of this culture, ladies who miss partners in church accept requests from anywhere. According to the elders and pastors, many ladies decide to get married outside the church because they do not find men in Adventist Churches, and by the time they realize, their relationships are so advanced they agree to a marriage proposal.

Today people do as wish with little concern for the end results. Some genders fall victims to the wrong decisions of others, especially ladies suffer not because God fails to provide partners, but because their supposed spouses went and married outside the church. Youth today are careless to Lord's commands and this makes them united even with pagans provided they are wealthy rather than with a faithful person who obeys and fears God.

To the issues of attending youth meeting especially the marriage meetings some Pastors miss the opportunity to attend the seminars on marriage because of their many commitments and responsibilities. A single pastor may lead a District with seven churches with more than 4,000 members and he is to be in charge of all church ceremonies and activities to the whole seven churches. The major problem is especially in the cities, because of lack of time they organize all activities on the Sabbath. Therefore it become difficult to the pastor to attend those programs organized in the same time. The Remera Church where the researcher conducted his study the year 2014 the average of interfaith marriage was 9% and the average for the year 2015 was 8%, and the purpose of the researcher is to increase the intra-faith

marriage to the 95% and to decrease the interfaith marriage to 5% after seminars and conversation with the young people of Remera church together with the leaders of the church.

### **Presentation and Description of Findings**

After the interview, it was necessary to make an assessment to know the problem with the interfaith marriage in Remera Church. The young people of the marriageable age of Remera Church were encouraged to feel free to respond to the questions prepared by the researcher to interfaith marriage. According to the knowledge they have on marriage and interfaith marriage, they were encouraged to give the advantages and inconveniencies of interfaith marriage. Using their experience, interfaith couples were advised not to hide anything that can help the researcher to arrive at the results of the study. Pastors and church elders would reveal the ratio of interfaith marriage, its reason and the strategy to stop interfaith marriage in Remera Church.

Each of the interviewees answered seven questions, in order to test their knowledge to the biblical principles governing marriage, cause, and consequences of interfaith marriage. During the interview, the researcher recorded all responses given by each young person, each member of the interfaith family, each pastor and every church elder selected to respond the questionnaires.

The general findings from the respondents are described that seeking God's intervention is the most key principle the young people must based on during the time of looking a partner for life. Another important element to be considered is spiritual aspect and consideration of long time effects in choosing a life partner. Using of social media in dating today had become a culture to some youth especially those considered themselves intellectual. Moreover it had become apparent that the partners

meet in the social media do not form a stable family. This indicates the utility of dating to the young people and marries a person they know very well.

The consideration of shared religion belief in marriage is an element every Christians would value before taking a decision. Indeed the emphasis on parental and church counsels is an advice every young person must consider before any further step in marriage. By all means much consideration would be given to requesting intervention from God during dating. Certainly the young people in general and those of Remera Church particularly do not give much attention to these elements during the time of choosing a partner. Therefore they need more teachings on principles guiding the people during the time of selecting a husband or wife based on Bible and from the counsels of Ellen G. White as well as the helping teachings from other trusted authors.

Regarding the causes of interfaith marriage according to the young people of marriageable age in Remera Church, the findings reveal that financial factors is the common problem that cause the interfaith marriage. However the physical appearance is also another issue attracting the youth today without considering the spiritual aspects. Wealth family factors and education consideration have become as well a disease because of wealthy ambitions of the young people of these days. As indicated above, the most important cause of interfaith marriage is the financial factor.

To the knowledge of the consequence the young people have on interfaith marriage, the findings indicate that more emphasis is needed to aware the young people of the result of marriage with a partner of different faith. Moreover the findings indicate that respondents knew that interfaith marriages lead to confusion about which church to attend. Other data indicate unfaithfulness to God and effects on the faith of the children.

There always inconveniencies and unhappiness of the family of interfaith couple's neither the people can accept it nor refuse it. Finally, the results indicate that the level of knowledge about consequences of interfaith marriage to the Adventist young people of Remera Church is not adequate

### **Discussion of Findings**

The Knowledge refers to the level of understanding of young people of Remera Church about the principles of marriage according to the Bible and writings of Ellen G. White as already discussed in chapter two. Many kinds of literature as reviewed in chapter three talk about marriage but it is wise to carefully select the one following the Biblical principles, so for these young people, the study of literature should be done wisely in order to be guided by the Holy Scripture during the time of dating.

After assessment of the findings, it became apparent that the young people of Remera Church do not have the adequate knowledge to the Biblical Principles governing a Christian to the choice of a partner. Therefore, they need seminars to improve their understanding about a good partner for life. Therefore, the researcher needs to design the plan to improve the level of the knowledge of the young people of this church and enable them to overcome the problem and consequences of interfaith marriage.

### **Designing of Intervention**

After the analysis of data, the researcher realizes insufficient knowledge of Biblical principles guiding people during their marriage. The young people of the marriageable age of Remera Church, they do not have the adequate knowledge to the concept of the Bible and counsels from the writings of Ellen G. White that can guide them during their selection of a partner. Another problem resides on important factors

that characterize a good partner and what the Bible indicates as factors to consider during marriage time. Therefore, the researcher decided to prepare a manual that help to change the understanding of the young people of this church. This manual used by the researcher during the seminars with young people of Remera, and the same book was given to the church of Remera to be used by the people in charge of the youth during the time of seminars and meeting with youth.

### **Limitations**

The researcher meets some limitations during the writing of the project, and in the time of implementation; these have become obstacles to arrive at the objectives of research or to produce a good research as he wished. Some of these are following:

From the time of preparation of manual in September 2015, up to the time of implementing the study in October 2015, the time was short. It has required devoting some hours of work in order to improve the quality of the manual, and to contact the interviewees.

The researcher has transferred to another area of the work and changes the responsibilities from January 2016. Therefore, to continue the seminars and to mentor the young people of Remera was very costly.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

One of the biggest decisions to make in the life after choosing to accept Jesus Christ as Savior is choosing a life partner. Therefore, before each person makes such big decision, he should make sure that his/her life partner loves God more than he or she loves him/her. Before one accepts to get married to his partner, it is important to observe for signs of love, faith, and purity in the prospective partner. Because many people concentrate on the outside rather than to look inside for the heart committed to God. It is important to find out if the person puts God first in his/her life, or if he

favors other things. The findings of this study indicated that many youths consider wealth and physical appearance as most important factors in their mate selection.

Internal attributes are less considered during mate selection.

If a young person truly trust in the Lord, he would not depend on to his/her own understanding and would instead seek the will of God in whatever he does. God will direct his/her paths even when things seem difficult or dark. The Lord is always the leader of His children. During the time of looking for a life partner, prayer is the only secret for every Christian. Whoever if put trust in the hand of one who deserves, He lead to the right person and provides a safe home.

## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVE OF INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Some of the young people of Remera Church in East Central Rwanda Conference are confused about which partner is suitable to a Christian. The interview conducted with the young people of the marriageable age of this church revealed the problem of interfaith marriage and confusion on how to choose a good partner for life, and the important factors to consider during this critical time. Therefore, this chapter is intended to redress this problem through seminars, counseling, and education.

However, the continuous educations are needed to change their thinking about a suitable partner. The most required task for the researcher is to help these young people to consider the Bible principles, counsels from Ellen G White and other spiritual authors during their time of choosing life partners. Therefore, this study indicated that the basis factors for choosing a partner for young people today are worldly based, such as, wealth in the family, the level of education or physical attraction, rather than looking Christian characters. The values of Christianity have been left aside and worldly attractions have been accorded greater consideration. This dissertation is purposed to correct mindset of young people of Remera Church on characteristics of a good partner through seminars, advice, counseling and continuous education. After implementation, the young people of Remera Church are evaluated through a survey in order to see the efficacy of the program implementation.

## **Participants' Background**

The young people of Remera Church come from different backgrounds. While some come from rural areas, others come from urban areas, including Kigali city. Still, some of them are students who come from different parts of the country to study in Kigali since it is the educational hub of Rwanda. Others come to Kigali to search for jobs because there are many national and international organizations having their headquarters there, in addition to many government institutions that are located in Kigali city plus many businesses operating in the city.

However, others come to the city to do their own business. Therefore, the young people of Remera comprise employed and unemployed, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, those from the rich families and as well as those from poor homes. These contrasts put them in different social statuses. However, these categories do not separate them, rather has served to unite them.

The number of the young people in this church change due to the different reasons. Some come into the city from surrounding provinces and accept the message of Seventh-day Adventist Church and are baptized there. When their jobs end they went back home and their membership transferred. Others get a transfer of their works to go outside of Kigali. For the students, when they finish their studies, they are also obligate to turn back home. This cause the instability of the number of the membership of Remera Church, the number of the young people included.

The statistics of the young people of this church in the year 2015 was 630. Consider the number of the youth of this church, the researcher interviewed 20 peoples of marriageable age between 21 to 40 years old as sample, combining male and female, educated and none educated, employed and none employed. The combination of all categories of young people provided the homogeneity of the

results.

The participants were mixed of people, thirteen of them were between 21 to 30 years old, comprise 65% of the total participants. Seven of them they age are ranging between 30 and 40 years old, equal to 35%. The number of a male was ten people, mean 50% of the participants, and the number of a female was also ten people equal to 50%. Concerning marital status 100% of total members of respondents were single, they were neither married nor widows or divorced.

To their education qualification, eight of them presenting 40% have secondary education, five have an undergraduate education equal to 25%, four have a primary education equivalent to 20%, and three have a graduate degree equal to 15% of participants. To their occupations, 15% equal to three people were self-employed, 15% corresponding to three were health care people, 15% equivalent to three were factory workers, 10% equal to two people were teachers, and 10% equal to two were electricians, 10% equivalent to two people were drivers, 10% equal to two were mechanicals, 10% corresponding to two people were non-occupation, and 5% equal to one person was government workers.

*Table 6. Demographic Background of Respondents*

Variable	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-30	13	65%
	31-40	7	35%
Gender	Male	10	50%
	Female	10	50%
Marital status	Single	20	100%
	Married	0	0%
	Widow	0	0%
	Divorced	0	0%
Education	Secondary Education	8	40%
	Undergraduate	5	25%
	Primary Education	4	20%
	Graduate	3	15%
Occupations	Self employed	3	15%
	Healthcare	3	15%
	Factory workers	3	15%
	Electricians	2	10%
	Drivers	2	10%
	Mechanicals	2	10%
	Non-occupation	2	10%
	Teachers	2	10%
	Government	1	5%

### **Program Implementation and Evaluation**

The survey conducted with the young people of Remera to interfaith marriage demonstrated the major problem as lack of sufficient knowledge on Bible principles about marriage. This causes the young people to go outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church to look for partners. Hence, this gives to the researcher the way to follow during seminars to redress the problem.

The analysis of the responses from the young people of Remera Church reveals in details the problem. Their major problem is what they give importance during their time of dating, which they consider as important factor to base on. A good number of the young people of this church never consider the counsels of the parents while

arriving at the time of looking for a partner. They do not care about shared religion during dating time. While the Holy Scripture considered as an important aspect to base on while selecting a partner for life.

The social media is another problem to the young people in this time of evolution, however a Christian would be careful to use social media to look for husband or wife. During the time of dating the character of a partner together with parents' character must be evaluated. Meanwhile today, the young people use social media as tools to select a spouse. The young people of Remera Church do not give much consideration of spiritual aspect and importance of the impact that can come after marriage because of wrong choice; however some of interviewees give significances to the spiritual aspect in marriage. However, during their time of choosing a partner, the majority of respondents have mentioned the role of God in the home and they remember to ask His intervention during the time of selecting a partner.

Throughout the time of data analysis, the researcher discovered the major cause of interfaith marriage. After analysis of results, the main problems found as the basis of their selection are financial factors and physical appearance. Almost the total number of the respondents within the young people accepted the financial factor as the most important factor leading to interfaith marriage. However, a good number of the respondents confirmed the physical appearance as also another cause of interfaith marriage in the youth. The others factors attributed to interfaith marriage are misconduct of the Adventist daughters because they forget their values as daughters of God and imitate the outside cultures. Education consideration is necessary today for the future measure; however are not the degrees that form a good family, before

consideration of the level it is quite necessary to look in the partner the obedience of God's word.

After assessment of results from the interviewees, especially the young people of marriageable age, the researcher would be able to help these young people with the appropriate materials because he knew now the cause of interfaith marriage and the gap they have in marriage matter.

In October 2015 the researcher presented to the committee of East Central Rwanda Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church the project for helping young people within the church to have stable marriages. The researcher decided to conduct this study because the young people are losing their lives and hope through interfaith marriage. He explained the importance of the study and the consequences of marrying outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

During this presentation, the content of chapter two about theological reflection was the basic of the content. After the presentation, the committee reaction was that this project helped the whole Conference to redress the marriage issues in the churches. At the same time, the researcher presented to the committee the manual prepared as a tool to the seminars and teachings. The manual was appreciated and adopted to be the tool for seminars of the Family Life Department of the conference (See Appendix B).

Another group was church elders of Remera Church. After the meeting with the conference leaders, it was the time of the church elders as part of program implementation. The purpose of the dialogue with the church elders of Remera Church was to see how the researcher together with the elders of the church can correct the problem of interfaith marriages in this church.

The leaders of the church are a key point of change; whatever the researcher

can do to redress the problem without the input of the church elders his effort would be vain. The church elders are responsible for the follow-up program to maintain what the researcher had done.

During the survey some young people showed the inadequacy of understanding the Biblical principles governing children of God in the time of choosing a spouse, not because of ignorance, but because some of the members are still new in Seventh-day Adventist Churches and their former churches do not teach the Bible as the Seventh-day Adventist teach. Sometimes they are baptized before receiving enough teachings about the church doctrines and their knowledge of the Seventh-day Adventist principles of marriage are not sufficient. So the understanding they have on marriage principles is what they have learned in their former churches.

### **Seminars with the Young People of Remera Church**

After collection and analyzing data, the researcher started conducting seminars in the implementation phase. The first seminar with the young people of Remera was conducted Saturday October 10, 2015, at Remera Church. In this first seminar, 541 young people and fifteen church elders were present. The church pastor presented the researcher and explained the purpose of the seminar; the duration of the seminar was two hours from 3:00 up to 5:00 of the afternoon. The topic of the seminar was “Dating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit” the topic was divided into three subjects: marriage in the Old Testament; prohibition of God’s people and important qualities to consider before entering marriage and consequences of interfaith marriage.

However due to the time limit, the researcher conducted three combined seminars. The first day of the seminar, after the opening prayer offered by the church

pastor, the researcher begins to present the subject of the day. The title of the day focused on marriage in the Old Testament. The researcher gave instructions from the Bible and from the writings of Ellen G. White and other spiritual authors about marriage covenant, the meaning of being one flesh, and about endogamy in the Old Testament.

### **Details of the First day of the Seminar**

To the marriage in the Old Testament, the researcher presented to the participants the conception of marriage to God from the beginning. The will of God was to have families that obey Him and observe His commandment. Even though the enemy had corrupted the marriage, the institutor of marriage wishes to have the families that remain to the covenant of marriage.

**Marriage covenant.** The covenant is a promise two people or two parties agreed on. However for a husband and wife their covenant is made between them, but also as vow to God, to the families and to the community surrounding. Therefore the families and community are the witnesses for the covenant of marriage. When one of the members of the family goes contrary to the covenant, the family members are responsible for reminding him/her to remember the covenant made in front of the family and friends

God has planned the covenant between man and woman to be eternal, but today there are obstacles for the marriage to be eternal. Misunderstanding in different families because of different beliefs had become one of the problems the families and society have today. Many congregations have accepted the union between people of same sexes and of different faiths, and this accelerates the wrath of God. Marriage by contract is also common because it is practiced in western countries. However, the intimacy in a marriage would be more than a contract.

The covenants must be the origin of happiness at home and each spouse would try the best to maintain the regular happiness in the house. In a mysterious sense, when two people joined for marriage the Bible says they become one physically and spiritually. Before the nation of God, Israel entered the promised land, God had given to them the instruction about marriage. The instructions were not to mix in marriage with the indigenous of the land. When Israelite arrived in the Promised land, some nations like Gibeonites corrupted them and request to unite through marriage and the consequences become vicious because they have accepted to mingle with the pagan nation in marriage.

However, it was prohibited to marry to the people who worship other gods than God the father. In Judges 3: 5-7 the Bible illustrates the anger of God to Israel people when made a covenant of marriage with the people of Canaan. In the Promised land was other nations occupied the place before the arrival of Israel people, so the selected people of God would live with them.

The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.” Ellen G. White forbid the marriages with people do not obey God and said “Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions. Never should God's people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God.<sup>1</sup>

The mission, the vision, the understanding, the needs and the will of this people were different with the Israel people. That is why the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White advice Christian to unite with those of the same faith.

**One body.** The Bible declares the oneness between husband and wife. In this

---

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Message to Young People*, complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 436.

union husband and wife become one body, two individual merges into one with tenderness and caring love. The wedding ceremony is a gift given to the Adam and Even from the beginning and should be practiced according to the will of the creator.

But being one flesh means far more than a physical thrill and release of bodily tensions between any male and any female. It means that two persons share everything they have. To become one flesh means that two persons become completely one with body, soul, and spirit and yet there remain two different persons.<sup>2</sup>

**Endogamy in Israel.** Endogamy is a practice made by some people like Israel to marry within the same group, ethics or faith. However, this was also the will of God to maintain the people who observe God's commandment. God exhorted the Israelites not to intermarry with other nations because He wanted them to be a holy nation. The surrounding people neither worshiped the true God nor observed His commandments. Indeed God's purpose of forbidding the union between His nations with others was for His knowledge and will to be known and followed from one generation to another. This demonstrates the importance of abstinence of mixing between the believers and those who don't accept God's instructions.

**Suitable helper.** Many people gave their own meaning to the suitable helper; some have said that the suitable helper is someone who brings his/her wealth or fortune for the development of the newly formed family. Others considered a suitable helper as someone who has a regular income who contributed to the wealth of the family. When some thinking about suitable helper they only think on the side of a wife, however, this is not right; a suitable helper is for both: the husband and wife. To become a suitable helper, both of them must love God than anything else. They must love God more than they love their own life. A suitable helper is someone who became the origin of happiness at home, who initiate the time of prayer at home.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dudley, Hutchison, and Baxter, *Married and Glad of It*, 29–31.

However, the Bible defines a suitable helper as someone who can lead his/her family to Christ, who can prepare his/her family for eternal life.

**Open discussion.** After the seminar the researcher give time to argue and to discuss the presentation of the day. The young people asked questions especially to the covenant of marriage. Their worries were to know if the covenant must be always eternal because the Bible in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 accepts to divorce of the wife when she commits marital unfaithfulness. The researcher answer was to choose a really Christian partner who cannot commit such sin. Because adultery is not an accident, it is planned and prepared sin that is the reason why God ask His people to marry the faithful person.

Another question was how a person may know suitable helper before marriage. The answer to this question was to take the time to pray for the partner, God is always ready to provide a helper who cannot deceive; the problem is that many people guided by their sentiments and emotions during the time of looking a helper. Other confuse a suitable helper with external appearance, however, the quality of good helper is the character of a person transformed by the word of God.

**Figures of the first seminar.** The number of the young people of Remera Church in the statistics was 630, but some of them were not available at that day. The number of young people attended the first seminar were 541 representing 85.8% of the whole young people of the church, the number of males was 240, and the number of females was 301. The church elders were fifteen equal to 93. 75% of the total number of church elders, including thirteen male and two female, the church pastor was also present on that day. The total numbers of the participants were 557.

*Table 7. Number of Participants in the First Seminar*

Category	Total	Attendance	Gender		Percent of Total (%)
			Male	Female	
Church Elder	16	15	13	2	93.8
Youth	630	541	240	301	85.8
Church Pastor	1	1	1		100

### **Second Day of Seminar**

The second seminar comes after one week, on Saturday, October 17, 2015, at Remera Church. The seminar attended by the church pastor, fourteen church elders, and 520 young people. The meeting started at 3:00 afternoons and end at 5:00 afternoons. The people were interested to hear the subject of the day. The focus of the second day of the seminar under the theme dating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit was "Prohibition to God's people and important qualities to consider before entering marriage." The researcher offered the opening prayer and starts the presentation.

The requirement of God to His people from the time of Adam was not to mix by matrimonial union with those who do not accept His instructions. The word of God states in Genesis 6:1-2 that "When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose"(NIV). Because of these unions, God became angry with them. In Genesis 6:3 then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years" (NIV).

The sons of men are those who are born to a generation of Cain, who disobeyed God's laws. The sons of God are those who come from the posterity of Seth. The people from the generation of Seth have remained keeping the Lord

commandments; however they have mixed by marriage with Cain's generation and incite the anger of Lord because of that marriage.

This is an example of how God hates the marriage between pure and impure people. If God had becomes jealous of people before the deluge when they violated His instructions, how it can be to the people of today if they commit the same mistakes? Whatever happened to the people of the time would also happen to the people of today if they test God's anger.

Ellen G. White said: "This nation would follow Abel's example of obedience. Men might have worked out the will of God. They might have obeyed His law, and in obedience, they would have found salvation."<sup>3</sup> The instructions are clear concerning interdiction of marriage to people worshiping other gods and the people who worship the true God. He is always unhappy of marriages between holy and unholy nations. God had counseled to his people regarding the problem of choosing daughters from elsewhere except the chosen ones. Therefore, God's people are required to follow the will of God in order to maximize their days in this world and have hope for the world to come.

**Important qualities to consider before entering marriage.** Marriage has rules and regulations in every community and society. Not only that but also the practice of marriage are not same in every religions or denomination. What one person call right is not right to other; the right marriage to one person is not right to another person. All these depend on what is important to one another. There are factors people today consider as important to them, however, it is necessary to bring those factors to the balance of the Bible to see if they are valuable.

---

<sup>3</sup> White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1 (1953):1089.

A Christian must be characterized by the guidance of the Holy Scripture, so he is not allowed to set his qualities different from the qualities of the Bible. Even in the marriage matter, a Christian must give importance to the qualities approved by the Bible before fixing his own qualities. Some Christians have failed in the marriage because they have set their qualities instead of thinking about Bible qualities.

The people learn from past experiences to reject bad things and to uphold good ones. The Bible considers Abraham and Isaac as righteous people of their time. So those who are living today would imitate their examples if they want to be friends of God. When Abraham wanted to choose a wife for his son Isaac, he sent his chief servant to his country and his tribe, and to their relatives. The reason why he did not take a wife from anywhere was because he wanted a daughter-in-law who obeys and who is faithful to God.

“When Rebekah fulfilled the requirements Abraham gives to Eliezer, he carefully observed to see if she fulfill the requirement of becoming the wife of Isaac” (Gen 24:21). There are qualities a Christian who obey God would observe to his/her partner for life. First and foremost a partner is someone who is righteous, who has a continuous faithfulness to observe Lord Commandments. In Genesis 24:16 the Bible describes the virginity and the beautifulness of Rebekah. The regulations about sexual misconduct and behavior of the time of Rebekah condemn the person involved in to the death penalty.

In the book of Deuteronomy 22:20-21, the Bible confirm the death of a daughter commit adultery while she is in the father’s house.

If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the young woman’s virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father’s house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done an outrageous thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father’s house. You must purge the evil from among you.

Therefore, certain characters would be observed in a young woman before her marriage, as same as good characters should be observed in a life partner after marriage.

***Commitment to Christ.*** At the time of choosing a life partner, a person should seek for a partner who is faithful, committed to Christ, a partner to whom you can go together in the house of prayer, and kneel down together, and adore thee. Such partner can lead his/her family to the way God desires to His people to follow. A young person before taking a marriage decision he must think about a person who is already changed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:17-20).

***Faithful person.*** Whatever an individual does, such as, what he/she wears, eats and drinks may determine his faith. It is not good to marry a person knew that he/she a heretic. You may not agree on every minor issue, but make sure that you agree on the biblical basis of sound doctrine and he/she must be faithful to the Lord (1 John 4:1-6).

***Culture/ family background.*** A person should study the family background of his spouse to be in order to find out whether there are traits that can be inherited from their family, which are incompatible to the new family. Difference in culture may have an impact to the relationship between husband and wife, and may be a handicap of the family to be model.

***Commitment to church.*** The Christians are called to be united in the church and every one to use his/her talents to the advancement of the God's work. In Ephesians 4:5, Paul states the Christian calling in "one hope, one Lord, one faith and one baptism. And in Ephesians 4:11-13 he illustrates the gifts of Christ to His followers in order to be united in faith and contribute to the church mission.

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of

Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

So the agreement to the church commitment is essential for the couple before marriage.

God did not intend the Christian life to be a game of solitaire. He designed the church to meet the needs of the believers, and for them to serve the church; nevertheless, before going far a boy or daughter should agree on this issue for the better future of their life.<sup>4</sup>

***The manner of life.*** Genotype, rhesus factors, mental ability, HIV status and state of mind should be analyzed before making a decision. All these may have an impact to the joy of the family and may become a handicap to the development of the family. Therefore it is good to know the problem that can be an impact of the well-being of the family and if possible prevent it.

***Age gap.*** Too much gap of age could be a source of marital conflict because the desires of a young teenager of say eighteen years are different from those of a mature person of forty years old. "An age difference of from two to four years, with the man being older, is generally a fair statement of the ideal."<sup>5</sup> The desire and ambitions of the person advanced in age are totally different with a younger person, so the age consideration in marriage is necessary for a happily home.

***Educational attainment.*** The aspiration, vision, and perception of a well-educated person could be different from that of an individual who is not well educated. So the education consideration is an issue to consider before taking a decision on marriage. The well-being of the family of the same level of education or

---

<sup>4</sup> Ron Mehl, "Choosing a Life Partner," *Family Life*, accessed March 12, 2016, <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/choosing-a-spouse/choosing-a-life-partner>.

<sup>5</sup> Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 62.

similar level are good than those of who are controversial in opinions.

***Nature of job.*** The nature of the partner's job is one of the important factors that can influence marital relationship. For example, there are some professions that demand and require absence from home for a period of time. Professionals, such as nursing, medicine, journalism may require working during nights, while profession like piloting, driving, geology, salesmanship and security service may require a long absence from home. It is quite important to accept a partner knowing that he/she may pass a certain time outside of the home and prepare to accept that kind of life condition.

***Skin beauty.*** Everyone has the mental picture of his/ her, marital partner. The physical characteristics one may desire before making a decision includes body shape and size, skin complexion, the shape of the nose, the size of the head, hands, legs, and dress habit is essential. This is necessary because it gives a lot of joy to marry someone that one appreciates her beauty or his good look.

However, the Lord does not look in the same way as a man. He looks the heart transformed by the Holy Spirit and internal quality of a person who trust only in God. In the book (1 Sam 16:7) the Lord said to the prophet Samuel "Do not consider his appearance or his height. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

The selection of God is different with the selection of man, God is not interested in the skin beauty and physical appearance, but to the interior character of a transformed person. Beauty is only skin-deep, but character goes right to the bone. A person may be physically attractive to somebody, but that is not as important as the inner character. The successful marriage is not based on the external look but to the

faithful person, committed to Christ and determined to hold the righteousness up to the end.

The Bible says “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and he will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6, NLT). Every Christian who wishes to have a better future should make sure he prays and asks God to show him the path where he should walk. Put all hope in the hands of God (Ps 25:4-5, NLT).

**Figures for the second seminar.** The total number of attendance of the second seminar was 525, including 520 young people, representing 82.5% of all young people of the church. The number of males was 226, and the numbers of females were 294. The total number of church elders of Remera Church are sixteen, the church elders participated in the seminar were fourteen, include twelve males and two females equivalent to 87.5 % and the church pastor of Remera district was present also. The total numbers of the participant were 525.

*Table 8. Number of Participants in Second Seminar*

Category	Total	Attendance	Gender		Percent of Total (%)
			Male	Female	
Church Elder	16	14	12	2	87.5
Youth	630	520	226	294	82.5
Church Pastor	1	1	1		100

### **Third day of the Seminar**

The third session of the seminar is conducted on Saturday, October 24, 2015, at Remera Church, the time to start the meeting was three of the afternoon and it ended at five thirty. One of the young people offered a prayer and the researcher begun the presentation. The focus of the day was consequences of interfaith marriage.

Enough time is taken by the attendees to spell out the consequences the people involved in interfaith marriage can meet in their family life before the researcher also gives his opinions.

**Consequences of interfaith marriage.** The attendees after two sessions of seminars they were able to give the consequences the interfaith families may meet in their lives. Some of the consequences they have mentioned are children's confusion to the church to attend, diminution of happiness at home, alienation in Christianity, divorce, and losing hope for eternal life. One of the attendees had given the advantages of interfaith marriage as to remove barriers between denominations and to increase the number of the members of the church.

The consequences of the interfaith marriage affect the church, the couple, the children and the society. The church loses the members; it brought misunderstanding in the family and the married lack of joy. The mistakes of the parents affect also their children and the large family. The society is affected by the family problem, especially in the case of divorce; it involved the justice to solve the problem.

The writers of the Old Testament such as Moses warn about religiously mixed marriage, the great concern was to the people called people of God, like Israel people. Moses warned Israel not to intermarry with others people because they can faze them to follow God, and end up by worship their gods. In Exodus Moses warned Israel with intensity about mixing with the people of others religion.

Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same (Exodus 34:12-16).

Again in Deuteronomy 7:1-4, he reminded them the same message

Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

Paul clearly states the forbidden unification with non-believers in (2 Cor 6:14-15). Ellen G. White advises on the same in the book *Adventist Home*. She wrote about the problem of marrying someone who is interested in the world rather than Jesus. She says

It would be better to remain unmarried than to link your interest for life with one who chooses the world rather than Jesus, and who leads you away from the cross of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Another fearful observation from White states:

Just as the Israelites did in disobedience to God in the Old Testament, hundreds have sacrificed Christ and heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons.<sup>7</sup>

The majority of people engaged in interfaith marriage without thinking about its impact, but the values of earthly joy are not comparable to the happiness of heaven, therefore it is necessary to give glory to the God by selecting the partners who honor God.

The consequences of interfaith marriage affect the present life, the Christian life, and the future life. It can impact the formed family and even the larger family. The couple and their descendant may suffer due to the wrong decisions made without enough assessment of the consequences. The devil is watching and waiting for people who make this choice of marrying his workers. He knows that when a person is united in marriage with unbeliever non-Christian, he become the enemy of God and follow

---

<sup>6</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 68.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

his way. Therefore a Christians should understand that it is a great mistake to be united with somebody who is the enemy of God.

The feedback from young people after this seminar was positive except some who were not well convinced to the prohibition of interfaith marriage. To them the consequences of interfaith marriages were negligible. This required another strategy to help some of them, especially those consider themselves knowledgeable.

**Figures for the third seminar.** The total numbers of attendees of October 24, 2015, were 580, include one pastor, fourteen church elders composed by twelve male and two females, corresponding to 87.5%. The young people were 565 equivalent to 89.6%, the number of the male were 246 of the participants and 319 were daughters. Because the pastor is one, and he was present the equivalence is 100%.

*Table 9. Figures of Participants in the Third Seminar*

Category	Total	Attendance	Gender		Percent of Total (%)
			Male	Female	
Church Elder	16	14	12	2	87.5
Youth	630	565	246	319	89.6
Church Pastor	1	1	1		100

### **Seminar with Educated Young People**

The feedback from the trainees after the third seminar revealed a misunderstanding of some people, especially those who are considered educated. In the group, they were 23 graduates people included thirteen female and ten male and 49 people who have Bachelors level, included 28 female and 21male. The majority of them have understood well the lessons learned, but nineteen only were confused to the way to follow.

The researcher decided to invite all educated people for another session of

November 7, 2017. On the first Saturday of November, the researcher meets the special intellectual young people of the church, the total number of attendees were 72 people. The meeting with this selected group started at three afternoons and ended at five twenty, the seminar was beneficial because their way of understanding was different from the others. Their appreciation and considerations were also different.

Since this was a small group, it was possible for the researcher to discuss openly with them. They gave their arguments on interfaith marriages and the researcher helped them to reason beyond the present benefits and focus on their purpose of being Adventists and their perspectives for the future. The researcher discovered that their main problem is to understand Adventism and its Bible belief and the target they have in life. Some of them enjoy being Adventists without really being converted and they do not know the doctrines of Adventist Church even though some of them are members of the church from ten years.

There was a need for them to be taught about the consequences of marrying outside the church and the qualities considered as precious to God. The researcher explained to them the values of world wealth because the majority of them have a vision of prosperity in their life. The researcher explained to them again what God intended in establishing marriage and what He expects to His followers. God is not interested in the welfare of this world because He has planned the high things to those who do His will, including eternal life.

Contact with them brought change as they were able to realize the impacts of marrying outside the church and how such marriages have misled some people from the path to eternal life. A good number of them accepted Bible teachings and counsels from the spirit books on how to choose a partner under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The researcher realized that the people of same nature, same understanding,

and same character would be treated and trained together.

**Figures of the educated young people.** In the church, the total number of graduates and undergraduate are 72. Between them, 23 graduate's people included thirteen female and ten male and 49 people who have Bachelors level, included 28 female and 21 male. The majority of them have understood well the lessons learned, but nineteen only were confused to the way to follow. This figure corresponds to 26.3%, as state above the researcher organized a special seminar for all educated people including 26.3 % of those who did not understand well in the previous seminars.

*Table 10.* Number of Participants in the Educated Seminar

Category	Attendance	Gender	
		Male	Female
Graduate Level	23	13	10
Bachelors Level	49	28	21
Church Pastor	1	1	

### **Individual Meeting with Targeted People**

After receiving feedback from educated young people of Remera Church, the researcher realized that four people of them view interfaith marriage as being beneficial to the church because they consider it as a means of evangelism and increasing the church. In the regular participants two people called the researcher on the phone and asked him questions about seminars conducted, however, they have attended three seminars. This showed to the researcher a gap to fill for these two young people. Therefore on Sunday of November 15, 2015, the researcher carried out

individual contact with these 6 people at Remera Church from 2:30 PM up to 5:10 PM. He took advantage of personal contact because it easier to convince one person than a group.

From November 14, 2015, the church elders carried on with regular seminars using the manuals prepared to educate the young people to be guided by the Bible in every step of choosing their mates, preparing their marriage, and planning their future family. Their purpose was to make Remera Church a model in the whole conference and if possible in the whole Union, in following the Bible principles and advice from the Ellen G. White writings during the time of choosing a partner. Another vision was to reduce the number of interfaith marriages in their church and to have stable families.

**Figures of the unchanged people.** The total numbers of the young people of Remera Church are 630, between them 72 are educated; this mean that the non-educated are 558. The Table 11 indicates the number of the educated people who were resistant to the change. In educated people four equivalent to 5.5%, were resistant, while the uneducated were two representing 0.3%.

*Table 11.* Number of Participants in the Individual Counseling

Category	Attendance	Gender		Percent (%)
		Male	Female	
Educated	4	0	4	5.5
Uneducated	2	2	0	0.3

### **Indices after Seminars**

After seminars with young people, church elders and pastor if Remera Church, education, counseling, contact with focus group and individual meeting; the research conducted another survey to ten people now especially to the young people of Remera

Seventh-day Adventist Church. Every person was requested to answer six questions in the first series and five questions in two series, for two first series the researcher want to compare their knowledge of Biblical principles governing people during their time of dating, and consequences of interfaith marriage before seminars and the competences they have after seminars. The last is to test the improvement of understanding the qualities of a good partner (Questionnaires, see Appendix C).

The researcher selected ten young people from different categories. Six of them were male and four were female. The researcher selected more male, because in the Rwandan culture are the boys who have right to choose a partner. However, the number of females surpasses the number of a male in the church of Remera. The researcher selected one graduate female, one bachelor male, one male of high school level, one male government agent, one male driver, one female nursery, one female teacher and three unemployed people. All of them would answer questions about dating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the interview conducted on 29 November 2015.

Table 12 presents that, the responses received from the respondents after the seminars were adequate. The following Table indicates that consideration and understanding of Bible principles during the time of dating are necessary. According to the indications, there are many young people of marriageable age in Remera Church who have changed their mind after seminars. Now all of the respondents ten young people believe in seeking God's intervention as the key principle. All of them equivalent to ten people consider the importance of God's intervention during dating time. Consideration of Spiritual aspect in choosing a life partner increased to the total number of interviewees compare to 80% of the respondents before seminars.

Understanding of avoiding social media as a tool of dating also accepted by

the majority of the respondents compared to the statistics of before seminars. Focusing on shared religious beliefs during dating time has become apparent that is an important factor to consider before any other step. This is accepted by the young people of Remera and illustrated by the indices of after seminar. Consideration of parents and church counsels during dating the understanding of the respondents is quite good according to the responses of interviewees after seminars. The average of understanding biblical principle guiding young people in the time of choosing a partner for life increased also if you compare findings before the seminars and after seminars. From the table below, much consideration was given to requesting intervention from God, and consideration of spiritual aspect during dating time.

*Table 12. Assessment of Knowledge of Bible Principles After Seminars to the Young People of Marriageable age in Remera Church*

Discussion Questions	Answers
Is it necessary to ask for God's intervention during dating time?	Seeking God's intervention is the key principle during dating time.
Does the consideration of God's intervention during dating time essential?	Yes the consideration of God's intervention during dating time is very essential.
Do you remember to value the spiritual aspect in choosing a life partner?	Consideration of Spiritual aspect in choosing a life is quite necessary.
What do you thing on using social media as tool for dating?	The young people must avoid social media as a tool of dating as much as possible
Does the young people value shared religion beliefs during dating time?	After all shared religion is an important factor to consider before any other step toward marriage
Does a young person consider parents' and church counsels during dating time?	Consideration of parents and church counsels during dating would be a required element of every Christian person

Table 13 below indicates that the young people of Remera Church understood the consequences the person involved in interfaith marriage may confront in the formed family. After the seminars the participants in survey realize the confusion the family of interfaith marriage may have concerning the church to attend, because they are not belonging to the same church. Before the seminars, only fourteen people of the

respondents were aware of these consequences.

Another consideration is realize the confusion the family of interfaith marriage may have concerning the church to attend, because they are not belonging to the same church unfaithfulness to God nine persons of participants agreed on it, compared to fourteen out of twenty before seminars. The effect of the children's faith and confusion to which of parents they can follow is a major problem the interfaith families face in orientation of their children. However before seminars it was not the considered as big issue. The interfaith families have problem and inconveniencies in the life more than intra-faith families these have become understandable after seminar that families of same faith are happier. Another consideration is unhappiness of couple; the respondent need to know more about happiness, because some think the wealth as the origin of joy, however, the respondents after seminar realize the unhappiness in interfaith family to the high level compare to the number of before seminar. These results indicate that the seminars have had a great impact to change the mind of young people of Remera Church on how they value the long-term consequences of interfaith marriage to the Adventist members involved in.

*Table 13. Respondents Knowledge on Consequences of Interfaith Marriage*

Discussion Questions	Answers
Which church the children attend in interfaith marriage?	There is confusion to the children of interfaith marriage concerning the church to attend, because they are not belonging none.
Does interfaith families faithful to God?	The unfaithfulness of interfaith families is far more than intra-faith families
Which effects the children of interfaith marriage face?	Confusion to whom of the parents they can follow.
What are the inconveniencies of Interfaith marriage?	Misunderstanding between couple, unhappy family, problem to the children orientation
Does interfaith couple happier?	No, they not always happy.

Some of the questionnaires the researcher asked after seminars were about the characters and qualities to consider in courtship time, after seminar the young people of marriageable age in Remera Church indicated that every person would choose a person committed to Christ. Again ten people of respondents would accept to seek for a faithful person before the declaration for marriage. Nine people out of ten interviewed, said they would look for the employed person. Beauty was also an important quality to consider where nine of respondents agreed on beautifulness as important element of dating choice. The culture and family background were least valued by interviewees by eight people out of ten of respondents. In the character and quality to look for in the time of dating, the commitment to Christ and faithfulness has surpassed all the other qualities.

*Table 14. Qualities to Consider in Courtship Time*

Discussion Question	Answers
Order according to the importance the quality to consider in courtship time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Faithful person</li> <li>2. Commitment to Christ</li> <li>3. Beauty</li> <li>4. Employed person</li> <li>5. Culture and family background</li> </ol>

### **Results after Research Implementation**

In Remera Church before the researcher start the study in the year 2014, the number of the young people married outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church was 9% equal to thirteen marriages out of 144 marriages, according to the church statistics. The intra-faith marriages were 91% equal to 131 marriages out of 144 marriages. However even though the number of intra-faith marriage is bigger than interfaith marriage, there is a need to save all people.

Jesus in the book of Luke 15:4, when He talked about one lost sheep had said

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?” The church is not worried about the young people who remain in the church, they are in the house of the father, however, the problem are those who are becoming lost because of world attraction. So the church will not keep silent even if is one person who drops the church to any manner.

Table 15 below presents the number of intra-faith marriage and interfaith marriage in the year 2015. The number of young people of this church married to the non-Adventist was 7.6% equal to six people, compare to 92.4% equal to 79 married within the church within five months.

*Table 15. Comparison of Intra and Interfaith Marriage from January to May 2015*

2015	Intra-marriage		Interfaith Marriage	
	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
January	19	90.4	2	9.7
February	14	93.3	1	6.7
March	14	93.3	1	6.7
April	14	93.3	1	6.7
May	18	91.7	1	8.3
Total	79	92.4	6	7.6

This number of interfaith marriage had pushed the researcher to conduct a study in this church to help the young people to reverse the thinking on the marriage issue. The marriage is a crucial and important ceremony that needs enough care. It must begin with prayers and much attention because it has had some dire consequences to the children and to the whole family. Most of the time interfaith marriages generally created more conflicts than happiness to the couple's involved and to the community in general.

Before the research, Remera Church had two challenges: firstly, the church

elders did not give much attention to the problem of interfaith marriage in the young people of the church, and secondly, the materials prepared for seminars and other training were not sufficient. After the seminars, the elders of the church understood the utility of caring the youth as the tomorrow's leaders of the church. Furthermore, they have now manual to use it during the seminars and teachings. The intervention of the researcher together with the elders of the church had created an impact to the marriage in Remera Church.

The study conducted by the researcher in Remera Church was intended to awaken the consciousness of Remera young people by using examples from the Bible, instructions from the Spirit of Prophecy and other knowledgeable books during their time of dating. Before the research implementation in the year 2015, the number of intra-faith marriage from January to May within the church were 79 equal to 92.4%, because in the same period the church recorded six interfaith marriages of their young people equal to 7.6%. From October to November 2015 the researcher conducted the seminars with young people and elders of Remera Church, where after the church elders continued the seminars until December 2015. After the seminars, the results become positive because the number of interfaith marriage reduced. The records of the same period from January to May for the year 2016 showed the hope for stemming interfaith marriage in Remera Church.

Even though the augmentation of marriages may vary from time to time, the numbers of marriages registered in church book of Remera in 2016 have increased from one to two couples every month, except the month of April where the number of marriage remain the same compared to the previous year 2015.

Table 16 presents the records of how the number of marriages has increased from January to May 2016 as compared to the same period in the year 2015. The

superior score comes in May where the percentage increased to 10% equal to two marriages, when the number of marriages rose from eighteen to twenty. The month of January, February and March the records of marriage increasing were same because to every month it was one marriage increased in comparison with the same months of 2015. However compare to the number of marriages in each month February and March increased by 6.6% equal to one marriage of increasing, while the month of January increased by 5% equal to one marriage. The last month was April scored 0% where the number of marriage in 2016 remained the same as in 2015.

*Table 16. Comparison of Marriages in the Records, Between January to May 2015 and January to May 2016*

2016	Intra-marriage	Interfaith Marriage	Increase	
	Number	Number	Number	Percent (%)
January	19	20	1	5
February	14	15	1	6.7
March	14	15	1	6.7
April	14	14	0	0
May	18	20	2	10.0
Total	79	84	5	5.9

In these five consecutive months of the year 2016, the average of marriage within the church come from 79 couples and arrived at 84 couples mean five marriages of increasing, with the percentage of increasing equal to 5.9%, this indicates that the number of intra-faith marriage come from 92% and arrived at 97.9%. The Table 17 indicates number of interfaith marriage decreased from 8% to 2.1%. That mean from six interfaith marriages in five month of the year 2015 to two interfaith marriage in the five months of the year 2016. One interfaith marriage recognized in January and one in May. The purpose of the researcher was to increase the number of Adventist marriage from 92% of the weddings recorded in the year

2015 to 95% in the year 2016. Therefore, the researcher managed to reach the goal proposed because had arrived to 97.9%.

*Table 17. Comparison of Intra and Interfaith Marriage from January to May 2016*

2016	Intra-marriage		Interfaith Marriage	
	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
January	20	95.0	1	5.0
February	15	100	0	0
March	15	100	0	0
April	14	100	0	0
May	20	95.0	1	5.0
Total	84	97.9	2	2.1

### **Summary of the Chapter**

Christianity for those who accept Christ is learned from early age to the old age. However, its application in the life of people has become a matter of study. A good number of those who professed to be Christians have refused to be led by the Holy Spirit in their daily life. This is also observed in the time of dating when one has to choose a life partner. Many people are led by their own desires, instead of being guided by the Holy Spirit. Some refuse to give value to the parents and church counsels during that important time. The young people today are not interested in faithful persons committed to Christ, but they look physical beauty or an employed person. Instead of taking time and looking for the will of God, they are busy searching sites to find a partner in the social media.

The first thought of the young people to consider would be a partner of good character who is committed to God and faithful to the promise of God. A young person who has committed his/her life to God would not accept to be mixed with an unfaithful person, just as oil and water cannot be mixed, a mouse and a cat would not

make the best of friends. This is same for marriage life; a follower of Christ would not make a good marriage with an unfaithful person.

Nothing should be more important to the partner than the spiritual well-being. To find such person is more precious than gold in life. Abraham knew that his servant would travel a long distance to find a spiritually compatible bride for his son. It was not simply that he was a protective and controlling father but he knew that the most significant factor in marriage is to find a fervent person who accepts to be guided by the word of God.

Christianity is the most important factor to consider while a young person is looking for a partner. That is why Abraham gave his servant strict orders: not to look for a wife for his son among the Canaanites who were notorious idolaters, who worshiped gods and goddesses and who sacrificed a human being to their gods.

Many young people today do not consider how and what their partners worship. Before any step in marriage, every person must find out if the partner knows Jesus as the Savior and provider of life. Even today there are Canaanites in many churches. They are not obviously pagan, but they can appear in religious outfits. However, it is not sufficient for a partner to be just religious, but to have an intimate relationship with God and to observe His commandments.

The young people of Remera Church have the desires of choosing partners from other denominations. However, after the seminars, advice and counsels from the Bible and from the writings of Ellen G. White and other Christian's authors, they have accepted to change their mind. To allow their feelings to dominate the spiritual issues is to allow the enemy to inspire their hearts. The most important issue to consider during dating time must be the spiritual aspect. The indicators are a score of change after seminars and the reduction of interfaith marriage in Remera Church.

The Lord never gives importance to the conditions set by a person seeking a partner, if they are not leading to eternal life. God's concern must be the people's concern. His thinking is far beyond of human thinking. So it is wise to request for the direction to follow from Him during dating time because His ways are good forever.

## CHAPTER 6

### FINAL EVALUATION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Interfaith marriage has a great impact on church and society in general. Inasmuch as the Seventh-day Adventist Church uses considerable effort to reduce this kind of marriage, the young people are still losing hope for the future and the families are getting ruined. This chapter focuses on findings and evaluation according to research objectives, summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

#### **Final Evaluation**

The research focused on young people of twenty-one years old and above of Remera Church. However, in data collection, different categories of people who are involved in interfaith marriages were interviewed, including, two pastors, three church elders, five interfaith families and twenty young people of the marriageable age of both genders.

Reference to the young people of Remera Church, the knowledge and level of understanding of marriage principles according to the scripture and to the counsels from the writings of Ellen G. White is low. Most writers talk about marriages, but it is wise to carefully select those in line with Biblical principles. The young people of Remera are requested to select good literature wisely and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help them choose those written in accordance with the Bible principles during the time of dating.

The young Christians would have an adequate level of knowledge about the Bible principles that guide the choice of friend for life. After finding it has realized the inadequate of knowledge to the concepts of the Bible of Ellen G. Whites and others spiritual writers guiding them in the time of choosing partners. However after evaluation of the study findings, it became clear that the respondents don't have sufficient knowledge.

Regarding the causes of interfaith marriages according to the young people of marriageable age in Remera Church, financial factors top the cause of interfaith marriage within the youth. Followed by a physical appearance, misconduct of Seventh-day Adventist ladies was also an important cause according to the respondents. Family factors and education consideration are also another important factors, while Social network was least considered.

On the consequences of interfaith marriages, the respondents knew that marriages between people sharing different faith confuse the partners and their children about which church to attend. Unfaithfulness to God and effects on the faith of the children has been noted by the respondents as also an issue to consider before taking a decision. Inconveniencies brought by misunderstanding between couples and unhappiness of the family came last according to the respondents.

### **Summary**

The introductory chapter deals with the problem in Remera Church, where the young people marry to people of other churches and denominations, which result on marital conflict in the families involved in interfaith marriage. The purpose of the researcher was to develop guidelines that helped the young people of Remera Church to overcome the problem of interfaith marriage. Through Bible teachings and principles from Ellen G. White and other writers; the researcher would highlight the

important factors to consider when a man or woman reaches the crucial time of dating. The Seventh - day Adventist Church as remnant is a unique and special church, it differs from other churches to the various reasons; it is the only church that respects all God's commandments and that has the testimony of Jesus. However, its uniqueness must be manifested in honoring God's instructions as it is written in the Bible. Marriage is one of the rites that must distinguish the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the other churches and denominations.

Chapter two in theological foundation the dissertation analyzed the origin of marriage from the beginning, the models of the marriage in the Old Testament and New Testament. From the time of creation, God's plan for marriage was to become a source of Joy and happiness in the family. Families' joy would be expanded in the society and would become a source of joys in entire world. Marriage is a covenant in between husband and wife but this covenant is made before God, therefore no longer for spouse only is also a covenant with God. In marriage the couple pledges to love each other, to be loyal to each other, and to be together as long as they are still alive. When these pledges are applicable in the family, it becomes a place of rejoicing and the members of the family learn to love and to serve God.

However, this may not happen unless the people accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit. From the time of dating, during their time of preparation for marriage, and when they form the family; the Lord must be the center of their desires, the center of their work, and the center of their life.

If people knew the goodness of God, His love and His ambition to the human race, they would accept His guidance. After knowing God, they may know His reality; and understand that He chooses the best for His people; not only in matters of marriage but in every area of life.

The Lord, who creates man and women and joins them, is the one who can guide every person to his/her right partner. The Bible illustrates the marriage as a covenant between a man and woman, but the covenant must not be made blindly; first and foremost the marriage must be a factor of linking man to God. Spiritual factors would be considered in marriage rather than physical ambition. The relationship a person has with God will be reflected the relationship will have with his/her partner. Therefore if a person obeys and respects God, it will be the same for the partner.

When two people love the Lord, the closer each of them gets to the Lord, the closer they get to each other, and God becomes the concord that binds them together for life. The Old Testament clearly indicates the will of God in a matter of marriage and point out the consequences of those who go contrary to the instructions of God on marriage matter.

Marriage originated from God himself when He joined the first parents in the Garden of Eden and is established from the beginning to be the origin of reproduction and the fulfillment of the earth. However for the marriage to be successful, the similarity in belief and commonality in faith should be considered before any step of marriage.

The Bible messages in the Old Testament forbid the union of God's people with the forbidden race. These directives were given to Israel before they entered the Promised Land. However, some leaders, Kings, and people of Israel sinned against the Lord by marrying the people who worshiped idols. Paul's teachings suggest that better to remain unmarried than to form a family on a dangerous ground with someone who is an enemy of Christ and who will lead you away from Christ.

The third chapter deals with arguments of the authors who wrote about interfaith marriage. The teachings of Seventh-day Adventist Church on marriage

agree with the teachings of the Bible that one should marry someone you share the same faith with. The bible shows serious consequences that befell Israel as a nation when they refused to obey God's instructions on interfaith marriages. They became idolatrous, pagans and enemies of God. So a partner for life should be selected carefully and prayerfully because it is a life decision.

Prayer for God's wisdom and directions of the Holy Spirit are essential during the time of choosing a marriage partner. Many people have made mistakes because of carelessness in this matter: Samson and pagan woman Delilah, Solomon with pagan wives, Ahab and Jezebel are examples of people who reacted contrary to the Biblical instruction and experience the consequences of their choice.

The Scripture is clear that it is quite wrong for a Christian to marry an unbeliever. People may think that they can bring good out of a wrong action, but this is mere deception, this has been the downfall of many young and older Christians. Without Christ, there is no true happiness and joy, and no blessings come in disobedient. Marriage is for life and any wrong step taken is taken for life.

For a Christian there is another aspect to consider while choosing a partner, some ignore the commitment to the Lord and look for just a baptized member; the advice is to choose a Christian who proves to be committed to Christ. Many people come to the church not because they are converted but because they need a partner, and few days after marriage the attraction of the world take them back to the world things. If someone is not committed to the Lord, he/she cannot be a suitable partner.

If young people who are involved in the Lord's work in whatever capacities and abilities can meet others who are like-minded, the commitment to serve the Lord will flow up to the home. Body attraction is not sufficient because the reality may appear different after marriage.

The family that serves the Lord and which has the same faith and understanding enjoys the privileges of Christian fellowship. Then together the couple brings up children with the same conviction.

. The world today is dominated by technology and if people accept the social media as their means to socialize, it can unconsciously affect their choice. The young people today need to be guarded against songs, films, books, plays, the internet etc. because these media entertainment lowers children's morals and overplay the physical and emotional aspect of choosing a good partner.

Therefore, the "Seventh-day Adventist Church strongly discourages marriages between a Seventh-day Adventist and a member of another religion and strongly urges its pastors not to perform such marriages."<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White advises that: "it would be better to remain unmarried than to link your interest for life with one who chooses the world rather than Jesus, and who leads you away from the cross of Christ"<sup>2</sup> There is nowhere in the Bible or in the writings of Ellen. G White the marriage with person of other faith is encouraged.

The true happiness in the home comes when Christ becomes the reign of the family. Unpleasantness, bitterness, disappointment may not leave home for the members of the family invite Christ in their daily program. The welcome of Christ in the family had miraculously restored the happiness and peace in the house and stop the misunderstanding in the family.

Chapter four described the ministry context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Remera, where the study was undertaken. This chapter also discusses interfaith relationships in this church and further identifies factors that lead to

---

<sup>1</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, 147.

<sup>2</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 68.

interfaith marriages and the current situation in this church. After analyzing the data the researcher discovered the causes and provided the results of the interfaith marriages, an intervention is developed to help the young people to take measures for the future of their families.

Chapter five intended to redress the problem of interfaith marriage in the young people of Remera Church through seminars, counseling, and education. The most required task for the researcher is to help these young people to consider the Bible principles, counsels from Ellen G White and other spiritual authors during their time of choosing life partners. The values of Christianity have been left aside and worldly attractions have been accorded greater consideration. The purpose was to correct mindset of young people of Remera Church on characteristics of a good partner through seminars, advice, counseling and continuous education.

### **Conclusion**

According to this study, the young people of Remera Church do not have adequate knowledge of Biblical principles that guide them in a time of choosing marriage partners. They need to be educated more on marriage matters. The church elders and other leaders of the church needed to provide more effort to guide these young people in the way of the Bible.

Marriage is a tool of union between families and is a symbol of relationship Christ has with His church as a Bride and a Groom. It is essential to know that God created man and woman with equal worth but different roles and responsibilities for complementarities of couples in marriage. The Old and New Testament, as well as Ellen G. White writings, support marriages in which partners are Christians who fear and obey God. This refers to a similar understanding of faith and the same vision of following Christ.

Successful and happy marriages are becoming rare because of many misunderstandings at home. The rate of divorce is enormous in various places of the world, but the major problems it does arrive also in the Christian home. The churches are surpassed by the family situations and conflicts between the partners and children in the families are suffering.

The marriage unifies families in many things because the spouse becomes a member of the new family. Therefore they share hope and sorrow, fail and success, life and consequences from it. In the same way, when two people united in marriage matrimony they become one physically and spiritually, they become the origin of future generation and model for future homes. True and faithful love reigns where Christ is the overall control. When the married are harmonized in love, their souls praise the Lord, the Angels are welcomed in the home and Jesus takes the first place in the home.

However, for Christ to be the first and last in the home, the couple should have the same understanding of faith. Therefore before making the decision of marriage, each one must take the time to pray and ask God to choose for him/her, a partner who loves God more than he or she loves him/her and of the same faith. The person who respects the word of God and who accepts to be guided by the Holy Spirit in order to have a good family on earth but the family which will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Today young people are interested in the outside rather than to look inside for the heart that is committed to God. It is important to know if the fiancé puts God first in his/her life, or if he favors other things. The findings of this study indicate that many youths consider wealth and physical appearance as most important factors in their mate selection. Internal attributes are less considered and valued during mate selection.

Before final engagement, a young person should make sure that his/her friend for life is a Christian more than anything else because Paul warns about bad friends where he says: "Do not be misled. Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Cor 15:33). If a young person truly trusts in the Lord, he will not depend on his/her own understanding but he will instead seek the will of God in whatever he does.

In the family of such person, God directs his/her paths even when things seem difficult or dark. The Lord always is the counselor of that family and the leader of their children. When looking for a life partner, prayer is the only secret for every Christian to succeed. It is the only thing that deserves to be the arm of the Christian houses in order to become strong in the Lord.

There is power in the prayer especially when requesting good thing "The creator of man knows what bring happiness; He requires considering faith before choosing a lifetime partner. However thoughtfully and prayerfully wait for the responses from God for who will be a forever partner."<sup>3</sup>

If the human race had accepted the instructions of the Bible and the counsels of Elle G. White on marriage, families and the world would be a place of rejoicing. If God has chosen the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be a special people and the light for the nation as He had chosen Israel, they should also follow the instructions given to Israel concerning marriage and choose within the church to maintain the people who obey God and keep His commandments.

Marriage is part of God's plan; it is a gift which has to be valued and respected. If people want to remain faithful to God they have to respect the gift of marriage. Because it is not a human initiative, cultural requirement or wish of

---

<sup>3</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church Department of Family Life, *Fullness of Joyful* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1984), 54.

growing family, but marriage is an institution of God. It is intended that the people must respect God's order, being faithful in order to raise their children in harmony with God's will. The conformity between husband and wife, between parents and children, the family as whole, is necessary since the family is a pillar of the church, for the community, church, and nation.

### **Recommendations**

The study conducted at Remera Church on interfaith marriages among the marriageable young people. The researcher has realized that young people are not equipped as it should be. Other aspect similar to the interfaith marriage or that may have similar consequences may be taken into consideration. Therefore the researcher suggests the following recommendations that can help the young people to be more efficient in the church and well cared, but also that can help Remera Church and the churches in Rwanda, in general, to help more the young people to have a stable family and be prepared for the eternal life.

1. Due to the importance of young people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church; the leaders at all levels should incorporate family lessons in the Adventist Youth program.
2. The method of teaching young people during marriage seminars must be improved to use many visual aids and concrete experience as much as possible.
3. The youth adviser in a matter of marriage should be an experienced person who has a good relationship with his/ her family.
4. Parents as responsible of their children must not leave the young people alone during their time of selecting life partners.
5. The findings and results of this study must be extended to other churches, and conferences in Rwanda to help the churches and pastors to redress the issue of interfaith marriage in their churches.
6. Because of the importance and values of young people as the church leaders of tomorrow, and in order to maximize their value and contribution, it wishes to provide a Pastor for the young people in churches where it's possible.
7. The interfaith couples need to open up and share the consequences of interfaith

marriage in order to prevent its impact in the church and warn the young on its consequences.

8. Further research in this area is needed to find out in a broader perspective the reason behind immediate marriage soon after baptism.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRES

**Young single persons**

1. Why do some young people prefer to marry outside the church? How do you consider the Biblical Principles of marriage during dating time?
2. Do the young people consider the Biblical Principles of Marriage during Dating Time? Does he/she still faithful to God after married outside of SDA Church? What would be the church for children?
3. Which church should he/she attend after marrying as person from another denomination?
4. What would be the church for children in interfaith marriage?
5. What are the important factors young people would consider during dating time? And what are the advantages of marrying outside of SDA Church?
6. Do you think interfaith couples are always as happy as SDA couples are?
7. What do you consider as disadvantages or inconveniencies of marrying a non-Adventist?

**Interfaith families**

1. What are the important factors a person based on in choosing the church to attend?
2. What do you consider to be the principal reason for interfaith marriage?
3. Why some Adventist marries outside?
4. Do you think there are differences in the quality of marriage life between intra-faith and interfaith marriage?
5. Have you the freedom to worship as you wish in interfaith family?
6. What will be the religion of your children?
7. If you were to make another choice in marriage would you choose to have an interfaith marriage?

**Pastors and church elders**

1. According to your experience, what is the average of people who marry outside of Seventh - day Adventist Church?
2. What gender in your experience considers marrying more to the non Adventist?
3. What do you think are the reasons for our young people to marry outside the Adventist Church?
4. Does the church organize the meetings with youth especially for the marriage matter?
5. Are these meetings regular or occasionally?
6. Do pastors/ church elders attend these meetings?
7. Have you materials to use on marriage seminars?

## APPENDIX B

### MANUAL DOCUMENT FOR TRAINING

#### **DATING UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

##### **Introduction**

In existence of all individuals the various stages of life are often marked by ceremonies symbolizing stepping-stone from one stage to another suchlike childbirth, adolescence and marriage. Marriage life is like being born again, this may be characterized by better life than prior. The cycles of life along time are understood and described by the living being. Marriage as a cycle of life may be characterized by the blessing of God.

The choice of a partner is an important stage in the life of every human being. Therefore spiritual quality must be the fundamental factor of choice while the youth arrive the period of dating; because the ending result to the unification of couples sharing different faith seem to be miserable. Some may enter into marriage thinking that they will change the other partner in the cause of marriage, but the result becomes unhappy marriage.

From the beginning God's plan for marriage was to be a permanent union between a man and a woman. The house would be a place where children are nurtured to love and serve God, where God-given gifts are developed and refined, and where all members learn how to share the good news of salvation with neighbors and friends<sup>1</sup> Scripture teaches us that marriage was the first institution established by God at the Creation, and ever since the beginning of time the evil one has worked to destroy it. The Bible and the spirit of prophecy have enough advices on marriage and family, the Bible is full of examples of successes and failures in marriage. From Genesis to Revelation marriage is considered as basic right of humanity and divine institution. Ellen G White through her scriptures gives instructions to the youth, on the way to follow while choosing a partner.

If the human race would follow the Bible and spirit of prophecy instructions on marriage, the families and world would be a place of rejoices. Therefore, this chapter will focus on what biblical and Spirit of Prophecy teachings are on marriage.

##### **Origin of Marriage**

Marriage is divinely instituted. God Himself performed the first marriage on the sixth day of creation when He brought together Adam and Eve as husband and wife (Genesis 2:18-25). In declaring their marital union God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is one of God's original gifts given in the Garden of Eden, which He has preserved throughout the ages; God created this loving companionship to give us a sense of belonging and joy.

Consequently the enemy of God and man has been tried to attack this institution to

---

<sup>1</sup> Oliver and Willie, "Strong Families: How Are Family," 16.

demolish the meaning of marriage. The results of this attack are evident from the beginning; in the garden of Eden Satan found the initial success when he successfully tempted to cause Adam to fail to his responsibility of accompanying his wife and help her in the choice of obeying God's commandment in contrary to be overshadowed by the enemy. As the Bible says after eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil, their eyes opened and they realized that they were naked.

God planned the first marriage to be the pattern for all future marriage relationships. God wanted Adam to be happy and fulfilled, so He created a counterpart (Gen. 2:18-21). When Adam woke up from his Friday afternoon nap, he was absolutely sure that the woman in front of him belonged to him. Seeing the woman the first time, he exclaimed: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). On that Friday afternoon of creation week began the opening love history.

**Marriage Instructions.** Even though there was no reporter to the act of the first marriage, through the scripture God tells us how all began. The Bible says that marriage is established by God and begun from the week of creation while God completed the creation of Heaven, the earth and their entire creatures. The only creator of marriage has the principles that should govern the marriage.

"If God had left us without instructions about marriage after establishing it, then marriage could be regulated according to personal will, but He has not left us in the dark. In His revelation to human being through the Holy Scripture, God has revealed His will regarding the nature and function of marriage. If a Christians choose to live in accordance with God's will, he must study and respect those Biblical principles governing marriage."<sup>2</sup>

**The Marriage Covenant:** The Bible indicates two kind of covenant; God with man and man to man. The scripture contains several covenants God made with man like: the covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham as sign between God and Him. (Genesis 17:11) and the covenant of becoming the father of the nations (Genesis 17:4); covenant to give to Israel as a nation the land of Canaan. (Exodus 6:4); covenant of rainbow made with the people of Noah's time to never destroy again the earth by flood; the Ten Commandments as words of covenant (Exodus 34:28); the blood of covenant for salvation and forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:8).

The covenants between two men are also biblical; the covenant between David and Jonathan found in 1 Samuel 18:1-4, is an example of covenant man to man. This covenant is made through mutual agreement and contains two components: promises and terms. "The promise expresses interpersonal commitment of individual making the commitment. Each pledge to keep the covenant and state what he/she will do. The terms indicate the conditions under which agreement will be fulfilled and the durations of agreement. Most covenants are accompanied by an oath or vow."<sup>3</sup>

In these days where the signs of the end of the earth are available everywhere, it is quite necessary to understand the marriage as covenant. The marriage today especially in the western countries is taken as contract between two individual. According to the bible the covenant of marriage is personal engagement for life, this covenant is permanent as long as the person is alive, it cannot be broken; if it's broken it is a personal loss. But the contract is between people and is for a short period of time, if

---

<sup>2</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*.

<sup>3</sup> Word Search, 7 References Library Software, Preacher Outline and Sermon Bible: Genesis, 12.

the contract is ended, the concerned separate because their covenant is limited. According to the Bible, marriage is a covenant which husband and wife make with each other and with God. In marriage the couple pledges their love, loyalty, and devotion to each other as long as they are both alive.

In Eph 5:28, 29 and Titus 2:4 confirm this love. Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. The husband must care and feed his wife as Christ does for His church. Such love enables husband and wife to accept each other unconditionally, to share in each other's pain and failures, to rejoice in each other's victories and accomplishments.

Paul describes the kind of love which is necessary for the marriage covenant to succeed: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, NIV). God has planned the covenant between man and women to be eternal, but the results of today's marriage are less satisfied than before. Many congregations have accepted the union between people of different faith, and this accelerates the divorce all over the world. Another problem arises when one of the partners refuses to share the treasures he/she possesses before marriage as it's acceptable and legally permissible or culturally encouraged for a spouse to separate their finances and possessions in time of covenant as some countries constitutions accept it. At that time the really problem this couple face is the lack of understanding the complete exchange and mutual sharing of everything they have for the rest of their lives.

The intimacy in a marriage is more than a contract. In a mysterious sense, the two become one—not only physically but spiritually as well. When Israelite arrived to the Promised Land, the Gibeonites who were inhabitant of the promise land tricked the Israel to enter into covenant with them. Even though this covenant was not in the will of God, He told them to honor the covenant they have made.

### **Marriage in the Old Testament**

In the beginning God preferred to make a woman from the rib of man, He had many possibilities to make a helper to Adam but with purpose He uses Adam's rib to create the first woman. The woman was formed for inseparable unity and fellowship life with the man, and the mode of her creation was to lay the actual foundation for the moral ordinance of marriage. Marriage is a type of the fellowship of love and life that exist between the Lord and His church (Ephesians 5: 32).<sup>4</sup>

### **A Suitable Helper**

When Eve came from the flesh of Adam, they shared character, thinking and faith. Had Eve came from elsewhere she would have different understanding with her husband, and should affect their relationship. The factor of having the same understanding, perception and appreciation between husband and wife is a vital aspect of success in the formed family.

**Leaving, Cleaving, One Flesh.** After God created the earth and the animals, He said, "Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:26-27).

---

<sup>4</sup> H. Branson William, ed., *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Gen. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1976), 1:226.

And God said “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Genesis 2:24. King James Version KJV. This verse mentions the three things that are essential to marriage: leaving, cleaving and being one flesh.

**Leaving.** Indicate the legal and public act of marriage-the wedding itself. It calls for both man and woman to stand up and declare before society that henceforth they will be a unit. It testifies that the man and woman are willing to make a commitment to each other, to live together and to share their future for the rest of their lives. They do not make this commitment secretly so that they can back out if things do not develop as they had hoped. They tell the world. They burn all bridges behind them. They make a clear cut with their parental home and begin a new family. The leaving family does not mean to forget the responsibility of child to their parents, especially when they arrive to the old age.

**Cleaving.** In Hebrew is “Dabaq” דבַּק the literal sense of it is “cleaving” is to stick to, to paste, and to be glued to a person”<sup>5</sup>.

Husband and wife are glued together like two pieces of paper. If you try to separate two pieces of paper which are glued together you tear them both. This indicates the kind of closeness that God planned for marriage. Husband and wife are to be closer to each other than to anything else in the world. Their relationship is to take precedence over their careers, over their hobbies, over their side interest, and other things.

They are also to be closer to each other than to anyone else in the world-parents, friends, business, associates-even closer than to their children. Only God should be closer to a person than his or her spouse is. But there are couples who fail to build their relationship because they are attached to the former friends, to the job, to education, sport, than to the spouse. Every spouse would learn to leave behind other attitudes and influence for the health and growth of the new covenant of marriage.

**Being one flesh.** Describe the physical aspect of marriage. God in His great wisdom sought for some way to symbolize and to celebrate the blending of two lives in the deepest intimacy and companionship possible between human. The almost unbelievably perfect answer was the sexual act. Here two individual could truly merge into one with tenderness and caring, it was the creator’s wedding gift to the father and mother of our race. But being one flesh means far more than a physical thrill and release of bodily tensions between any male and any female. It means that two person share everything they have, not only their bodies, not only their material possession, but also their thinking and their feeling, their joy and their suffering, their hope and their fears, their success and their failures. To become one flesh means that two persons become completely one with body, soul, and spirit and yet there remain two different persons<sup>6</sup>

### **Endogamy in the Old Testament**

“Endogamy is the practice of marrying within a specific ethnic group, class or caste, and rejecting others on such a basis as being unsuitable for marriage or for other close personal relationships. Certain groups such as Orthodox Jews have practiced endogamy as an inherent part of their religious beliefs and traditions.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Parsons, “Hebrew for Christians.”

<sup>6</sup> Dudley, Hutchison, and Baxter, *Married and Glad of It*, 29–31.

<sup>7</sup> Admin, “Endogamy,” *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*, accessed July 20, 2014, <http://www.en.wikipedia.org>.

God has exhorted the Israel people not to marry with other nations; this was because He wants to them to be a holy nation. The surrounding people have not learned to worship the true God and to observe His commandments. Indeed God's purpose by forbidding the union between His nations with others was His knowledge and will to be known and follow from one generation to another. Endogamy customs in Israel was necessary because their customs would be transmitted to their children and remains as faithful community who obey God. This demonstrates the importance of abstinence of mixing between the non-believers and those who don't accept God's instructions.

God's idea while refusing his people to marry outside of their tribes and religions, was to prevent them to be corrupted by those pagan people. "Through intermarriage with these people the integrity of Israel's faith could be undermined and ultimately destroyed. This was the supreme biblical argument for endogamy and against exogamy."<sup>8</sup>

**Abraham and Holiness of Marriage:** The Bible is full of example of right marriage and mistaken marriage in the life of humanity. Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, and tells to him "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women" (Gen 28:1 ESV).

If united with one who did not fear God, he would be in danger of sacrificing principle for the sake of harmony. In the mind of Abraham the choice of a wife for his son was a matter of grave importance; he was anxious to have him marry one who would not lead him from God.<sup>9</sup>

In the Old Testament Israel people would marry with people of same faith, according to the testimonies in the Bible; marriage would be sacred to descendants God's people. The consequences of the marriage of Abraham with Hagar, and of the marriage connections of Ishmael and Lot, were before him. The lack of faith on the part of Abraham and Sarah had resulted in the birth of Ishmael, the mingling of the righteous seed with the ungodly. The father's influence upon his son was counteracted by that of the mother's idolatrous kindred and by Ishmael's connection with heathen wives.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore the experience of Abraham for marrying Hagar would be the example to all generations. The practice he experienced became to him a lesson that helped to consider his nation while he wanted to date for his son Isaac.

The servant of God Abraham was instructed about the holiness of marriage, this warning should be considered as important information from the heavenly father to all generations. "It declares that the rights and happiness of this relation are to be arefully guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Both Abraham and Sarah distrusted the power of God, and it was this error that led to the marriage with Hagar. God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations, but his faith had not been perfect."<sup>11</sup>

**Isaac's Pattern:** In Genesis 24 Abraham's insistence on a non-Canaanite wife for

---

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012), 281–282.

<sup>9</sup> White, "Patriarchs and Prophets."

<sup>10</sup> White, *Message to Young People*, 464.

<sup>11</sup> White, *Daughters of God*, 28.

Isaac (v. 3) was not racial preference, but theological. The Canaanites worshipped Baal and Asherah (cf. 15:16; Deut. 7:3). But Abraham's extended family evidently worshipped the true God (cf. v. 31; 11:27—12:4; Josh. 24:2).

Isaac was not regarded as a merely pious candidate for matrimony, but as the successor of the promise, who must therefore be kept from any alliance with the race whose possessions were to come to his descendants, and which was ripening for the judgment to be executed by those descendants.<sup>12</sup>

Abraham by saying to the chief servant that God will to send His angel before him" (Genesis 24: 7) meant that He would prepare the way for Abraham's servant's arrival. Since camels could drink 25 gallons, the servant's sign was sagacious (v. 14). It tested Rebekah's kindness, hospitality, industry, and willingness to help a stranger.

Although the Lord elects both Abraham and Rebekah, his mode of revelation to them is strikingly different. To Abraham he speaks (12:7) in visions and auditions, to Rebekah he communicates through answered prayer and providential acts (24:27, 48, 50).

Rebekah's name means "Ensnaring Beauty," and Moses commented on her beauty (v. 16). It might seem strange that he wrote, apparently redundantly, that she was "a virgin, and no man had had relations with her."<sup>13</sup>

It was customary in Hurrian society to consult the bride before completing the marriage plans (v. 58-60). Also the brother took the lead in giving his sister in marriage. Note that Laban, Rebekah's brother, was the principal negotiator who represented the family rather than Bethuel, her father (cf. v. 50), or her mother (vv. 53, 55; cf. 34:11-17; 42:1-3). Another view is that Bethuel was simply too old, infirm, or was under his wife's control, as Rebekah later "organized" Isaac. The description of the family farewell also reflects Laban's leadership (vv. 59-60). Rebekah demonstrated her faith in Abraham's God by decisively choosing to leave her family to marry Isaac<sup>14</sup>

The story of how Rebecca became Isaac's wife illustrates much about mate selection. The story begins with Abraham, the father of all people of faith. Abraham did not allow his servant simply to wander around the countryside looking for a pretty woman for Isaac. Instead he sent him to a particular place, to a particular group of people. Abraham wanted to ensure that his new daughter in law had certain qualities, including spiritual compatibility with Isaac. Christians must marry within the "Christian territory."<sup>15</sup>

### **Important Qualities to Consider Before Entering Marriage**

Marriage has rules and regulations in every community and society. Not only that but also the practice of marriage are not same in every religions or denomination. What one person call right is not right to other; the right marriage to one person is not right to another person. All these depend on what is important to one another. There are factors people today consider as important to them, however, it is necessary to bring those factors to the balance of the Bible to see if they are valuable.

A Christian must be characterized by the guidance of the Holy Scripture, so he is not

---

<sup>12</sup> Constable, "Exegesis of the Book of Genesis," 89.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 190

<sup>14</sup> Constable, "Exegesis of the Book of Genesis," 190.

<sup>15</sup> Odunze, *Successful Family Living*, 2-3.

allowed to set his qualities different from the qualities of the Bible. Even in the marriage matter, a Christian must give importance to the qualities approved by the Bible before fixing his own qualities. Some Christians have failed in the marriage because they have set their qualities instead of thinking about Bible qualities. The people learn from past experiences to reject bad things and to uphold good ones. The Bible considers Abraham and Isaac as righteous people of their time. So those who are living today would imitate their examples if they want to be friends of God. When Abraham wanted to choose a wife for his son Isaac, he sent his chief servant to his country and his tribe, and to their relatives. The reason why he did not take a wife from anywhere was because he wanted a daughter-in-law who obeys and who is faithful to God.

“When Rebekah fulfilled the requirements Abraham gives to Eliezer, he carefully observed to see if she fulfill the requirement of becoming the wife of Isaac” (Gen 24:21). There are qualities a Christian who obey God would observe to his/her partner for life. First and foremost a partner is someone who is righteous, who has a continuous faithfulness to observe Lord Commandments. In Genesis 24:16 the Bible describes the virginity and the beautifulness of Rebekah. The regulations about sexual misconduct and behavior of the time of Rebekah condemn the person involved in to the death penalty. In the book of Deuteronomy 22:20-21, the Bible confirm the death of a daughter commit adultery while she is in the father’s house. “If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the young woman’s virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father’s house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done an outrageous thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father’s house. You must purge the evil from among you.” Therefore certain characters would be observed in a young woman before her marriage, as same as good characters should be observed in a life partner after marriage.

**Commitment to Christ.** At the time of choosing a life partner, a person should seek for a partner who is faithful, committed to Christ, a partner to whom you can go together in the house of prayer, and kneel down together, and adore thee. Such partner can lead his/her family to the way God desires to His people to follow. A young person before taking a marriage decision he must think about a person who is already changed by the Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:17-20)

**Faithfull person.** Whatever an individual does, such as, what he/she wears, eats and drinks may determine his faith. It is not good to marry a person knew that he/she a heretic. You may not agree on every minor issue, but make sure that you agree on the biblical basis of sound doctrine and he/she must be faithful to the Lord (1 Jn. 4:1-6).

**Culture/ Family background.** A person should study the family background of his spouse to be in order to find out whether there are traits that can be inherited from their family, which are incompatible to the new family. Difference in culture may have an impact to the relationship between husband and wife, and may be an handicap of the family to be model.

**Commitment to church.** “God did not intend the Christian life to be a game of solitaire. He designed the church to meet the needs of the believers, and for them to serve the church.

Nevertheless, before going far a boy or daughter should agree on this issue for the better future of their life"<sup>16</sup> (Eph. 4:1-16; Heb. 10:24-25).

**The manner of life.** Genotype, rhesus factors, mental ability, HIV status and state of mind should be analyzed before making a decision. All these may have an impact to the joy of the family and may become a handicap to the development of the family. Therefore it is good to know the problem that can be an impact of the well-being of the family and if possible prevent it.

**A gap of Age.** Too much gap of age could be a source of marital conflict because the desires of a young teenager of say eighteen years are different from those of a mature person of forty years old. The desire and ambitions of the person advanced in age are totally different with a younger parson, so the age consideration in marriage is necessary for a happily home.

**Educational attainment.** The aspiration, vision, and perception of a well-educated person could be different from that of an individual who is not well educated. So the education consideration is an issue to consider before taking a decision on marriage. The well-being of the family of the same level of education or similar level are good than those of who are controversial in opinions.

**Nature of Job.** the nature of the partner's job is one of the important factors that can influence marital relationship. For example, there are some professions that demand and require absence from home for a period of time. Professionals, such as nursing, medicine, journalism may require working during nights, while profession like piloting, driving, geology, salesmanship and security service may require a long absence from home. It is quite important to accept a partner knowing that he/she will pass a certain time outside of the home and prepare to accept that kind of life condition.

**Skin beauty.** Everyone has the mental picture of his/ her, marital partner. The physical characteristics one may desire before making a decision includes body shape and size, skin complexion, the shape of the nose, the size of the head, hands, legs, and dress habit. This is necessary because it gives a lot of joy to marry someone that one appreciates her beauty or his good look. However, the Lord does not look in the same way as a man. He looks the heart transformed by the Holy Spirit and internal quality of a person who trust only in God. In the book (1 Sam. 16:7) the Lord said to the prophet Samuel "Do not consider his appearance or his height. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." The selection of God is different with the selection of man, God is not interested in the skin beauty and physical appearance, but to the interior character of a transformed person. Beauty is only skin-deep, but character goes right to the bone. A person may be physically attractive to somebody, but that is not as important as the inner character. The successful marriage is not based on the external look but to the faithful person, committed to Christ and determined to hold the righteousness up to the end.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6, NLT). Every Christian who wishes to have a better future should make sure he prays and asks God to show him the path where he should walk. Put all hope in the hands of God. (Ps. 25:4-5, NLT).

### **Marriage Prohibition to God's people in the Old Testament**

---

<sup>16</sup> Mehl, "Choosing a Life Partner."

The requirement of God to His people from the time of Adam was not to mix by matrimonial union with those who do not accept His instructions. The word of God states in Genesis 6:1-2 that “When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose”(New International Version). Because of these unions, God became angry with them. In Genesis 6:3 then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years” (New International Version). The sons of men are those who are born to a generation of Cain, who disobeyed God’s law commandments. The sons of God are those who come from the posterity of Seth. The people from the generation of Seth have remained keeping the Lord commandments; however they have mixed by marriage with Cain's generation and incite the anger of Lord because of that marriage.

This is an example of how God hates the marriage between pure and impure people. If God had becomes jealous of people before the deluge when they violated His instructions, how it will be to the people of today if they commit the same mistakes? Whatever happened to the people of the time would also happen to the people of today if they test God’s anger.

Ellen G. white said: “This nation would follow Abel's example of obedience. Men might have worked out the will of God. They might have obeyed His law, and in obedience, they would have found salvation.”<sup>17</sup> The instructions are clear concerning interdiction of marriage to people worshiping other gods and the people who worship the true God. He is always unhappy of marriages between holy and unholy nations. God had counseled to his people regarding the problem of choosing daughters from elsewhere except the chosen ones. Therefore, God’s people are required to follow the will of God in order to maximize their days in this world and have hope for the world to come.

**Prohibition is a Divine Authority.** The Bible prohibition is divine authority; God have said in Leviticus 18:5 “Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.” And in Leviticus 18:30 said “Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the abominable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile you with them. I am the LORD your God.

The theological reason for the prohibitions is because the forbidden behavior would link Israelites with the Egyptians, the land the Israelites had left, and the Canaanites, whose land the Israelites came to possess. The moral corruption practiced by the Canaanites had so dishonored the land that they were to be hold.

**Joshua’s Advices:** Joshua doesn’t encourage such forbidden marriage, he wrote in Joshua23:12-13 “For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you” (NIV).

Israelites had acquired such behavior and the land in which they were going to occupy, had been defiled and vomited by God. Union with Canaanites people have become a great crime against God. Through its polluting influence Israel had contaminated the relationship with God and had resulted in divine sentence to Israel

---

<sup>17</sup> White, *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1 (1953):1089.

community in general.

### **Preservation to God's People in the Old Testament**

Moses servant of God had warned Israel by clear words about marriage to their descendant: Deuteronomy 23:2. "No one born of neither a forbidden marriage nor any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation." Through Moses God has prohibited the descendant of Jacob the cohabitation with the ethnics who possess the land because God knows the influence of them to Israel community, and if they dwelt near those people the consequences will come fast. The Israelites did not value the warning of God's servant and consequences follow them up to generations.

In Judges 3:5-7, the Bible said "and the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forget the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves." New International Version (NIV)

The warning of Lord is an instruction; He has warned His people not to befriend and mix with the people of the land, people polluted by the corruption, by detestable practices and filled with impurity from one end to the other.

Ezra 9:12 He informed the Israel again saying; "Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance." New International Version (NIV)

Prophet Ezra had asked this question. "Should we again break your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant or survivor?" Ezra 9:14 NKJV

The above sketch from the life of God's people is intended to point out the consequences of not obeying the commandment of Lord, and at the same time show what danger the people of God would have in forgetting the sacred vocation of their race, through marriages with nations and people of different faith.

**God's Ways for Leading Choice.** "In the ultimate, the Christian young person should be concerned more with the evidence of God's will in his life than he is with the counsel that he receives from other human beings. After he has received counsel available, he still needs to know before he makes a final decision, of what is God's will in the matter.

It is encouraging first of all, to remember that God invites the young people to come to Him, as He says in Isaiah 1:18 "Come now let us reason together", "because God leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble His ways" as He says in Psalm 25:9.

Unfortunately, sometimes the young people ask God of wisdom and then don't give Him an opportunity to impart that wisdom. Either they are not listening to what He has already said, or they are not waiting on His answer through prayer and meditation. There are ways in which God leads while you seek a life partner:

**God leads through Bible principles.** As people study Bible principles they begin to make them their own. This will narrow the field of potential marriage partner.

Through His word, God will lead His children toward the very best person, who is assimilating God's principles into his or her life.

**God leads through prayer.** Just as earthy friends find pleasure in talking to one another, studying, contemplating, meditating, so the heavenly father wants to spend time with His people through prayers. In this way He can impress your thoughts and bring to the mind ideas that will guide each one in thinking constructively.

Ellen G. White makes this comment: "If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated. Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life, both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will not advance his plans in this direction without the knowledge that God approves his course."<sup>18</sup>

**God leads through parents.** Honoring father and mother involve more than a card for mother's day and father's day. It is also recognizing their responsibility to the children and giving attention to their instructions. A person may not feel his parents understand his particular situation. That is not always true, more often they were right about their concerns. One of the saddest things that a person cannot forget in his life it's when the parents have tried to warn him, but he didn't hear their advices.

**God leads through qualified counselors.** God always speaks through pastors, teachers, counselors, and writers. Many hours are spent in preparing sermons, lessons preparations and classroom instructions, and writings for publication. Even though many different people are involved in these preparations to help people, their counselors may not be considered as something significant and important as they are.

**God leads through experience of others.** People can learn from the experience of others and that is one of the gifts that distinguishes human from animals. It is not necessary to go through other peoples experience in order to learn the lesson. But a wise person can be informed from experience of others. A miserable life as a warning of person with unsuitable marriages has the same background of information. It is given as a warning to keep person from going through bad and disappointing experience. "God has various ways of revealing His will to those who seek Him sincerely. But the young person who prays earnestly and waits patiently can rest assured that God will answer his prayer in the way that is best."<sup>19</sup>

### **Adventist Position in interfaith Marriage**

The annual world council of Bangalore in 1993 statement clearly delineates the ideal and makes it clear that church members should not expect their pastor to marry a couple when they come from different religious backgrounds. At the same time it allows for cultural adaptations.

This statement, for the first time, emphasizes the importance of premarital counseling. Ministers should not marry any couple with whom they have not counseled or who have not had some other minister counsel with them. Ministers should not perform the marriage ceremony if they feel that the couples are incompatible. The minister may refuse to marry two Adventist young people because after counseling them he or she believes that God cannot bless that marriage. Just because two people are Adventists does not mean they are ready for marriage.

Differences in religious belief should be only one of the criteria we use when deciding

---

<sup>18</sup>Ellen G. White, *Message to young people*, Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Shryock, *On Being Sweethearts*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> White, *Message to Young People*.

when it is appropriate to marry a couple. We have a solemn obligation to lift high the standards of God's Word. What a responsibility rests upon us. Ministers should never perform any wedding that they believe is violating the principles of God's kingdom. Let us continue to teach the principles so important for a happy marriage.”<sup>21</sup>

God has planned the covenant between man and woman to be eternal, but the results of today's marriage are less satisfied than before. Many congregations have accepted the union between religion of different faith, and this accelerates the divorce all over the world.

“The intimacy in a marriage is more than a contract. In a mysterious sense, the two become one not only physically but spiritually as well. Marriage is not a merely social or biological construct, but an icon of the union between Christ and the church. Both husband and wife is held accountable to the community for the marriage itself.”<sup>22</sup>

“Marriage covenant is covenant of faith because no Christian spouse knows for sure how their marriages are going to work out. What spouses can know for sure is whether or not they have solemnly committed themselves before God for a lifelong covenant partnership in which they shall belong together as long as they both shall live.”<sup>23</sup>

There are decisions a person can take for himself for their life of partnership according to his will, but the desire of living in harmony with the will of God imply other factors; remember marriage is not part time covenant, the Bible instruction require the married to be together as much as they are still alive.

“Therefore this covenant of permanent live and success of partners can only be made by spouses who share a common faith in God and in His ability to work out His purpose in their marriage. Sharing this common faith provides the courage to believe that God will help us to make our marriages work, even when they seem hopelessly doomed.”<sup>24</sup>

“Marriages are more likely to endure, and the family life to fulfill the divine plan, if the husband and wife are united and are bound together by common spiritual values and lifestyle. For these reason, the Seventh-day Adventist Church strongly discourages marriage between a Seventh - day Adventist and a non-Seventh-day Adventist, and strongly urges Seventh-day Adventist ministers not to perform such weddings.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Faithless Kings and Interfaith Marriage in the Old Testament**

The Kings was the super persons selected by God to lead His people; they would be an example in everything they do because the people would follow their model. Especially the Israel kings were called to be different from other kings because they

---

<sup>21</sup> Newman, “Marrying No-Adventist,” 5.

<sup>22</sup> Regnerus, “Is Interfaith Marriage Always Wrong, given That the Bible Teaches Us Not to Be 'Unequally Yoke?,” 62–63.

<sup>23</sup> Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Seventh-Day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 175–176.

were lead special people of God, but also they were anointed to lead these people in truth and in righteousness. However, some Kings of Israel goes contrary to the will of God betrayed their honor and profaned their holiness by the marriage with the wives who were not Israel and who worshiped idols

**Solomon.** In his youth, Solomon loved the Lord; he showed this love by worshiping Him and by walking in the statutes of David his father; in which were the statutes of the Lord, or which he exhorted him to walk in and follow. Therefore, even though king David was faithful to the Lord's instructions, his precedent king Salomon married the foreigners women including the forbidden nations

They were from nations which the Lord had instructed the Israelites this, "you must not intermarry with them because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods. Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love" (1 Kings 11:1-2 NIV). But after that Solomon married non-Israelite women, these wives turned his heart to the worshiping of false gods "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (1 Kings 11: 4).

During the revival of Nehemiah, he warned the Israel about marriage guidance to their children and said: "And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves" (Nehemiah13:25-27). This emphasis and prominence were to underline the preservation of relationship in marriage between the chosen nation and irreligious people.

**Judah.** In the book of Malachi, the Bible says "Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god" (Malachi 2:11ESV). The marriage with the people of foreign gods is an intolerable mistake to the Lord as Malachi wrote. Therefore the people of God must be wise enough and accept to be guided by the Holy Spirit during dating time.

**Ahaziah.** When you related through marriage to the family not obeying God you became like them and follow their customs. When Ahaziah was King in Jerusalem he related in marriage to the house of King Ahab, who was corrupted because of his wife who worshiped Baal. After this relation in marriage, Ahaziah has become also a worshiper of false gods and broken the relationship he had with the God of heaven. The Bible says "He followed in the ways of the house of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was related by marriage to Ahab's family" (2 Kings 8:27 NIV).

God has made a covenant with Israel be a holy nation, He has set apart this nation to glorify His name. the dwelling of God among this nation was a sign of the love God had for them. The sanctuary set up among them was a tangible sign of His presence He said, "It is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it" (Ps. 132:14); but by marrying the foreigners wives they profaned this holiness.

**Ahab.** In 1 King 16, the Bible gives the chronological origin of the king Ahab. He was the son of the king Omri who did evil in the eyes of the Lord and become sinner more that the kings who reign before him. Is one of the kings who provoked the anger of the Lord because of his vanities and idols worship? However, the marriage of Ahab and worshipers of Baal Jezebel is a result of his father who was also the worshipers of idols.

"Ahab married to Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the Zidonians and went and served Baal and worshiped him." (1 Kings16:31). It was the customer of the king

of Israel to marry the wives of pagan people. This was the first time the king of Israel associated by marriage to the pagan's people. Consequently, Ahab becomes proverbial for wickedness. "Her father was the high priest of the Baal. Jezebel's priestly origin may account for the queen's fanatical devotion to spreading false religion in Israel"<sup>26</sup> The nature of human is formed from what he/she always do. The personality of Jezebel was miserable due to the human sacrifice she offered to the idols of her father. "Jezebel was violent and had sanguinary character. She accounts for her great devotion to the gods of her country, and for her determined efforts to establish their impure rites in her husband's kingdom."<sup>27</sup> After their marriage the king Ahab has become also a servant of idols. The Bible says in 1 Kings 16:33 "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." The Ahab's unfavorable deeds were not only the heredity from his father but also the wrong selection of a wicked wife.

"Jezebel introduced into Israel many kinds of witchcraft the word making its debut in the Bible. Jezebel had a stable of 850 prophets in her service; 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah ate at Jezebel's table (1 Kings 18:19). She is the first queen persecutor against the prophets of God."<sup>28</sup> (2 Kings 9:22). "God would have been with Ahab if he had walked in the counsels of heaven. But he did not do this. He married a woman given to idolatry. Jezebel had more power over the king than God had. She led him into idolatry and with his people."<sup>29</sup>

The Old Testament illustrates marriage as a covenant between a man and woman, but the covenant must not be made blindly but first and foremost the marriage must be a matter of obedience to God. The Old Testament clearly indicates the will of God in matters of marriage and indicates the consequences of those who go contrary to the instructions of God. Shecaniah addressed Ezra and says "we have married foreign women from the people of the land, but even now there is a hope for Israel in spite of this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my Lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law" (Ezra 10:2-3).

### **Marriage in the New Testament**

With regard to marriage, the New Testament follows the Old Testament and does not develop a new form of marriage. This is not an exception, because other Old Testament teachings and institutions are also presupposed and continued in the New Testament, such as creation, the Decalogue, and the Sabbath.

### **Jesus' Teachings on Marriage**

Jesus at the very outset of His ministry, participated in a wedding (John 2), thus giving the institution of marriage His approval and blessing. In addition, Jesus reference to marriage in various places is linked to the creation account. There are also parables illustrating diverse aspects of marriage, the seriousness of adultery and divorce, and provisions for remaining single. Matthew 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 5:27-32; 19:1-12.

---

<sup>26</sup> Nichol, "Jezebel versus the Spirit of God [1Kings 16:31]," 2:810.

<sup>27</sup> Macdonald, *Pulpit Commentaries*, 32.

<sup>28</sup> Yap, "Birds of a Feather Flock Together."

<sup>29</sup> Nichol, "Jezebel versus the Spirit of God [1Kings 16:31]," 2:1033.

Jesus restored the creation view of marriage as a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman (Matt 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9). Much biblical instruction affirms marriage and seeks to correct problems which tend to weaken or destroy the marriage covenant (Eph 5:21-33; Heb 13:4; 1 Peter 3:7).

Jesus also described the message of Matthew 22:38-39 as greatest commandments; this message is a message of love. In these verses the Bible says: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself." To be Jesus' disciples, every person must apply these words in his life. Even when choosing a partner for life, each should remember this message of Jesus. In every action of life the honor of God must take the first place. It is inauspicious that even the Christians today are led by emotional needs and pursuing the worldly mode of romance during their dating time.

To the neighbor, Jesus' commandment requires all His disciples to consider him as human of value to the world and to God. It requires putting the partner for life as holiness future for happiness. Therefore if you are a Christian, the first thing to consider in your partner is spiritual beneficial experience and relationship with God, because if he/she don't love and fear God, it will be the same for the partner.

Remember the good selection in the time of dating is the foundation of the future healthy and happy marriage.

### **Paul Teachings on Marriage**

Paul the apostle dealt with marriage and related aspects in various places. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of responsibilities within the marriage bond, faithfulness to marriage vows, marriage and faith confession, a life of chastity, church discipline and immorality, etc. (1 Corinthians 7 and 5).

In Ephesians 5:22-33, the apostle also takes the high road to emphasize the sanctity of marriage by comparing the relationship of a man and a woman in marriage to the relationship between Jesus and His church. The emphasis of the message of Paul to the Ephesians in chapter 5 is a proper message to the married couples of all the time. In chapter 4:21-23, Paul is advising the believers to take off the old self which is being corrupted by deceitful desire and put on the new man. This new life is belonging to Christ, so Paul every connection of believers including marriage must be renewed by the new life in Christ.

To Paul the relationship of wife and husband would be done in accordance to the relationship the believer must have to his Lord. This can help the husband and wife to walk in the spirit of submission and love. The wife again is expected to submit herself to the authority husband out of obedience and love for her Lord. Christian wives do not obey the Lord out of resentment and reaction because it is a commandment. They obey the Lord out of love because they love both the Lord and their husbands. Therefore their focus is not only to their husband but also to the Lord. A husband to be a head does not mean to be superior to wife, but Paul want to establish an order at home.

The parallelism of submission and love between husband and wife is symbol of Christ and church. He is the head and has authority to his church, as the church submits to her Master Jesus is same as the wife must submit to his husband.

From verse Ephesians 2:25 to 29 the love Paul is talking about is a command not optional; a husband is required to love his wife as Christ loves His church. This is an order not negotiable, so the creator of man knew the capacity of love man has, to that it is not difficult to man to manifest such love to his wife because within him there is love. This agape love comes from the heart accompanied with the will and unselfish

of husband who loves his wife.

In addition to it, for the husband to accomplish the required love, he must die to self in order to give unconditional love which comes from above. This command supports the everlasting of the family, because Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, illustrates love as “patient, kind, without envy and boast. As dishonor others, not self-seeking, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” if all these characteristics of love are found in husband’s mind it can be easy for him to obey God’s command without hesitation and the wife can submit to the husband and accept his authority as the head of the family.

Finally, the love the husband manifests to his wife must be the same as that he has for himself, that means he has to treat her as he treats his own body, that means by feeding her, clothing her, nourishing her and continue as long as they live. This figurative counsel of Paul has deeply influenced the appreciation of marriage in Christian history.

### **Marriage in Ellen G. White Writings**

Ellen G. White is one of the writers talked about the marriage; her writings are full of the advice that can help everyone who desires to have a peaceful home. In her many books, she warned the young people how they can select their partners for life with many prayers. She counsels the married on how they can have a good family.

however she always reminds about shared faith, and same belief. Her counsels have helped many families who followed them, in the time of dating and in their home.

Ellen G. White confirms the peace that covers the home while the union is between the same faith by saying: “The blessing of God is in the home where this union shall exist is as the sunshine of heaven. It is the Lord's ordained will that man and wife should be linked together in holy bonds of union, under Jesus Christ, with Him to control, and His spirit to guide. God wants the home to be the happiest place on earth, the very symbol of the home in heaven. Bearing the marriage responsibilities in the home, linking their interests with Jesus Christ, husband and wife may share happiness in this union that angels of God command.”<sup>30</sup>

Consequently Ellen White insists on attention everyone should make and said:

“Before giving her hand in marriage, everybody should inquire whether he/she with whom he is about to unite destiny is worthy. Religion is needed in the home; Christ alone is the foundation of the true home, where He reigns the peace is guaranteed.”

<sup>31</sup>The two people live together in harmony; different souls of the couples become one. The house will be a solution to the people’s problems and Angels will be their guest.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1991), 130.

<sup>31</sup> White, *Testimony for the Church*, 5:362.

### **Marriage is Honorable**

Marriage is one of the ceremonies that gather many people, of the large family as well as the friend of the families. In the time of the wedding, the bride and groom are honored by the participant, but also they are honored by the heaven if their marriage is in conformity with God order. God celebrated the first marriage. This institution has for its originator to the Creator of the universe. That is why marriage must be honorable by every person; marriage is God's gift to human generation and some instructions are set to guide this institution.

White wrote about the wedding Jesus attended in the Cana of Galilee and the miracle He performs to illustrate the value He give to the marriage. "He who gave Eve to Adam as a helper performed His first miracle at a marriage festival. In the festal hall where friends and kindred rejoiced together, Christ began His public ministry."<sup>32</sup> This indicates the importance of the marriage, the Bible do not reveal many festivals Jesus attended when He was on this earth. However, He valued marriage and compare it with the relationship he has with the church himself as the bridegroom and the church is a bride.

### **Parents' Responsibility in Marriage**

Parents should never lose sight of their own responsibility for the future happiness of their children. Isaac's respect to his father's judgment was the result of the training that had taught him from his childhood to live a life of obedience. "In ancient times the parents generally made marriage engagements, and this was the custom among those who worshiped God. Isaac, trusting in his father's wisdom and affection, was satisfied to commit the matter to him."<sup>33</sup> The parents are wise and are trusted people; they have a responsibility to raise their children in accordance with the will of God. The children have the right to ask devices to their parents even in the time of looking a partner. It is the responsibility of the parents to direct their children to the right person who is Christian and who will lead the family to God.

The experience of Abraham in mixing with people who feared God and those who feared Him not had become an alert to him for the future time. The Christian today must learn from the experience of other in order to prevent the future crisis. However, the actual problem is the children who took their decision without consulting the parent or other Christian leaders to guide them in their choice. "Even among professed Christians! Young people of today often feel that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted a matter that neither God nor their parents should in any way control."<sup>34</sup> However, their future illustrates the wrong decision they have taken. They would consult the source of knowledge, and the wise people who are experienced to guide their directive for future of their family.

### **Ellen G. White Perception of Interfaith Marriage**

In the life of all human being, marriage is an important action man can think and plan before taking a decision. The scriptures counsel to the Adventist young is to marry with an individual of common faith because it prevents their home from a crisis of misunderstanding.

**A happy or unhappy marriage.** The young people would recognize the consequences of the wrong decision in marriage. Some enter into marriage without

---

<sup>32</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 26.

<sup>33</sup> White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, 172.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

inquiring of the results of this action. White affirms the troubles that come because of this decision. She says “It is from the marriage hour that many men and women date their success or failure in this life, and their hopes of the future life. I wish I could make the youth see and feel their danger, especially the danger of making unhappy marriages.”<sup>35</sup>The effects of a wrong decision affect even the innocent people, who did not have any role in the action. The first to be affected by the deceitful marriage are the children of the family. Likewise is affecting the well-being of the parents as well, even though they are responsible for action “Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will not advance his plans in this direction without the knowledge that God approves his course. He will not want to choose for himself, but will feel that God must choose for him.”<sup>36</sup>

**Compromising beliefs.** Every Christian who becomes romantically involved in marriage with non-Christian is compromising his belief. Ellen G. White consistently discourage against marriage between the believer and the non-believer, and further cautions against uniting with fellow Christians who have not accepted the truth of this matter.

The happiness and prosperity of the family always depend on the relationship between the spouses, however, the families that not sharing the same understanding of the way to follow in their faith, it is difficult to walk together. Therefore it is good to agree on the direction before taking the journey. When the married do not agree to the belief, they have diverged even if they are in the same home.

“If there is any subject which should be carefully considered, and in which the counsel of older and more experienced persons should be sought, it is the subject of marriage; if ever the Bible was needed as a counselor, if ever divine guidance should be sought in prayer, it is before taking a step that binds persons together for life.”<sup>37</sup>

Marriage is a stage of life every person think about it even before it happened, from the adolescence the majority of young people begun to guess how the family will be. However, they forget the most needed, which is to inquire the divine intervention in every step of marriage.

The ultimate purpose of God creating marriage was to unite the people who will have a better life in this world and who can prepare the descendants to meet the requirement of God's word and to become the heritage of eternal life. However, the marriage between the people of different faith has become a handicap to the fulfillment of the divine plan. The Christian life is only possible if the couple put together their effort to accomplish the will of God and characterized by the common goal of inheritance of eternal life. “

---

<sup>35</sup> White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, 39.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> White, *Message to the Young People*, 445.

For these reasons, the Church strongly discourages marriage between a Seventh-day Adventist and a member of another religion and strongly urges its pastors not to perform such marriages.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Consequences of Interfaith marriage**

The consequences of the interfaith marriage affect the church, the couple, the children and the society. The church loses the members; it brought misunderstanding in the family and the married lack of joy. The mistakes of the parents affect also their children and the large family. The society is affected by the family problem, especially in the case of divorce; it involved the justice to solve the problem.

The writers of the Old Testament such as Moses warn about religiously mixed marriage, the great concern was to the people called people of God, like Israel people. Moses warned Israel not to intermarry with others people because they can faze them to follow God, and end up by worship their gods. In Exodus 34:12-16 Moses warned Israel with intensity about mixing with the people of others religion.

Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same

Again in Deuteronomy 7:1-4, he reminded them the same message “Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.”

Paul clearly states the forbidden unification with non-believers in (2 Cor 6:14-15).

Ellen G. White advises on the same in the book *Adventist Home*. She wrote about the problem of marrying someone who is interested in the world rather than Jesus. She says “It would be better to remain unmarried than to link your interest for life with one who chooses the world rather than Jesus, and who leads you away from the cross of Christ”<sup>39</sup>. Another fearful observation from White says: “Just as the Israelites did in disobedience to God in the Old Testament, hundreds have sacrificed Christ and heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons.”<sup>40</sup> The majority of people engaged in interfaith marriage without thinking about its impact, but the values of earthly joy are not comparable to the happiness of heaven, therefore it is necessary to give glory to the God by selecting the partners who honor God.

The consequences of interfaith marriage affect the present life, the Christian life, and the future life. It can impact the formed family and even the larger family. The couple and their descendant may suffer due to the wrong decisions made without enough assessment of the consequences. The devil is watching and waiting for people who

---

<sup>38</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, 147.

<sup>39</sup> White, *The Adventist Home*, 68.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

make this choice of marrying his workers. He knows that when a person is united in marriage with unbeliever non-Christian, he become the enemy of God and follow his way. Therefore a Christians should understand that it is a great mistake to be united with somebody who is the enemy of God.

### **Summary**

Marriage as instituted by God in the Garden of Eden; is one of the institutions established from the beginning to be the origin of reproduction and the fulfillment of the earth. The Bible states the marriage as covenant between husband and wife, only death can separate them. For the marriage to be successful, each of the partners must fulfill his/her requirements including die to self, obeying God's commandments, giving up independent living for the good of the other, laying down his/her life for the other, and placing above the interest of his/her partner than his/her own.

Old and New Testament as well as Ellen G. White support the marriage in which the partners are Christians who fear and obey God. This help to have the same understanding of faith and to raise their children in harmony with the divine will.

Marriage is a tool of union between families, and is a symbol of relationship Christ has with His church as Bride and Groom. It is important to know that God created man and woman with equal worth but different roles and responsibilities for complementarities of couples in marriage.

Before taking the decision of marriage each one must take time to pray and ask God to choose for him/her, a partner for life of the same faith, who respect the Bible and wish to be guided by the Holy Scripture in order to have a good family on earth but the family which will enter the kingdom of heaven.

## APPENDIX C

### SECOND SURVEY

#### **I. Knowledge of Bible principles governing people during their time of dating**

1. Do you believe necessary to ask for God's intervention during dating time?
2. Do you Consider God's intervention during dating time?
3. Is it necessary considering spiritual aspect in choosing a life partner?
4. Do you notice the important of avoiding social media in dating?
5. Is it vital to date a partner whom you share religious beliefs?
6. Do you think it is necessary to based on parents' and church counsels during dating time?

#### **II. Consequences of Interfaith marriage**

8. Which church partners in interfaith marriage attend?
9. If someone gets married outside SDA Church, does he/she still be faithful to God?
10. What would be the church for children?
11. Do you believe that the interfaith families have disadvantages or inconveniencies than intra-faith marriage and why?
12. Do you think interfaith couples are always as happy Seventh-day Adventist couples are?

#### **III. In this list which characters and Qualities a young person must seek in his/her partner for life?**

- a. Employed person
- b. Commitment to Christ
- c. Faithfull person
- d. Beautiful person
- e. Culture and family background

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Achteimeier, Paul J. "Amorites." In *Harper's Bible Dictionary (HB-D)*, edited by Paul J. Achtemeier. New York, NY: Library of Congress, 1985.

Admin. "Endogamy." *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://www.en.wikipedia.org>.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Fourth Population and Housing Census, Rwanda*. Thematic Report. Kigali, Rwanda: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Kigali City Map." *Google*. Accessed July 10, 2016. <http://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+kigali+city&newwindows=&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiOh-ylt-3NAHXJ7hoKHZIV AbsQ7 AkILA&biw=938&bih=619>.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Rwanda Country Overview." *World Bank*. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/rwanda/overview>.

\_\_\_\_\_. "What Does Qur'an Say about the Interfaith Marriage?" *Asma-Lamrabet*. Last modified 2013. Accessed May 16, 2014. <http://www.asma-lamrabet.com/articles/what-does-the-qur-an-say-about-the-interfaith-marriage>.

Alden, Sparrow F. "Let's Talk about Interfaith Families." *UUA*. Accessed July 2, 2014. <http://www.uua.org/sites/live-ew.uua.org/filesdocuments/aldensparrow/interfaithfamilies.pdf>.

Ariyo, Oladeji D. "Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Mate Selection among Adolescents of Reproductive Age in Nigeria." *Questia*. Accessed May 22, 2015. <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-3606168861/socio-economic-factors-influencing-mate-selection>.

Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Biblical perspectives 4990, 2001.

Bruce, F. F. *The Book of 2 Corinthians*. Pulpit Commentary on the New Testament. Washington, DC: AGE Software Rio, 2001.

Clarke, Adam. "Verse by Verse Bible Commentary." *Study Light*. Accessed February 1, 2014. <http://studylight.org/commentary/deuteronomy/7-1.html>.

- Clooney, Francis S.J. "Offerings on Interfaith Dialogue: Religious Diversity and Comparative Theology." *Harvard Divinity School Office of students life*, May 2014.
- Constable, Thomas L. "Exegesis of the Book of Genesis." *Sonic Light*. Accessed February 2, 2015. <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>.
- Cressman, Annie. *Marriage and the Home*. Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel House, 2005.
- Davis, Henry P. "Bible Study Tools: Passionately Proclaiming Uncompromising Truth." *All Communion with the Nation Forbidden*. Last modified 2014. Accessed February 6, 2014. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/deuteronomy/7-1-compare.html>.
- DeGenova, Mary K. *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families*. 7th ed. New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 2008. [www.departments/marriage/interfaith/faq/interreligious-marriage-questions-fqa](http://www.departments/marriage/interfaith/faq/interreligious-marriage-questions-fqa).
- Department of Family Life, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church. *Fullness of Joyful*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1984.
- Douglas, J. D., and D. R. W. N. Hillyer. "Canaanites." In *New Bible Dictionary*. Downers Grove, IL: Wood Inter Varsity, 1996.
- Dudley, Metropolitan Borough, Peggy Hutchison, and Roger Baxter. *Married and Glad of It*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1987.
- East Central Rwanda Conference. *Statistical Report*. Third Quarter. Kigali, Rwanda: East Central Rwanda Conference, 2014.
- Ebi, Maliki. "A Determinants of Mate Selection Choice Among University Students in South-South Zone of Nigeria." 171. Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 1994.
- Esposito, John L. "The Oxford Dictionary of Islam." *Oxfrd Islamic Studies*. Accessed February 6, 2014. <http://www.oxfrdislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e74>.
- Flores, Julia. "Performance Assessment Resource Center." *Evaluation Series No. 1: The Logical Framework*. Accessed August 21, 2015. [http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/883/evaluation\\_series\\_n\\_\\_1\\_LF\\_PARC.pdf](http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/883/evaluation_series_n__1_LF_PARC.pdf).
- Flynn, John. "The Consequences of Interfaith Marriage." *Zenit*. Accessed June 27, 2013. <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/the-consequences-of-interfaith-marriage>.
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Ministerial Association. *Seventh-Day Adventist Minister's Handbook*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005.

- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Fundamental Belief*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990.
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association. *Seventh-Day Adventist Believe*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1988.
- Government of the Republic of Serbia EU Integration office, European Integration Office. "Guide to the Logical Framework Approach: A Key Tool for Project Cycle Management." *EVROPA*. Last modified 2011. Accessed August 22, 2015. <http://www.evropa.gov.rs/Evropa/ShowDocument.aspx?Type=Home&Id=525>.
- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. "Interreligious Marriage Questions –FAQ." *Goarch*. Accessed February 22, 2015. <http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese>.
- Heller, Patrice E. "The Influence of Religious and Ethnic Differences on Marital Intimacy: Intermarriage versus Intra-Marriage." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 242 (April 2000): 241–252.
- Henry, Mathew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Genesis to Leviticus*. Vol. 1. New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 2009.
- Holland's, Jeffrey R. "Faith, Family, and Religious Freedom." *IDS*. Accessed March 28, 2015. <https://www.lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/faith-family-and-religious-freedom?lang=eng>.
- Hurdall, E. "Unequal Yoking." *Bible Hub*. Accessed December 10, 2014. [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/homiletics/2\\_corinthians/6.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/homiletics/2_corinthians/6.htm).
- Jamieson, Robert, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown. "A Commentary, Critical, Practical, and Exploration on the Old and New Testament." *SACRED*. Accessed February 1, 2014. <http://www.sacred-text.com/bib/cmt/jfb/deu007.htm>.
- Koranteng-Pipim, Samuel. *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005. Accessed November 10, 2016. <http://www.drpipim.org/worship-aamp-church-growth-contemporaryissues-48184-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music-past-and-present.html>.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J., and David W. Jones. *God Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. New York, NY: Library of Congress, 2010.
- Lorimer, Lawrence T. "Ammonites." *Encyclopedia Americana International Edition (EAIE)*. New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1994.

- Lorimer, Lawrence T.. "Endogamy." *Encyclopedia Americana International Edition (EAIE)*. New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1994.
- Macdonald, J. A. *Pulpit Commentaries*. WI:USA: Rio City, 2001.
- Matlins, Stuart M., and Arthur J. Magida. *How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook*. Andover, MA: Skylight Publishing: Sunset Farm Office, 2006.
- Mayer, Egon. *Love and Tradition: Marriage between Jews and Christians*. New York, NY: Library of Congress Cataloging, 1985.
- Mehl, Ron. "Choosing a Life Partner." *Family Life*. Accessed March 12, 2016. <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/getting-married/choosing-a-spouse/choosing-a-life-partner>.
- Melgosa, Julian, and Annette D. Melgosa. *To Couples: Enjoying a Stable, Lifelong Relationship*. Madrid, Spain: Safeliz, 2012.
- Miller, Susan Katz, and Jen Chitwood. "Whats It Like Being Both a Conversation with Interfaith Family." *Chron*. Last modified August 26, 2014. Accessed February 14, 2016. <http://blog.chron.com/sacredduty/2014/08/whats-it-like-being-both-a-conversation-with-interfaith-family-pioneer-author-susan-katz-miller/>.
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. "Rwanda Religions." *Index Mundi*. Accessed July 10, 2016. <http://www.indexmundi.com/rwanda/religions.html>.
- Munroe, Myles. *The Purpose and Power of Love and Marriage*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2002.
- Ndengeyinka, Emmanuel. *Remera Church Record*. Statistics report of 2015. Kigali, Rwanda, 2015.
- Newman, J. David. "Marrying No-Adventist." *Ministry Magazine*, February 1994.
- Nichol, Francis D, ed. "Fourteenth Year [Genesis 2:22]." In *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*. Rev. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jezebel versus the Spirit of God [1Kings 16:31]." In *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*. Rev. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976.
- Ntagungira, Godfrey. "The History of City of Kigali." *New Times*. Accessed June 28, 2016. <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2011-05-20/97496>.
- Odunze, Don. *Successful Family Living*. Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel House, 1993.
- Oliver, Elaine, and Willie. "Strong Families: How Are Family." *Adventist World*, September 2012.

- Parsons, John. "Hebrew for Christians." *Hebrew 4 Christians*.  
[http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Glossary/Hebrew\\_Glossary\\_-\\_D/hebrew\\_glossary\\_-\\_d.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Glossary/Hebrew_Glossary_-_D/hebrew_glossary_-_d.html).
- Petts, Richard J., and Chris Knoester. "Parents' Religious Heterogamy and Children's Well-Being." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46 (2007).
- Phillips, Richard D., and Sharon L. Philips. *Holding Hands: Holding Heart*. Phillipsbourg, NJ, 2006.
- Regnerus, Mark. "Is Interfaith Marriage Always Wrong, given That the Bible Teaches Us Not to Be 'Unequally Yoke?'" *Bible and interfaith*, June 2013.
- Seventh-day Adventist Church, Department of Family Ministries. "Divorce and Remarriage in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Divorce and Remarriage Study Commission Report." *Family Adventist*. Last modified 2012. Accessed May 16, 2014. <http://www.family.adventist.org/home---divorce-and-remarriage-in-the-seventh-day-adventist-church---divorce-and-remarriage-study-com.html>.
- Shorter, Aylward. *Church and Marriage in Eastern Africa*. Nairobi, Kenya: The AMECEA Research Department, 1975.
- Shryock, Harold. *Happiness for Husbands and Wives*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1946.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *On Being Sweethearts*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1966.
- Steed, Lincoln E. *Winning: A Drug-Free Tomorrow*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2000.
- The Senate, Rwanda Parliament. "Political Pluralism and Power Sharing: Theoretical Overview and Qualitative Analysis of Rwanda's Experiences." In *Senate Research Book*. Kigali, Rwanda: Rwanda Parliament, 2010.
- Throckmorton, B.H. Endogamy, and George Arthur Buttrick. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (IDB)*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Walsh, Froma. "Spiritual Diversity: Multifaith Perspectives in Family Therapy." *Family Process*, 2010.
- Wesley, John. "Genesis." In *Complete Published Phil Rindner Online Publishing, Inc. [Power Bible CD]*. Bronson, MI: Matteson Street, 1999.
- White, Ellen G. *Christ Centered Home*. Complete Published Ellen G White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Christian Education*. Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Counsels for the Church*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1991.

- White, Ellen G. *Daughters of God*. Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Message to the Young People*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1890.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Message to Young People*. Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Patriarch and Prophets*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1890.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Patriarchs and Prophets." Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Comprehensive Research Edition. Vol. 1 (1953). Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Vol. 3. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Southern Watchman: Heathen Plots*. Complete Published Ellen G White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Testimony for the Church*. Vol. 5. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Adventist Home*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Spirit of Prophecy*. Complete Published Ellen G White Writings [CD ROM]. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012.
- William, H. Branson, ed. *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Gen. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1976.
- Willimon, William H. "Interfaith Marriage: A Reality Check." *NCBI*. Accessed March 28, 2015. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7573787>.
- Word Search. *7 References Library Software, Preacher Outline and Sermon Bible: Genesis*. Austin, TX: Leadership Ministries, 2005.
- Yahaya, Lasiele A. *Marriage, Sex and Family Counseling: Choice of Spouse*. Ilorin: University of Unilorin Press, 2008.
- Yap, Victor. "Birds of a Feather Flock Together." *Epreaching*. Accessed October 28, 2014. <http://epreaching.blogspot.co.ke/2007/05/ahab-and-jezebel.html>.
- "Impressionable Minds: The Value of Bearing and Raising Children." *Family* (August 2002): 2–4.

## VITA

**Name:** Karangwa Naphtal

**Background:** I was born on 1 June 1972 at Gitwe, Ruhango District, central Rwanda, in the Adventist family of seven children with beloved parents. I was baptized in Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1987, after three years of baptismal class. I am a fruit of Adventist Christian education because I have attended Seventh-day Adventist schools from elementary up to university.

**Family:** I was married on 15 August 2005 to Drocella Niyindorera who is from also Ruhango district, in central Rwanda. We are blessed to have three children, Irasubiza K. Senior (Born in 2006), Igiraneza K. Brian (Born in 2007) and Ihirwe K. Bliss (Born in 2011).

**Education:**

1979-1988: Elementary school at Gitwe Adventist primary school  
1989-1995: High school diploma from Secondary School of Adventist Parents of Gitwe  
2000-2003: BTH (Bachelor of Theology) from Adventist University of Central Africa  
2007-2009: MA in Religion from Andrews University  
2013- 2016: D Min (Leadership emphasis) from Adventist University of Africa

**Ordination:**

2010: Ordained to hold Ministerial Credential from East Central Rwanda Conference of Seventh-day Adventist

**Experience:**

1996-1999: Teacher at Rusororo Adventist primary school  
2003-2004: District Pastor of Mutara SDA Churches (Mutara)  
2004-2005: District Pastor of Gitarama SDA Churches (Gitarama)  
2006-2007: Department Director (Central Rwanda Field)  
2009-2010: Department Director (East Rwanda Field)  
2011-2014: Executive Secretary of East Central Rwanda Conference  
2014-2015: Education Director of Rwanda Union Mission  
2015-2020: President of West Rwanda Field