

### **3. CHAPTER THREE: MARRIAGE IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION**

#### **3.1 UNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE**

Brian Craig argues that: “Marriages are in the family the back bone of a secure society. Today it is rapidly becoming the antithesis of community. Many couples and not just secular but Christians as well, are becoming fearful of the marriage bond” (2004: 4). The above-mentioned sentiment has serious implications for marriage today, especially in the Christian tradition, and is bad news in itself. However, before we can go deeper into the issue, we need to share some definitions on marriage.

#### **3.2 MARRIAGE: SOME DEFINITIONS**

3.2.1 Waruta defines marriage: “As the union, permanent least by intention, of a man and a woman for purpose of procreation and the rearing of children and mutual assistance.”(2005: 102)

3.2.2 Van Pelt on the other hand sees marriage: “As the total commitment of the total person for a total way of life” (1980: 16).

3.2.3 Elwell again defines marriage: “As an intimate and complementing union between a man and a woman in which the two become one physically, in whole life” (1936: 115).

3.2.4 Merriam Webster's online Dictionary defines marriage in the following way: "As the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law" (2010).

3.2.5 The author of this dissertation sees marriage: "As a lifelong covenant relationship between a man and a woman with God, as the Chief Witness."

Let me emphasize from the outset of this chapter that I'm well aware of the many different marriage customs in the world today, especially among African tribes. The following are examples of some of the different customs of marriage presently performed in the world. The author will touch briefly on the following in order for the reader to have a holistic understanding of this phenomenon, and how it is performed in the praxis of everyday life.

- Jewish marriage customs
- Muslim marriage customs
- Indian marriage customs
- Hindu marriage customs
- Chinese marriage customs
- Xhosa marriage customs

### **3.3 DIFFERENT MARRIAGE CUSTOMS**

Let us now analyze the different customs that effect marriage today.

### **3.3.1 JEWISH MARRIAGE CUSTOMS**

According to Partridge (2005: 293), marriage in Judaism is considered to be a holy covenant between the bride and the groom. The first major step in Jewish marriage is betrothal. Betrothal involves the establishment of a marriage covenant. During Jesus' time, it was usual for such a covenant to be established as the result of the prospective bridegroom taking the initiative. The prospective bridegroom would travel from his father's house to the home of the prospective bride. Therefore, he would negotiate with the father of the young woman to determine the price (*Mohar*) that he must pay for his bride. Once the bridegroom has paid the bride price, the marriage covenant was thereby established, and the young man and woman were regarded as husband and wife. From that moment on, the bride is declared to be consecrated or sanctified, and set apart, exclusively for her bridegroom. As a symbol of their covenant relationship that had been established, the groom and bride would drink from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction had been pronounced. To inform us further on this important issue, Landman reports: "that the groom would leave the home of the bride and return to his father's house. There he would remain separate from his bride for a period of twelve month. This period of separation afforded the bride time to gather her

trousseau (the clothes and household items which a bride brings with her on marriage) and prepare for married life” (1948: 372).

The groom occupied himself with the preparation of living accommodation in his father’s house to which he could bring his bride. At the end of the period of separation, the groom would come to take his bride to live with him. The bride is usually taken at night. The groom, best man and other male escorts would leave the groom’s father’s house and conduct a torch light procession to the home of the bride. Although the bride expects her groom to come for her, she does not know the exact time of his coming. As a result the groom’s arrival would be preceded by a shout. This shout would be to warn the bride to prepare for the coming of the groom. After the groom received his bride, together with her female attendants, the enlarged wedding party would return from the bride’s home to the groom’s father’s house. Upon arrival, the wedding party would find the wedding guests assembled already. Shortly after arrival, the bride and the groom would be escorted by the other members of the wedding party to the bridal chamber (*huppah*). Prior to entering the chamber the bride remains veiled so that no one could see her face. While the groom’s men and bride’s maids would wait outside. The bride and groom would enter the bridal chamber alone. There in the privacy of that place, they would enter into physical union for the first time, thereby consummating the

marriage that had been covenanted earlier (Ibid: 372). Douglas (et. al) says: “these marriage festivities will last for at least seven days, and is called the seven days of the *huppah* (1975: 789).

The author of this dissertation believes that it is also worth mentioning to the readers that there is a difference between Orthodox and Reform Judaism in post-modern day Israel, concerning the recognition of marriage. The Sunday Times reports that the biggest difference concerning the above is that only Orthodox marriages are recognized in Israel (8 August 2010).

### **3.3.2 MUSLIM MARRIAGE CUSTOMS**

According to Muslim marriage customs and traditions, Theodore Gabriel (2005: 387), is of great help to us. He reports that Islam, unlike other religions is a strong advocate of marriage. In Islam, there is no place for celibacy like, for example, the Roman Catholic priests and nuns. In Islam, marriage is a religious duty and is consequently a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity. Here, marriage acts as an outlet for sexual needs, and regulate it so that one does not become a slave to his/her desires. In Islam, marriage is a social necessity because through this act, families are established and families are the fundamental unit of society. Furthermore, marriage is the only legitimate or *halal* way to indulge in intimacy between a man and a woman. Islam also takes the middle-of-the-road position to sexual relations. It neither condemns it like

certain religions, nor does it allow it freely. According to Islam, the general purpose of marriage is that the sexes can provide company to one another, love one another, procreate children and live in peace and tranquility according to the commandments of Allah. Marriage is “*mithaq*” it means a solemn covenant (agreement) and is not to be taken lightly. It should be entered into with total commitment and full knowledge of what it involves. For a marriage in Islam to be valid, certain conditions must be met:

- Consent of both parties;
- “*Mahr*” a gift from the groom to the bride;
- Witnesses – Two (2) male or female;
- The marriage should be publicized; it should never be kept secret as it leads to suspicion and troubles within the community.

### **3.3.3 INDIAN MARRIAGE CUSTOMS**

In our quest to grasp Indian marriage customs, Rafi Michael is most helpful. He reports that Indian marriages are mostly arranged by parents. They see it as their responsibility to find a suitable husband/wife for their child. This is pursued sometimes through adverts in the newspapers and more often through networks of friends and family. They generally will look for someone from the same community (caste), and someone with similar educational

qualities. Indian Christians often ask pastors to help them find suitable partners for their children through their networks. At one time, a young man or woman would not see their intended spouse until the day of the actual wedding.

These days, however, things got a little freer. Often the parents will show their child a photo of the intended spouse and the child can say if he/she is happy with the prospective husband or wife and subsequent marriage arrangement. Sometimes the two are allowed to talk to each other on the phone, or meet up with each other in the context of the two families getting together. If all is well, the bride's family pays an appropriate dowry to the bridegroom's family. This is decided beforehand and is valued on the standing and education of the young man. This is crippling to many families, and leads to a very large abortion rate of girl babies so that this will be avoided later in life.

(<http://www.weddingtraditions.India.com>, 2010).

### **3.3.4 HINDU MARRIAGE CUSTOMS**

The free Encyclopedia reports that according to Hindu *Sastra* there are four stages of life, of which *Grahastha Ashram* or married life signifies the second stage. It begins when a man and a woman come together and marry. In India, marriage is treated as an institution, which teaches the actual values of life. Every stage in life has its own charm and a married life is no exception. In India,

marriage is usually arranged by the respective parents of the bride and the groom and follows various steps. Marriage among Hindus is not only considered a union of two souls, but of two families.

A Hindu wedding not only involves the bride and the groom but the entire community, friends, family and relatives; as everybody participates in their coming together of the to-be couple. The first and the foremost step, is the selection of the bride and the bridegroom. In love marriages, a boy and a girl themselves select their life partner. However, it is crucial when it comes to arranged marriages. According to arranged marriages in the Hindu custom, it is the parents who select the prospective bride/groom for their son/daughter. After the selection procedure is over, family members of both the daughter and man ask the priest to suggest an auspicious date for the arrangement of the wedding of the two, also known as *misri* or ring ceremony. Since India boasts of diverse cultures and traditions, the engagement ceremony rituals differ from region to region and from community to community. However, the basic of all the rituals mentioned here, form an indispensable part of Hindu wedding. In the betrothal ceremony, the bride to be and the groom exchange wedding rings among each other. Sweets and garlands are also exchanged by the couple.

After the festive spirit of engagement, the next important ritual is the *mehndi* party. Hindus believed *mehndi* signifies the essence of love in a marriage, so it is upon the bride's hand to strengthen that bond of love. On the morning of the wedding day, *Pithi or Haldi*, the cleansing ceremony is practiced during which the bride and bridegroom are pasted with turmeric powder in their respective homes, as part of their beautification process. In Hinduism, a wedding mostly takes place in a *mandap* or a tent, which is beautifully decorated with flowers. The main Hindu wedding ceremony is a long and elaborate affair, which lasts for several hours and is attended by a large number of relatives, friends, and acquaintances. These were some of the rituals and customs which were generally followed in all the Hindu marriages. ([http://www.Wikipedia.org/Hindu weddings](http://www.Wikipedia.org/Hindu%20weddings), 2010).

### **3.3.5 CHINESE WEDDING TRADITIONS**

In our quest to have a grasp of Chinese wedding customs, Christian Jochim (1996: 11-15), is most helpful here. He reports that for the Chinese people, marriage is entered into to continue the ancestral line and to create alliances between two families. As the world changes, Chinese wedding traditions have evolved. In the ancient days, communication was done through letters; which played a vital role in the betrothal and wedding process. Three letters were sent during those times. The first one is the request letter which serves as a

confirmation of the formal arrangement of marriage. This is sent by the groom's family to the bride's family along with gifts. The second letter is called the gift letter. It serves as a gift record that describes the value of each gift. The third one is the wedding letter which is given to the bride's family on the wedding day itself. However, in other countries nowadays, the bride's family handles the expenses of the wedding because it is said to be the "bride's day". In some other countries, both the bride and groom take care of the wedding expenses. However, in Chinese wedding traditions, it is the "groom's day". This means the groom's family handles all the festivities before, during and after the wedding. Before the wedding, a Chinese bride is isolated with her closest friends. In this custom, the bride-to-be symbolically mourns the loss of family and friends. On her wedding day, the bride is bathed in water which is infused with *pomelo* in order to cleanse her from bad influences. A traditional Chinese couple is very picky when it comes to choosing the date for the wedding, because it should be a lucky one. Most Chinese families choose a wedding date which is according to the lunar calendar. Colors play a vital part in Chinese weddings. The color red plays a vital role in the wedding festivities of the Chinese people. Red is considered by them as a bold and lucky color. In addition to this, the color signifies love, prosperity and happiness; therefore,

everything is in red-wedding including invitations, gifts envelopes and the bride's wedding dress.

On the big day of the marriage, the couple will need to serve tea to both parents and family and guests. In return, they will be presented with jewelry and money which is placed in red envelopes. There will be three different dresses for the bride for Chinese wedding traditions. The white dress with a veil is worn during the wedding ceremony. The second wedding dress, a traditional Chinese wedding dress, is used at the banquet. The last dress is called the bride's going away dress. This is worn before the bride leaves the banquet. A Chinese wedding also consists of a post wedding ritual which takes place after the day of the wedding. On this day, the bride is formally introduced to the groom's family, relatives and friends. Three days after the wedding, the bride will visit her family where she is welcomed and received as a guest.

### **3.3.6 XHOSA WEDDING CUSTOMS**

Femme Bride Magazine (17 March 2010), reports as follows on the above mentioned custom. It is of the view that traditional Xhosa weddings differ quite substantially from those of the West, although the trend today is to perform both sets of ceremonies. The traditional process of the Xhosa marriage begins with the *ukutwala*, which means when roughly translated as

“the taking,” or “carry away/abduction” which occurs after a groom’s family has chosen a suitable bride for himself. It is important to appreciate that the *ukutwala* is not a “kidnapping,” because the prospective bride is not harmed and may return to her family, rather it is a formal method of signifying the intention to marry, and this marks the beginning of the betrothal process.

After the *ukutwala* has taken place, the groom’s family will begin negotiating the marriage and *lobola* with the bride’s family. It is important to appreciate that *lobola* is not a “bride’s price”, but a means of establishing a link between the two families. The size of *lobola* varies considerably depending on the relative wealth and status of the families involved, the advantage to gain from the marriage link, and the desirability of the bride. Traditionally *lobola* usually amounted to eight heads of cattle, and today the value of each head of cattle forms part of the overall negotiation. However, there is a Xhosa saying, “ one never stops paying *lobola*”, which means the family link is the important part of *lobola*, a union that must be constantly renewed by visiting one’s in-laws, inviting them around, and in general, maintaining good familial relationships.

Once the *lobola* is finalized, the marriage can take place. On an appointed day, the bride’s family brings the bride to the groom’s house, amidst celebrations in which animals are slaughtered as a sacrifice to the ancestors, inviting them to bless the occasion and introducing the bride to them. There are no formal

invitations for this event, rather whoever wishes to attend, can participate in the celebrations, and this often leads to very large gatherings. The whole event is joyous and very communal in spirit, and the celebrations go on for at least two days at both the bride's home and the groom's (especially at the groom's). The final stage of the marriage occurs when the bride and groom show themselves to the community by walking along the main road together. This is called *ukucanda ibala*.

For modern urban weddings, most couples prefer to perform both the traditional wedding and the modern civil ceremony, often with a church service and reception. Today, the bride and the groom are far more familiar before the marriage process begins, with the *ukutwala* uncommon, and when it does happen the bride is informed beforehand. However, the actual event may still be a surprise. More commonly, the groom makes a formal marriage proposal, and if it is accepted, he will send a delegation to the bride's family to negotiate *lobola*. The large communal wedding is still very much the preferred, but is either preceded or followed by the civil act of signing the register (www.matrimony online. copyright @1997-2010).

The author has given the reader a brief overview of some of the important marriage customs that are performed in the world today. In the next section, the author will briefly compare the above-mentioned marriage customs with

one another to see how they differ or complement each other and, if any, we can learn from them.

### **3.4 COMPARISON: DIFFERENT MARRIAGE CUSTOMS**

When we analyze and take a closer look at the above mentioned marriage customs, we come to the realization that all of the above see the institution of marriage as very serious. In Judaism, marriage is seen as a holy covenant between the groom and the bride. Islam, on the other hand, is a strong advocate of marriage. Through the act of marriage, families are established and this forms the fundamental unit of society. For Islam, the general purpose of marriage is that the sexes can provide company to one another, love one another, procreate children and live in peace and tranquility to the commandments of Allah. Although marriage is a serious matter for Indians, the parents play the leading role in selecting a suitable partner for their child. When it comes to *Mohar* (price, Judaism) and *Lobola* (the link between two families), Judaism and Xhosa customs are more or less similar. In both instances negotiations take place to determine the price. However, in Xhosa marriage custom the size of *lobola* varies considerably depending on the relative wealth and status of the families, the advantage to gain from the marriage link, and the desirability of the bride. In Indian marriage, the opposite happens. Here, it is the bride's family who must pay an appropriate dowry to

the bridegroom's family. This however, is decided before hand and is valued on the social standing and education of the young man. Each of the above mentioned marriage customs are unique in character and style, and this information is helpful in enhancing our understanding thereof.

Not only is the above mentioned information helpful in enhancing our understanding of the different marriage customs. We can also learn from them as Christians, especially marriage in the Jewish tradition. In the Near East the act of betrothal is almost as binding as marriage itself. Douglas submits that "in the Bible the betrothed woman was sometimes called "wife" and was under the same obligation of faithfulness" (1975: 788). Betrothal involves the establishment of a marriage covenant which last for a year and signifies the aspect of commitment for the prospective bride and groom. The process of betrothal helps the prospective couple and families to test marriage. This process helps to correct problems of divorce afterwards.

In the next section the author will analyze and discuss how Christians understand marriage in the Christian tradition. The author will share insights into marriage as an expression of the relational nature of God. He will also look at marriage as a journey towards intimacy. The author will also discuss key expressions that shape the Christian view of marriage. Furthermore, he will

look at marriage as a covenant relationship. We will also look at marriage after the fall (Genesis 3) and discusses the redemption of marriage after the fall.

### **3.4 MARRIAGE IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION**

Sandile Memela wrote in his weekly column in the Daily Dispatch that “Marriage in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is under severe assault.” He goes on and declares boldly that “with due respect to all men who benefit in terms of power and authority through this outdated institution, it is high time to seriously re-examine the institution” (6 May 2010).

It is clear that Memela does not understand the Biblical basis of marriage and how it functions in the Christian tradition. By virtue of calling the institution of marriage outdated and to advocate for a re-examination of it, it goes without saying that his statement is against God’s idea for marriage from the beginning of human history.

In the book of Genesis, we read that God created Adam and Eve on the sixth day of creation and placed them into a relationship with each other as husband and wife (1: 26-27, 2: 18-25). Thus, from the above statement, it is clear that God intended that the marriage relationship, as recorded in the book of Genesis, would be the pattern for all other marriage relationships in the future. The family therefore, stands as one of the foundations of human existence.

Mace connects beautifully with this concept when he says: “How beautiful, then the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in home, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice, nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit. They pray together, they worship together; they fast together, instructing one another, encouraging one another, strengthening one another. Side by side they visit God’s Church and partake of God’s banquet; side by side they face difficulties and persecution, and share their consolations. They have no secrets from one another, they never shun each other’s company; they never bring sorrow to each other’s hearts. Unembarrassed they visit the sick and assist the needy, seeing this, Christ rejoices. To such as these He gives His peace. Where there are two together, there He also is present” (1980: 97).

The above sentiments points to the image of what we aspire to in a Christian marriage - between a husband and his wife. Therefore, in our quest to further unravel and understand marriage in the Christian tradition and the Gospel writers are invaluable sources here. Matthew indicates how Jesus echoes and embraces God’s original idea of marriage and instructed couples to strive diligently to understand the purpose and nature of marriage. Jesus says: “Haven’t you read,” He replied, “that at the beginning the creator made them

male and female, and said, “for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (19: 4-6).

The Apostle Paul also believed that the bond of marriage was a special and holy relationship created, originally, by God. He says in the letter to the Hebrews: “Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral (13: 4). As mentioned earlier in this work, marriage is a very ancient institution.

Christianity has from the beginning seen it as divinely ordained for good and necessary purpose. Mace is of the opinion that the first thing we have to say about Christian marriage, is that it sets certain clear conditions for the Christian husband and wife to meet.” He goes further and explains that “these conditions are intended to make sure, as far as possible, that the purposes of Christian marriage will be fulfilled (1980: 97-98). For Mace, three purposes pertaining to marriage, as found in most wedding rituals of the various Christian Churches, need attention here;

- The first purpose for a Christian marriage exists to insure that children, who are needed to replenish the earth and to continue the act of creation that God began, may be born into a social unit that will care for them in their helpless years, and bring them to maturity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;

- The second purpose is to insure that the sex drive, implanted by God, will be directed aright (?), as an expression of caring and continuing love. From this, we can clearly see that God has appointed human beings to be responsible for the created world. God has called us to be responsible human beings and to use our sexuality in the way God intends it, which is within marriage;
- The third purpose is to provide companionship to a close and nurturing relationship, because God in Genesis saw “that it is not good that the man (sic) should be alone” (2: 18a).

Through the centuries, the Church has placed heavy emphasis on the above pertaining to the success of the Christian marriage. However, we will only understand the Christian marriage if we understand the relational nature of God.

### **3.4.1 MARRIAGE AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF GOD**

In pursuing to understand the nature of Christian marital relationships, we should learn something about who God is and what He is like. In the book of Genesis, God says: “Let us make man (sic) in our image, in our likeness” (1: 26). For the author of this dissertation, it is clear that from the beginning of the institution of marriage, in the Garden of Eden, God fashioned and shaped

human beings in His image and according to His likeness. Thus, marriage is a beautiful reflection of the heart of God. Craig is of the opinion that: “God’s creative act reveals how he placed in both Adam and Eve a capacity for giving and receiving love within the confines of a loving and committed relationship.” He goes further and says: “This marital relationship highlights the importance that God places on intimacy, harmony, and relatedness, and shows how His relational nature is mirrored in the self-giving love of two individuals who find a sense of unity and togetherness through the joy of marital love” (2004: 21).

The Bible help us further develop and understand how much God longs to be in a relationship with us as human beings and how much relationship in a marriage is an expression of God’s relational nature. The Apostle John declares this as follows: “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (4: 7-8). Thus, the nature of God is love; therefore, God expects us to imitate Him herein.

The Bible Dictionary of the New Testament Etymology helps us to further understand the term love. The Bible dictionary differentiates between two Greek terms for love: *Agapē* and *Phileō*. *Phileō* is the alternative word to *agapē*. It is more naturally used of intimate affection. However, *agapē* is the highest and noblest form of love which sees something infinitely in its object

(1975: 753). God's nature is that of *agapē*, a self-giving love (sacrificial). God in establishing marriage remained true to its nature. He has fashioned and shaped a relationship based on love and intimacy that meets the human need for mutuality, co-creation, and friendship. It is thus, clear that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were nothing less than a reflection of God's relational nature, and as such, they brought glory to Him. To seal the bond between Adam and Eve, God created marriage and then pronounce it "very good" (Gen: 1: 31).

### **3.4.2 MARRIAGE AS A JOURNEY TOWARDS INTIMACY**

When we take a closer look at the marriage bond as presented to us in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we see clearly God's original plan and purpose for marriage. Here we hear that, "for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (2: 24).

Thus, the way God established the marriage bond between Adam and Eve is a great significance. Craig concludes that the words "therefore" or for this reason indicated that God was holding up this relationship as a pattern for all future generations" (2004: 24).

Mace connects with the above sentiment (idea) when he says: "the first requirement for a Christian marriage is a monogamous marriage between one man and one woman only (1980: 98). However, it is a known fact that in many cultures in the world today, a man may have several wives. In the Old

Testament of the Christian Bible, polygamy was often practiced. However, the Christian rule (in the New Testament) from the beginning has always been one man and one woman. In I Corinthians Paul declares: “since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband” (7: 2). Mace is thus correct when he concludes that: “the unit of the Christian marriage is what we call the dyad” (1980: 98). When the Bible speaks of one flesh it clearly indicates that companionship and intimacy form the goal of marriage. Anderson is right when he says: “through the partnership established in the marital relationship, God has ordained the means whereby a deep and lasting friendship can be achieved by two people who choose to remain committed to each other. More than any other relationship, the friendship achieved through marriage comes closest to touching the image and likeness of God in human form” (1995: 166). With the above in mind, let us now analyze key factors that uphold a successful marriage.

### **3.4.3 KEY EXPRESSIONS THAT SHAPE OUR VIEW OF A SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

In our pursuit of understanding, more fully, the Biblical concept of marriage, let us examine three key expressions that shape our view of a successful Christian marriage. Craig highlights three key expressions that give us a greater understanding and appreciation of the dynamic forces that influence and

shape the Biblical view of marriage, and illuminate the pathway to developing a happy and healthy marital relationship.

- Mutual desire and attraction;
- Mutual commitment;
- Mutual intimacy and companionship (2004: 25-31).

The author will explore them fully in the following paragraphs.

#### **3.4.3.1 MUTUAL DESIRE AND ATTRACTION**

Genesis declares: “for this reason a man (sic) will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (2: 24). The above scripture reference declares unambiguously that a man’s first loyalty is to his wife. Thus, the Bible is clear that both men and women are to leave, to cut loose from those ties of solidarity with their parents. Samuel is correct when he says: “maintaining this kinship ties can infect encroaches upon the independence and freedom of the marriage relationship and inhibit the couple’s ability to be loyal to each other, especially the man to his wife” (1985: 14-15). Thus, it is absolutely necessary for the married couple to be free from outside interference as they pursue the development of their emotional and sexual relationship. Craig believes that the new family (married couple) “is to sever themselves from those familial ties that restrict their independence and

prevent the establishment of very clear relationship boundaries.” He further says, “this process of differentiation will enable the couple as marital partners to establish a very special identity of their own, distinct and separate from their families of origin. Without this sense of separateness, the marriage relationship may easily be sabotaged by outside influences” (2004: 25). The above sentiment does not suggest that the married couple loses all sense of family connectedness. It is important that they seek to maintain a good balance between separateness and family connectedness.

The act of “*leaving*” on the part of both man and woman is clearly motivated by their desire for companionship and a sense of closeness to one another. Furthermore, it is clear from the book of Genesis that Adam greets the introduction of the woman not as a spectator but as an individual highly attracted and motivated towards her.

Our first parental father passionately embraced Eve as the one who offers the prospect of companionship, partnership, and sexual fulfillment. Therefore, he calls out: “this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man: (2: 23)”. Thus, the above idea points to the equality of our first parents, and therefore equal partners in marriage.

### **3.4.3.2 MUTUAL COMMITMENT**

The second part in the process of marriage formation involves the concept of union. To understand the term “union”, Kallard is most helpful. He explains that the Hebrew word for “be united” is the verb *dabaq*. This word signifies a “strong personal attachment”. He then goes further and says; “the original imagery of the word implies clinging, sticking, remaining physically close, as a girdle to the lion or as skin to flesh and flesh to bone” (1981: 15). In the book of Deuteronomy, the term is often used as a technical covenant for the bonding of Israel to the Lord (Deut 10: 12; 11: 22; 13: 4). Thus, it implies an agreement of deep and lasting significance that involves the totality of two parties to the agreement.

Craig says: “to be united emphasizes the inward, attitudinal dimensions of the covenant bond; attitudes expressed in the total commitment of the marital partners to each other and their relationship” (2004: 26). Collins agrees with Craig when he says: “it implies devotion and an unshakeable faith between two humans; it connotes a permanent attraction that transcends genital union, to which nonetheless it gives meaning” (1977: 153). In chapter 5 of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul elaborates further on this theme. He put forward the fact that the spiritual relationship that exist between husband and wife is one in which they are both devoted to each other in a mutual submission that nourishes, and gives strength to the marriage relationship (see verse 21). Craig

believes that “this submission is characterized by a devotion of love and self-surrender that is in no way demeaning for either the man or the woman but rather an expression of the grateful acceptance of the care and support they enjoy from each other” (2004: 26).

Thus, marriage is not a half-hearted or short-term commitment but rather an extremely close, binding relationship between two people. Hughes is of the opinion that: “this mutual commitment is a basic element in the Christian concept of marriage that is based not only on leaving but also on a deep respect for each other and a desire to meet each other’s needs (1990: 189-190).

This does not mean that the marital partner in any way to lose or give up that individuality in order to achieve intimacy. However, in the true sense of the word, the quality of their relationship is actually build around the fact that both have a strong sense of their own personhood, and it is this unique strength that they bring to the marriage bond which, in the end, enhances it.

#### **3.4.3.3 MUTUAL INTIMACY AND COMPANIONSHIP**

The third element in the marriage relationship is highlighted by the expression “to become one flesh” (see Ephesians 5: 31b). In our quest to better understand mutual intimacy and companionship in the marriage bond, Craig is

most helpful. He uses the Hebrew term “*basar chad*” which means to “become one flesh.” He further says that the term “*basar* or flesh in the Old Testament refers not only to the physical body but to a person’s whole existence in the world” (2004: 27). Oswalt connects beautifully when he says: “by one flesh is meant a mutual dependence and reciprocity in all areas of life, a uniting that embraces the mutual lives of two persons in their entirety, a sexual concourse and a psychological concurrence, in the fullest sense of conjunction of bodies and minds, at once through *eros* and *agapē*, a psychic as well as psychological gift of loyalty and exchange” (1981: 136).

Thus, it is clear that the Old and New Testament’s use of the term-one flesh, clearly indicates total togetherness and intimacy in the total relationship of both husband and wife in the marital setting. Craig is, therefore, correct when he says: “it is this concept that lies at the very heart of what God intended the marriage relationship to achieve, and it encapsulates the goal of marriage, intimacy and companionship.” The above mentioned author believes that it is also important for the reader to understand that the above mentioned intimacy and companionship, “is not a sudden or immediate phenomenon within the marriage bond” but: “marriage is a process of growing together, a relationship that blossoms and strengthens over time in the marital bond” (2004: 27-28).

Samuels is correct when he points out that: “the Hebrew nuance; not usually conveyed in the English translations, indicates that this state results from a process of development that deepens in intensity and strengthened itself with the passage of time instead of dissipating like a straw fire” (1985: 15). Thus, marriage is a relationship between two covenantal partners that deepens and develops through the life cycle of the marital bond which is vital for a successful marriage. Another important observation pertaining to mutual intimacy and companionship comes from John Bristow. He is of the opinion that although Jesus never defined the phrase “one flesh’, we can make seven important observations about the wording:

- First, becoming “one flesh” does not imply that two individual personalities are meant to merge into one in order for a husband and wife to become a whole person;
- Second, becoming “one flesh” doesn’t mean that marriage partners will always agree on everything but rather affirm their differences;
- Third, becoming “one flesh” implies an attachment or bonding that results in them being “one” in terms of their hopes, drives, and ambition, and that they are headed together in the same direction;

- In the fourth place, he suggests that becoming “one flesh” implies that a couple emotionally become responsive to each other, connect with each other’s feelings, and communicate with each other a sense of joy and pain, happiness and hurts;
- Fifth, becoming “one flesh” rules out the idea that a marriage is composed of superior over an inferior, or that the needs, choices, or ambitions of one are more important than those of the other. There is a sense of gender equality;
- Six, becoming “one flesh” is a process that requires time and experience to achieve;
- Lastly, becoming “one flesh” has a spiritual dimension. It describes a relationship that God created and blessed and that He intended would be a permanent, lifelong partnership (1994: 87-89)

It is quite clear for the author of this dissertation that there is indeed an amazing unity in the marriage setting. In this bond, there is an exchange of souls which indicates something of the psychological depth of the marital bond which leads inevitable to intimacy and companionship.

#### **3.4.4 MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP**

The Heinemann dictionary defines the term covenant “as a formal agreement or contract” (1987: 244).

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary on the other hand defines the above mentioned term: “as a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement”

(<http://www.merriam-webster> online dictionary. 2010.)

In our quest to further unravel and understand the term, covenant, the Bible is an invaluable source. Throughout the scriptures, marriage is prescribed both as a covenant and a covenant relationship. In the book of Malachi, the Prophet refers to the marriage bond as a covenant when he says: “You ask, why? It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner the wife of your marriage covenant” (2: 14) Brueggemann is of the opinion that “the Hebrew words *azab* and *dabaq* used in (Genesis: 2: 24) to describe the relationship between Adam and Eve clearly indicates a covenant context.” He further explains that “both words are associated with covenant making and evoke so many strong images of bonding, attachment to another, total commitment, and permanence in relationship. The language used here, not only parallels the oath of solidarity and the language of covenant relationship, but indicates that Adam was expressing to Eve an attitude of devotion and commitment to the marriage relationship” (1970: 535).

It is thus, comprehensible for the author that the covenant relationship within the marriage setting is one of total commitment to the covenant partner. This covenant, agreement, pledge or promise involves mutual promise made by the married partner to demonstrate exclusive love, loyalty, and a devotion to one another as long as they both shall live. Robinson in Craig is, thus, correct when he points out: “Anything less than total commitment, would inevitable harms the covenant relationship, and make the obligations of the agreement burdensome (2004: 32). Wade in Craig suggests that there are a number of significant meanings inherent in the Old Testament concept of the covenant that impacts on our understanding of marriage. The five variations he reflects on are:

- **CHOSENNESS** – a concept that filled the respondent with a sense of awe and humble gratitude at being chosen;
- **BELONGING** – a concept that placed emphasis not on individuality but on deriving a sense of personal identity from solidarity with another;
- **SEPARATENESS** – a concept that suggests exclusiveness in one’s devotion to another. Here, there is no room for rivals, only total commitment to the covenant partner;

- **KNOWLEDGE** – a concept that suggests a relational dimension, a knowing of another, not just intellectually but experientially;
- **FAITHFULNESS** – a concept that implies a love-inspired loyalty and steadfastness. A love that aspires to permanence (2004: 32-33).

Marriage as a covenant relationship is, thus, one of bonding, attachment to the covenant partner, a love that is deep seated and total commitment in the marital setting.

### **3.4.5 MARRIAGE AFTER THE FALL**

From the outset of our discussion on marriage in the Christian tradition, it is clear that God's original intention for marriage was one of intimacy and a long term relationship. However, this perfect picture of the world painted (highlighted) in Genesis 2: 18-25 was soon shattered. God creates our first parents for relationships, only to have the couple shattered all those relationships. The brokenness, as depicted in Genesis 3, highlights the devastating effects that resulted when Adam and Eve turned their backs on God and each other, and walked out of the covenant relationship that they had learned to enjoy. Craig is correct when he observed that: "With the experience of sin, or a broken relationship (Isaiah 59: 2-4) human nature was altered, and the relationship between male and female, husband and wife, irrevocably

changed.” He further says: “once equals, co-regents over the earth (Gen 1: 26-30), the Edenic couple now experienced disconnectedness, a loss of integrity, and a distortion of their gender identities. The delicate alignment, the joy of interdependence, was disrupted, and the dance of intimacy spoken of so concisely and meaningfully was now replaced by the dance for intimacy. Human innocence had been destroyed by the intrusion of self-interest, defensiveness, and denial, and the balance and unity in the marriage partnership were severely affected” (2004: 33). It is clear from the above sentiment that our first parents had lost the oneness which they had known with one another and with their creator, God. Humanity was now naked. In other words, they were inwardly polluted by sin and therefore, they needed covering from the face of God. Because of this shattered relationship with God and with each other, humanity cannot stand in the presence of a holy God. It is, thus, apparent that the human condition after the fall had plunged the whole human race in a dilemma. Clause (et.al) are correct when they say that: “as a result of Adam and Eve’s fall, human beings now struggle with a sense of isolation, fragmentation, and oppression that flows from their loss of dignity, esteem, and connectedness” (2006: 48).

Anderson connects beautifully when he says: “the loss of identity and personal dignity was no doubt communicated from generation to generation as a sense

of shame and isolation. One of the deepest wounds to the human spirit is the isolation and fragmentation that occurs when self-dignity and self-worth are systematically eroded. This is the pervasive effect of any form of human bondage and oppression, whether it is due to race, economic factors, political control, or marital or family abuse (1997: 39). The above sentiment shows clearly how the fall from grace for Adam and Eve compromised God's intention for marriage. Petersen is correct when he says: "As Adam and Eve struggled to maintain connection and commitment to one another, the pain of their distrust and disloyalty served only further to wound them and their relationship. Their sense of personhood and equality was ruptured, and they began to feel the pain of invalidation and inequality. Deprived of commitment to one another, their sexuality, which had been such a wonderful vehicle for the establishment of intimacy and bonds of affection, now failed to enchant them or enhance their sense of meaning and spirituality in the same way (1997: 38). The above changes had a sad and tragic effect on the marital setting, which clearly can be seen in the estrangement, unfaithfulness, neglect, abuse, violence, dominance, jealousy, separation, divorce and sexual perversion that, so often, have characterized love relationships down through the centuries up to our post-modern era.

#### **3.4.6 THE REDEMPTION OF MARRIAGE**

The failure of the first human pair as recorded in Genesis 3 is not God's final word regarding marriage. It may be correct to argue that the entrance of sin may have altered God's ideal for marriage. However, God's grace abounds in the face of destruction and failure. Anderson is of the opinion that: "the ingredients of the covenant relationship existed as a presupposition to the creation account. Those created in the image of God are, through the revelation of the Good News about God, to be restored to His likeness. Grace means the recovery of a relationship with the living God and reconciliation in relationship with each other" (1997: 52-59). From the above, it is clear that the grace of God confronts the conflicts, competition and behaviours which lead to broken relationships by declaring that God seeks to restore marriage to its original setting. The Bible as an invaluable source throughout human history helps us understand how God has called us for the restoration of marriage to its purity and beauty. We see how the Prophets see marriage as the pinnacle point in the relationships by using it to describe God's love (see Isaiah 54: 5-6), and lament the abuse that befell the marriage relationship (see 2 Sam 12: 1-9, Ezekiel 22: 9-11, Malachi 2: 16).

The New Testament inter alia, the Gospels, connect with the above when they depicted Jesus as approving of marriage and challenging the evils that had caused divisions between males and females. Craig expresses it well when he

says: “through the symbolism contained in the supernatural transformation of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana, Jesus demonstrated that the old ways were to be replaced by a new, refreshing, vitalizing power found only in Him (2004: 37). Thus, Jesus supported the view about marriage as expressed in Genesis 1&2 and not the brokenness as depicted in Genesis 3. Grundy, on the other hand, is of the opinion that Jesus not only approved of the marital setting, but that “Jesus also consciously sought to restore the gender balance and erase the inequalities that existed between the sexes. With graciousness and sensitivity, He sought to lift women up from their inferior status. He treated women as people and went out of His way to refute by His actions the attitude towards women” (1980: 46). The above shows clearly how Jesus terminated or cancelled the negative effect of the fall on women as well as men and restored them to their former glory. Thus, the Gospel story throughout the ages, up to today, is to restore in human beings the image of their Maker, and to bring them back to the perfection in which they were created.

In the next section, the author will analyze some sociological ideas about marriage and family life.

### **3.5 SOCIOLOGICAL IDEAS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

This section deals with some sociological ideas about marriage and family life.

However, in our quest to have a holistic understanding of the above-

mentioned phenomenon, let us first disentangle the term sociology. Horton

and Hunt define sociology as: “the science of the origin and evolution of

society, or of forms, institutions, and functions of human groups” (1970: 3).

The dictionary of Modern Sociology, on the other hand, sees the science of

sociology as: “the intellectual discipline concerned with developing systematic,

reliable knowledge about human social relationships in general and about the

products of relationships” (1969: 307). Ambrose (et.al) put it well when they

say: “sociologists are the main group of social scientists, engaged in the

analysis of society, who have produced a vast literature on marriage and the

family life” (1983: 9). Morgan in Ambrose makes an interesting observation

concerning the marital family. He says: “the family is not a formal organization

and there is no clearly laid down organizational charter telling people what the

family is for” (ibid: 9)

Horton beautifully connects when he says: “family patterns show a fascinating

variation from society to society, and persons from one society who become

involved in the family patterns of a different society generally react in a

predictable ethnocentric manner.” He further says and asks: “why, if the family

is so important, has mankind (sic) been unable to find and agree upon some

ideal pattern of family life which best serve human needs?” (1972: 199). It is thus; clear from the above opinion that there are indeed no clear cut rules, regulations and rationale set out for family life. However, it is a known fact that earlier sociologists had a very clear view of what the marriage setting ought to be. Ambrose reports that the German Sociologist, Tönnies is regarded as one of the founding fathers of this discipline. Tönnies sees: “marriage as a special form of what he termed *Gemeinschaft*, or close community association, based on mutual concern rather than on the hope of deriving some material benefit from others” (1983: 10). Thus, it is obvious for Tönnies that there is a natural division of labour within the family based on the differences in natural strength. Horton is of the opinion that: “the family, just like all institutions, is a system of accepted norms and procedures for getting some important jobs done” (1972: 199). Wimberly connects when he says: “a family is like a forest; when you are outside it is dense; when you are inside, you see that each tree has its own position (2007: 91).

Tönnies see the hierarchical family structure as a desirable miniature version of society at large. He argues that: “all natural authority is concentrated in the paternal authority which was like that of a prince, landowner or feudal lord; and that the study of the household is similar to the study of society just as the study of the organic cell, is the study of life itself.” He also stressed the close

relationship of religion and family life, arguing that religion is family life itself, for the care and assistance given by father or mother is the origin of all divine and godlike guidance (1983:10- 11). However, according to Ambrose, Tönnies did not approve the new trends of thoughts pertaining to the industrial revolution in Europe at the time. He says: “these changes threatened both the life of the small communities and the traditional pattern of marriage (because of the involvement of women in the labour force)” (1983: 11). However, to many modern thinkers this view of the marriage relationship in the late nineteenth- century Germany, seems totally outdated. Nevertheless, according to Ambrose; “it had been echoed in sociological writings until very recent times” (1983: 11).

The American sociologist, Talcott Parsons and his associates help us further in our pursuit to understand marriage and family life in its social context.

Ambrose reports that most of their work centered on the middle orders of American society. He says: “Parsons accepted that war and profound changes in society had exerted pressure on marital relationships, but he felt that there was no general disorganization of family life.” He further says: “that the divorce rate had peaked just after the Second World War and was now on a down ward path, that the rising house-building rates were evident of the

strength of the family as a social unit and that there was no serious tendency towards symmetry in the labour market between men and women” (1983: 11).

It is, thus, apparent from the above that the mother as wife and executive of the household is a vital component of marriage as a social setting. Pertaining to the educational role of the family, Parsons is of the opinion that: “education is necessary for the stabilizing of the adult personalities of the society (See Ambrose 1983: 11). In our pursuit to understand the social setting of marriage and family life, it inevitably opens up the discussion on the sexual regulation function within the family. Horton is correct when he says: “the family is the principal institution through which societies organize and regulate the satisfaction of sexual desire” (1972: 205). Macaulay in Ambrose connects with the above by saying that: “sexual activity could be legitimately engaged only in marriage and that marriage is for the production of children” (1983: 12).

As mentioned earlier, the family in any society is an institutional structure which develops through a society’s effort to get certain tasks done. Horton identifies seven important functions of the nuclear family:

- The sexual function;
- Reproductive function;
- Socializing function;

- Affectional function;
- Status function;
- Protective function;
- Economic function (1972: 205-208).

Let me stress from the outset that there is a vastness of other important literature pertaining to sociological writings on marriage and family life. As Ambrose rightly puts it: “the overall impression is similar to that gained when reviewing Christian pronouncements on marriage: we are left without any clear consensus on the precise aims and meaning of marriage and family life.” He further says: “some see the institution as a factory that produces human personalities, some as a means of placing people on the status hierarchy, some as a device for regulating sexual activity and some as a prime means by which the social order or social stability are preserved” (1983: 14-15).

### **3.6 MARRIAGE: SOME CRITICAL OPINION**

Reich commends the following on the institution of marriage. He says: “the people who defend the institution of marriage on principle never think of enquiring about its history and social function” (1983: 16). Thus, for Reich it is important that one understands the tradition of marriage and family life in its totality. Ambrose reports that: “the tradition of critical writing about marriage

and family life has its most obvious source in the work of Engels” (1983: 16-28). He highlights four prominent writers pertaining to the above tradition:

- Friedrich Engels;
- Wilhelm Reich;
- Ronald David Laing;
- David Graham Cooper (Ibid: 16-28).

The author will explore each of the above, fully, in the following paragraphs.

### **3.6.1 FRIEDRICH ENGELS**

In our quest to understand the thinking of Engels concerning marriage and family life, Ambrose and his associates are most valuable. Engels’ starting point pertaining to marriage was in his long essay called *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Here, he has an extensive discussion on ancient society. This work is predominantly Victorian in style. In this work, he was uses a three stage analysis starting with:

- Savagery-the period in which man’s (sic) appropriation of products in their natural state predominates; the products of human art were chiefly instruments which assist this appropriation;

- Barbarism-the period during which man (sic) learned to breed domestic animals and to practice agriculture, and acquired methods of increasing the supply of natural products by human activity;
- Civilization-the period in which man (sic) learned a more advance application of work to the products of nature, the period of industry proper and art. (Ambrose 1983: 16).

According to Engels; “marriage was not divinely ordained and eternally appropriate institution, rather it was an inevitable outgrowth of another, historically specific, institution inheritable private property” (Ibid: 17). A discussion of earlier systems of marriage such as polygamy (allowing the man a plurality of wives), polyandry (where several husbands share a single wife), group marriages (where several men and several women are all in a marriage relationship with one another), and pair marriages (a transient and easily dissolved form of monogamy (Horton: 1972: 203), prompted Engels to arrive at the growth of the lifelong monogamous marriage. He termed this type of marriage, monogamian marriage (Ambrose 1983: 17). This type of marriage, according to Engels: “is based on the supremacy of the man; it’s express aim is the begetting of children of undisputed paternity, this paternity being required in order that these children may in due time inherit their father’s wealth as his natural heirs. The monogamian family differs from pairing marriage in the far

greater rigidity of the marriage tie, which can no longer be dissolved at the pleasure of either party. Now, as a rule, only the man can dissolve it and cast off his wife. The right of conjugal infidelity remains his even now, sanctioned; at least by custom (the Code Napoleon expressly concedes this right to the husband as long as he does not bring his concubine into the conjugal home), and is exercised more and more with the growing development of society. Should the wife recall the ancient sexual practice and desire to revive it, she is punished more severely than ever before” (Ibid: 12). Concerning the human nature as Engels understood it; he maintains that apart from oppression within the marriage at least two other social institutions were always bound to co-exist with monogamous property-based marriage. These are:

- Adultery;
- Prostitution (Ambrose 1983: 18).

In their pursuit to accentuate more clearly the above mentioned point, Ambrose and his associates use Engels’ illustration of contemporary society where he contrasted marriage among the bourgeois (middle class) with sexual relations among the poor. He says “at the bourgeois level, arranged marriages were common in the Catholic countries, and divorce had been abolished since

the Church had become resigned to the view that for adultery, as for death there is no cure whatsoever” (1983: 19).

Engels’ key contribution to the analysis of marriage and family life was his insistence that these were changing institutions. He also argued that, historically, the regulation of sexual relations and the arrangements for the care of the young (and thus the reproduction of the society from one generation to the next) have changed as a response to changes in economic conditions and especially as a response to developments in the form of commodity production and the extent to which the means of production and the products themselves are privately owned (Ambrose 1983: 19). This stance is a direct contradiction to the teachings of Jesus with the emphasis on lifelong monogamous marriage as an eternal ideal state (Matthew 19: 4-6), regardless of, or with no attention paid, to other social and economic considerations.

The work of Friedrich Engels had a profound effect on ideas about marriage and family life. Ambrose reports that “in particular, post-revolutionary Russia attempted a full –scale sexual revolution” (1983: 20).

The following tendency concerning marriage emerge here and needs our attention:

- The law under the Czars had taken a very traditional view of marriage, with the husband legally bound to love his wife (article 106);
- The wife bound to obey her husband (article 107);
- Parents to have power over their children up to any age (article 164) and even power to have them imprisoned for disobedience (article 165) (Ibid: 20).

Soon after the revolution, in December 1917, Lenin issued decrees concerning sex equality and, there, he followed a string of further laws which made marriage a private matter and divorce obtainable on almost any grounds (Ibid 1983: 20).

In analyzing our discussion on Engels' critique on marriage and family life, it is obvious that he was not pleased with the status quo of marriage life during his era. The bourgeois family, as he termed it was squarely based on capital and private gain. Engels' critique on marriage has a profound effect on the institution of marriage for generations to come. Let us now analyze the next critical opinion concerning marriage and family life.

### **3.6.2 WILHELM REICH**

Wilhelm Reich was an Austrian-American psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and follower of Freud. In his book: *The Sexual Revolution*, Reich summarizes the

criticism of the prevailing sexual conditions and conflicts which resulted from his sex-economic medical experiences over a period of years. He demonstrated by way of individual examples, the general basic traits of conflicts in present day sexual living by dealing, particularly, with the institution of marriage and the institution of family life ([http:// Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia), the free encyclopedia and Ambrose 1983: 20-21).

Reich's intellectual point of departure was a criticism of his mentor Freud. According to Ambrose "Reich accepted the validity of Freud's distinction between the pleasure principle (an expression of our primary and unrestrained wants and needs) and the reality principle (our recognition that we cannot indulge all these impulses, except in fantasy, because we live in a society where others have rights). The tension is one between basic instincts and civilized codes of behavior." Ambrose further says that "Reich, however, believed that Freud had written as if the degree to which this tension was felt was historically unvarying whereas in Reich's observation the degree of tension, and thus the degree of guilt felt on indulging the pleasure principle, did not vary in different historical periods, in particular it depended upon the degree of repression in the state's laws concerning marriage, divorce, extra-marital sexual relations, child sexuality and the role of women" (1983: 21). Reich is of the opinion that the society around him, dominated by bourgeois

(middle class) ethics and repressive legislation, was sexually sick (ibid: 21). It was, thus, imperative for Reich that humanity create a society where natural sexual needs could be met without fear of repression at any level. Such a society, according to Ambrose, “would, for example, not only prohibit a love relationship between adolescents; it would give its full protection and help” (1983: 21). Reich regarded stable fulfilling marriage as an advisable ideal but he did not approve of the majority of marriages he saw around him. He termed such marriages as authoritarian compulsive marriages, and as products of and supporters of the authoritarian society and state (Ibid: 21). Thus, for Reich, these types of marriages were totally devoid of any happiness. For Reich, the way forward towards a stable and sexually fulfilled society, and to enduring marriage, lay in moving towards the economic independence of women and in developing natural and tender mutual love based on pleasurable sexual experiences ([http://www.theory of the family](http://www.theoryofthefamily.com), Wikipedia the free encyclopedia, 2010). Ambrose reports that “it is normally assumed that Christian doctrine invariably specifies monogamous marriage as not only in accord with Divine guidance but also as some kind of natural human state” (1983: 23). However, Reich dismissed the above notion because he saw monogamy itself as a source of sexual repression. Reich also believed that monogamy was instituted to insure the male’s economic dominance in the

marriage bond. He is also of the opinion that the negative sexual moralities connected with it were, themselves, agents of sexual repression.

With regard to Reich's view on the repression of women in marriage and which in turn has been powerfully developed in recent feminist writings about the role of women in mature capitalist systems, Ambrose reports as follows:

“Owing to the economic dependence of the women on the man and her lesser gratification in the process of production, marriage is a protective institution for her, but at the same time she is exploited in it. For she is not only the sexual object of the man and the provider of children for the state, but her unpaid work in the household indirectly increases the profit of the employer. For the man can work at the usual low wages only on the condition that in the home so and so much work is done without pay. If the employer is responsible for the running of his workers' homes, he either would have to pay a housekeeper for them or would have to pay them wages which would allow the workers to hire one. This work, however, is done by the housewife, without remuneration (1983: 24). Reich has seen marriage and family life as an institution of repression, especially on women. Therefore, this explains his call for the abolition of the monogamous family as the key to the liberation of women, children, and sexuality in general. Reich also hold the view that the monogamous family is the only private enterprise form of society which has an

interest in sexual repression, and which requires it for the maintenance of two of its basic institutions: the permanent monogamous marriage and the patriarchal family. Let us analyze the next critical observation on marriage and family life.

### **3.6.3 RONALD DAVID LAING**

Our next critical tradition to be considered is also rooted in the science of psychoanalysis but is somewhat different both in approach to the internal politics of the family and to the relationship of the family to the outside world (Ambrose 1983: 24). Ronald David Laing was a Scottish psychiatrist who was first trained in the science of medicine and who wrote comprehensively on mental illness; and particularly on the experience of psychosis.

(<http://www.Wikipedia>, the free encyclopedia, 2010). In our pursuit to have a better grasp of the term, psychosis, the Heinemann English dictionary is most helpful. This term is used “for all mental disorders other than neuroses, including schizophrenia and manic-depression” (1979: 870). The Encarta dictionary on the other hand sees this disorder as “a psychiatric disorder such as schizophrenia or mania that is marked by delusions, hallucinations, incoherence, and distorted perceptions of reality (<http://www.Online Encarta dictionary>, 2010). Ambrose reports that “Laing developed during the 1960’s and 1970’s a critique of family dynamics which is sharply different from that of

more convenient psychiatry.” He further says that “Laing’s concentration on the family developed out of a broader interest in the condition generally known as schizophrenia, a term he uses with some disquiet in view of its catch-all nature” (1983: 24).

Before we can proceed any further in analyzing Laing’s critique on the family, let us first disentangle the term, Schizophrenia in order to have a better grasp of it. The Encarta dictionary is most helpful here. It defines this term as “a severe psychiatric disorder with symptoms of emotional instability, detachment from reality, and withdrawal into the self” (<http://www.Encartaonline>, 2010). The Heinemann dictionary on the other hand, sees schizophrenia “as a wide group of psychoses characterized by the inability to act or think realistically, sometimes marked by delusions and the withdrawal into a private world” (1979: 968). Laing in Ambrose says “in using the term schizophrenia, I am not referring to any condition that I suppose to be mental rather than physical, or to an illness, like pneumonia, but to a label that some people pin on other people under certain social circumstances (1983: 24). Laing and his associates carried out many case studies of the family situation of patients referred to him as schizophrenic. These cases focused his attention firmly on the nuclear family which, for a variety of reasons, he found a mysterious field of study (<http://www.Wikipedia>, the free encyclopedia, 2010). Laing in

Ambrose is of the view that “ the more one studies family dynamics, the more unclear one becomes as to the ways family dynamics compare and contrast with the dynamics of other groups not called families, let alone the ways family themselves differ (1983: 25).

Laing is of the belief that the family is not just a “we” within and a “them” outside. It is a complex system of sub-groups consisting of individuals and pairs, each individual having his or her own unique self-perception and a unique perception of each of the other members, sub-groups and pair – relationships. Laing is also of the opinion that the functions of the family and the relationship within it cannot be set out in any objective way; they are subjectively experienced and then internalized (1983: 25). Laing argues that “the family acts as a defense against collapse, disintegration, emptiness, despair, guilt and other terrors.” However, the family, according to Laing, suffocates individual growth by a process he calls “attribution whereby children (principally) are led, almost hypnotized, into beliefs about themselves projected by parents. This control over the development of children is based less on what they are explicitly told to do, more on what they are implicitly led to believe they are” (Ibid: 25-26). Morgan fittingly summed up Laing’s contribution to the analysis of the family when he says “Laing present us with the dark, unspoken side of the family living, a side too readily played down in

much of the text-book discussions of the functions of the family. The family is a destructive exploitative institution as much as it is the reverse” (1983: 26-27).

Conceivably, Laing’s personal and family history had a profound effect on how he perceives marriage and family life. Laing’s personal life can be seen as an extreme example of how each generation of a family has consequences for the next. His parents led a life of extreme denial and exhibited bizarre behavior.

His father David, an electrical engineer, often came tough with his own brother, and he had a breakdown when Laing was a teenager. His mother Amelia was described as “still more psychologically peculiar.” Laing was troubled by his own personal problems, suffering from both episodic alcoholism and clinical depression, according to his self diagnosis. He fathered six sons and four daughters by four women (<http://www.Wikipedia>, the free encyclopedia, 2010). His son Adrian, said in 2008, “it was ironic that my father became well-known as a family psychiatrist, when in the meantime, he had nothing to do with his own family” (Ibid 2010).

Let us now evaluate the next critical tradition pertaining to marriage and family life.

#### **3.6.4 DAVID GRAHAM COOPER**

David Graham Cooper was a British psychiatrist, noted theorist and leader in the anti-psychiatry movement along with David Laing (<http://www.wikipedia.org>, 2010). Ambrose is, thus, correct when he reports that “Cooper was a follower of Laing.” He further says that “Cooper is explicitly concerned with the bourgeois nuclear family unit, and especially with the way it functions, as a conditioning unit in capitalist and other exploitative societies (1983: 27). In one of many dismissive judgments, Cooper sees the contemporary bourgeois family as the ultimate perfected form of non-meeting (1970: 4). He also emphasized the political role of the family when he gave an analysis on the factors that perpetuate ruling ideologies. He says “the power of the family resides in its social mediating function. It reinforces the effective power of ruling class in any exploitative society by providing a highly controllable paradigmatic form for every social institution. So we find the family form replicated through the social structures of the factory, the union branch, the school (primary and secondary), the university, the business corporation, the church, political parties and governmental apparatus, the armed forces, general and mental hospitals, and so on (ibid: 4). Cooper is troubled; especially with the way the nuclear family living prevents us from existing in a world of our own. In the family, he says “we have to live agglutinatively, so that one glues bits of other people onto oneself and then

proceeds to ignore the difference between the otherness in one's self and the selfsameness of one's self" (1970: 9).

For Cooper, the family is destructive of personal development because it reinforces its members with a sense of personal incompleteness, it lays down the roles members should play rather than encouraging the free development of identity, it instills, in children, far more social controls than are necessary to navigate life and it indoctrinates them with an elaborate system of taboos; especially in terms of sensual communication, thus setting up the conditions for massive guilt feelings in later years (1983: 27). Thus, for Cooper, the most excellent basis on which to institute love is the development of a person's separateness. Ambrose is correct when he says "this is precisely what nuclear family living tends to inhibit." He further says "it also inhibits the development of self-love which Cooper considers to be an essential part of a genuinely loving relationship with others (1983: 27). A loving relationship, according to Cooper, "is a relationship in which each person makes it possible for the other to love herself/himself enough to precondition a development of the relationship. It's all a matter of how one doesn't stop the other person from being nice and kind to himself or herself" (1970: 37). Ambrose reports that Cooper "regards contractual marriage as the submission of personal need to an externally imposed time-scheme." He says "our time withers away without

our noticing until we feel suddenly that we want it back, which involves a devastating shattering of our laboriously erected security structures in a break-up” (1983: 28). It is; thus evident from the above mentioned discussion, that Cooper was not happy with the conventional marital arrangements of his day. As earlier mentioned, he perceived the family as an endlessly replicated unit throughout all the institutions of society.

Ambrose (et.al) in analyzing the critique of Cooper on marriage and family life in his book: *Death of the family* concludes and I agree with him that “it provides insight but offers no clearly defined alternative to contractual marriages. It makes passing references to the broader society outside the marriage but little practical guidance about the means by which individuals and society alike can be liberated from the destructive effects (as he saw them) of permanent, exclusive monogamy” (1983: 28).

### **3.7 THE IMPACT OF PATRIARCHALISM ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

This section deals with the impact of patriarchy on family and marriage life. However, in our pursuit to have a better grasp of the above-mentioned phenomenon, let us first untangle the term, patriarchy.

The Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines the term, patriarchy “as a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan of the family,

the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line, broadly: control by men of a disproportionately large scale of power” (<http://www.Webster online>).

The New World encyclopedia, on the other hand, submits that “patriarchy (from Greek: *patria*, meaning father and *arché*, meaning rule) is the anthropological term used to define the sociological condition in which male members of a society predominate in positions of power: the more powerful the position, the more likely it is that a male will hold that position” (<http://www.New worldencyclopedia.com>).

The Heinemann English dictionary sees patriarchy “as a social system in which the father or eldest male is head of the household, having authority over women and children. Patriarchy also refers to a system of government by males and to the dominance of men in social or cultural systems” (1979: 784).

It is a known fact that patriarchy is a multidimensional condition of power and status. The free encyclopedia cites ten dimensions pertaining to patriarchy.

They are:

- Lack of property control by women;
- Lack of power of women in kinship context;
- Low value placed on the lives of women;

- Low value placed on the labour of women;
- Lack of domestic authority of women;
- Absence of ritualized female solidarity;
- Absence of control over women's marital and sexual lives;
- Absence of ritualized fear of women;
- Lack of male-female joint participation in warfare, work, and community decision making;
- Lack of women's indirect influence on decision making  
(<http://www.Wikipedia.org>).

The above outlook clearly points to the negative effect that a patriarchal value system can have on the society we live in, especially on the pastor and his family. Given the South African history of racism and discrimination; and as Wimberley puts it "the emasculation of African American men." Here, we also refer to the African context in which the author lives and operates. He also is of the opinion that "it does seem that male leadership in the home is very important. However, according to him "this male leadership is often expressed through utilizing stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity that permeate all of society" (1997: 1). Concerning these stereotypical images,

“many African American men have sought the sanction of religion to support a particular type of domineering leadership style in the home that is oppressive rather than liberating to the growth potential of their spouses and children (Ibid: 1-2).

It is a known fact that different role definitions are assigned to males and females and that scripture is drawn on for authority. Such dynamics “presents real problems for marriage and family life” (Wimberley 1997: 2). Masango reports that Aristotle proposed that men and women were by nature ordained for different functions. According to Aristotle “nature gave men strength of body and an intrepidity of mind to enable him to face hardships, and to women was given a weak and delicate constitution, accompanied by natural softness and modest timidity, which fit her for a sedentary life” (2003: 418). Masango and the author, however, differ with the above concept because it leads to domination over women. Phyllis in Wimberley points to some of the common and popular notions about women as inferior to men. She deduces the following popular ideas from Genesis 2:

- A male God creates first man (2: 7) and last woman (2: 22)-first means superior and last means inferior or subordinate;

- Woman is created for the sake of man: a helpmate to cure his loneliness (2: 21-22);
- Contrary to nature, woman comes out of man; she is denied even her natural function of birthing and that function is given to man (2: 21-22);
- Woman is the rib of man, dependent upon him for life. Taken out of man, woman has a derivative, not an autonomous, existence;
- Man names woman and thus has power over her (1997: 17).

The above sentiment clearly favours men, subjugates women even further and leads to oppression by men in a marital setting. When we take a closer look at the Bible and its culture, we see that on several occasions, “the Hebrew culture underpinning and informing the Biblical narratives behave itself as sexist” (See Waruta 2005: 146). They further say, “the Old Testament is replete with incidents, laws, stories, anecdotes that depict the treatment of women in Hebrew culture as less than human” (Ibid 2005: 146).

Masango is correct when he says that “the Bible is thought by many readers to be an anti-feminist document” (2003: 429). He further cites Aristotle’s view, which favours the humanity of men above the humanity of women. He connects this view with the effect it has on religion and says “The sacred scriptures of both Judaism and Christianity are considered to be detrimental to

the well being of women, especially in the modern world because of abuse and domination that occurs between men and women. The Bible had been used as a resource for arguing against a women's desire to be anything but a dutiful housewife and mother. The patriarchs from Abraham through Joseph, and then Moses expose a concept of God that is exclusively masculine and an attitude towards wives and women that is thoroughly paternalistic. These passages of scriptures create a problem today as they are used as justification for and/or explanation of violence and abuse among human beings" (Ibid: 429). The author holds the same view concerning the above because, for too long scriptures were used to subjugate women in the marital setting and thus; degrade the image of God in them, which in the end inevitably leads to violence, abuse and divorce. Thus, the parsonage is no exception in this regard.

Wimberley is quite accurate when he says "often wives also wants to be accommodating to the religious values that they feel are important. However, they are in conflict because they feel that what they are expected to do does not lead to their growth and development" (1997: 20). Thus, it is well known fact that many women, who are trapped in a patriarchal orientated marital setting, are in most instances in a spiritual dilemma and this includes the wife of the pastor. Patriarchalism has a major impact on marriage and family life and leads to divorce in the end. The elimination of Aristotle's view on Western

thinking that women are inferior to men, would be a major step towards equality in and out of the home. As mentioned earlier in this section, the Bible which is thought by many readers to be an anti-feminist document “creates an inferior complex that leads men to regard women as objects” (Masango 2003: 437). The author is in agreement with Masango when he says “this is a problem we are faced with, and we need to work on educating theologians in order for them (especially men) to break this chain of oppression” (Ibid: 438). The duty of the church and of pastors is to educate men that women just like men were created in the image of God. They are indeed fully human beings entrusted with possibilities, flair, and talents. Together with men they are the crown of God’s creation and deserve to be treated as such. In the next section, the above sentiment will be fully explored by the author.

### **3.7.1 MALE AND FEMALE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD**

Human beings are unique creations of God. Forell believes that the reason why human beings are unique “is the fact that they stand in a unique relationship to God” (1975: 127). Wimberley is of the belief that “this uniqueness is a gift of God bestowed by God, through God’s relationship with persons” (1997: 16). Thus, the source of our uniqueness is embedded in the fact that we are made in the image of God “*imago dei*” (Forell 1975: 125). In Genesis we read that, “then God said, let us make man (sic) in our image, in our likeness, and let

them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures, that move along the ground. So God created man (sic) in his own image, in the image of God he created him (sic), male and female he created them” (1: 26-27). The above portion of the scripture highlights the fact that women just like men were created in the image of God. Haring is correct when he points out that “women are fully human beings entrusted with giftedness, potentialities and talents. They were intended by God to be co-creators on earth in community and independence with other people. Women are called to be responsible persons, accountable to God for the stewardship of their giftedness and talents” (1984: 11). Phyllis in Wimberley connects beautifully when she points out that “image and likeness are not separated according to male and femaleness in the first creation story. Both males and females share godlikeness. Godlikeness also refers to resemblance, representation, similar form, a replica. Likeness and image therefore have to do with the godlikeness that exists in all human beings that are part of creation” (1997: 16). The above sentiments point to the fact that God in His great mercy has grand all humanity (male and female) His grace and mercy. Wimberley stresses this point further when he submits that “God’s original intent was for men and women to live in harmony with each other, with the earth and all earth creatures as well as with God” (1997: However, as

mentioned earlier in this dissertation, this perfect picture of human harmony that is decorated in Genesis 2: 18-25 was soon shattered and hostility and antagonism between male and female came into existence which haunts the human race up to today. This hostility and antagonism has now infiltrated the parsonage with a devastating effect on the pastor, his wife, children, congregation and society at large. The image of God (*imago dei*) in which the human race was created was now effectively destroyed. Forell observes, and I agree with him, that “this image has become a broken image” (1975: 125). However, this hostility, brokenness and enmity which were the consequence of the fall, had been overcome by Jesus Christ and the original creation of males and females in God’s own image was restored. Thus, in the person of Jesus, the perfect human was restored and this image was restored in us. The New Testament inter alia, the Gospels, are clear about the fact that the historical Jesus challenged the male and female stereotypes of his day by the way he related to women. As earlier mentioned in this thesis, “Jesus consciously sought to restore the gender balance and erase the inequalities that existed between the sexes. With graciousness and sensitivity, He sought to lift women up from their so called inferior status created by men. He also treated women as people and went out of his way to refute by his actions the attitudes towards women” (Grundy 1980: 46). Stott agrees and says “without any fuss or

publicity, Jesus terminated the curse of the fall, reinvented woman with her partially lost nobility, and reclaimed for his new kingdom community the original creation blessing of sexual equality” (1984; 136). The above shows clearly how Jesus cancelled “male superiority” and female “inferiority” (Wimberley 1997: 18), and restores them to their former glory. God’s original intention was for human beings to live in harmony with each other. Wimberley is correct, and I agree with him, when he declares that, “experiences of both males and females should be valued and form a complementary interaction to enrich the life of those in the eschatological community (1997: 19). Humans, made in the image of God *“imago dei”*, also have the capacity for loving relationships in marriage, the family, the church, and even to those who are different. Male and female, together, represent the image of God and are co-partners in his kingdom. Therefore, in the marital setting, males and females (husbands and wives) should demonstrate care, honour, nurture, cherish, and love one another with self sacrificing love. The Apostle Peter teaches that males and females (husbands and wives) who embrace the redemptive power of Christ’s love become “heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3: 7).

### 3.8 FACTORS WHICH GIVE RISE TO CONFLICT AND TENSION WITHIN THE MINISTER'S FAMILY

An anecdote has for a long time circulated in clerical circles about a man who just retired from the ministry, who was sitting down with his wife to look at the family photograph album. His wife shows him one particular photograph of the family on holiday. The husband points to the children who are in the picture, and says “but, darling, who are those children?” The wife replies seriously “they are yours my dear” (Rodd 1985: 167).

The above anecdote may seem beyond its true limit. However, as Patrick puts it, and I agree with him, that “for many minister’s it will touch a raw nerve, and highlights one of the principal areas of conflict and tension within their lives- the struggle between loyalty to their work and their family.” He further says, “It is a struggle unknown to the celibate priest, but for those in the Post-Reformation, non-celibate tradition it is a source of continual tension, something with which ministers are constantly trying to come to terms” (1985: 167). In order for us to have a better grasp of the tension and conflict pastoral (clergy) families must endure, Rodd is very helpful. He draws our attention to four areas of conflict and the tension which can be harmful to the marital setting of the pastoral (clergy) family. They are:

- Invasion of the pastoral family privacy;

- The difficulty of “having time off”;
- The finance factor;
- The mobility factor (moving) (1985: 167-171).

The author will explore each of the above fully in the following paragraphs.

### **3.8.1 THE INVASION OF THE PASTORAL FAMILY PRIVACY**

These are some of the major problems faced by a minister’s family. Patrick is correct when he observed that “the, manse or the vicarage is not simply a private home. It is an open house for the neighbourhood, and the minister’s office” (1985: 167-168). Wimberley connects with the above, when he refers to parsonage as living in a “glass-house” living (2007: 11). Thus, everyone is looking in on the pastoral family. However, it is a known fact that in recent years, more and more pastors have tried to make the ministry easy for themselves and their family by separating the manse from their work as far as possible and by working from the church premises. Patrick is of the view that, “although this may be helpful in some respect, it does not really remove the pressure from the manse” (1985: 168). The author is in agreement with the above sentiment because the pastoral work schedule of the pastor is never reinforced in any set time “a nine to five day” (Rodd 1985: 168). To accentuate the above more fully, Mace is most helpful. He says “most occupations tend to

be clearly defined. A job specification can be drawn up which describes certain responsibilities to be assumed and certain operations to be performed. There are clearly defined hours of work and usually a specific place where it is done. The task of the ministry simply cannot be fitted into that kind of framework” (1983: 61). Thus, many congregants, because of their daily occupations, make their appointment with the minister in the evening, when the family is also at home. It is a well known fact that the above phenomenon places heavy pressure on the marital setting of the pastoral family and on many occasions, leads to distress within the minister’s family.

### **3.8.2 THE DIFFICULTY OF HAVING “TIME OFF”**

It is a well known fact that time management, for many people, is very difficult, especially for the fulltime Ordained Pastor with the many pastoral roles assigned to him/her in our post-modern era. Mace calls this phenomenon, “the tyranny of time” (1983: 61). The above is a problem encounters by pastors (clergy) of all denominations. Patrick is correct when he declares that, “because of the nature of their calling, they are often over-conscientious, and because their work is by its nature never completed, many clergy work impossible long hours” (1985: 168). Kennedy in Mace connects beautifully with the above when he submits that “the ministry is a hard job, and no man (sic) who expects to be less than the hardest-working man in the

community ought to undertake it” (1983: 61). The above response points directly to the difficulties that occur within the pastoral family; which inevitably had a profound effect upon the minister’s marriage. It is a known fact that an overworked minister is often too exhausted to listen to his wife and children’s day to day problems. Patrick reports that one pastor’s wife has called out in distress “you have time for every one excepts me” (1985: 169). The above is a protest of many pastoral spouses and is infect an appeal for more quality family time for the pastoral family. Kathleen Nyburg, in Mace, is dead right when she says “if there is a villain in the minister’s story, his name is time. This villain can steal away a man’s (sic) essential resources before he is mature enough to realize that he has been victimized” (1983: 68). In our post-modern age, the clergy (pastors) across denomination lines are putting more stress upon the importance of having adequate leisure and quality time for their families. However, as Patrick puts it “this is a welcome emphasis, but the nature of the minister’s job means that it will always be a problem. In particular, there is the fact that for most people in the community, the weekend is a family time, whereas for the clergy it cannot be so” (1985: 169). The author is of the opinion that a married couple who loves and cares about each other, and who are bind by the covenantal bond of marriage will always desire to spend time together, and eventually find ways of making this happen.

Mace is correct when he points out that “the amount of time shared, and the quality of that time, will usually reflect the quality of the relationship” (1983: 68). The author is of the opinion that any pastoral family who does not find the liberty for quality family time together, such marriage is surely in trouble.

### **3.8.3 THE FINANCE FACTOR**

Concerning the above, Mace tells of a fourth century writer, Geoffrey Chaucer who wrote the Canterbury Tales, and one of the pilgrims he described in the tale was the “clerk of Oxenford.” The tale reads as follows:

*There also came an Oxford clergyman (sic),*

*Well educated, especially in logic.*

*His horse was as lean as a rake,*

*And he himself was gaunt and slender.*

*His coat was in rags and tatters;*

*For although he was a philosopher*

*His supply of money was meager.*

*All that he could beg from his friends*

*Was spent on books and learning;*

*And he rewarded them by praying earnestly*

*For the welfare of their souls (1983: 81).*

The above quotation clearly points to the fact that many pastors (clergy) today still struggle to make ends meet; with the meager salary they receive from their parishes. It is a well known fact that finances is a frequent source of conflict and tension within the pastoral family setting and this leads to divorce in the end. What is actually true from the author's own experience, is that, however, hard for pastors to try as many of them cannot manage on their monthly salary. Rodd is correct when he points out that "resentment can build up within the pastoral family against the circumstances which has led to this" (1985: 170). Lucille Lavender in Mace is a strong advocate for the mere fact that pastors are entitled to a better salary. To drive this point home, she quotes a report from the bureau of labour statistics, U.S. department of labour, which presented a list of occupations, median annual earnings, and educational backgrounds. This list was numbered, beginning with the highest paid occupation, and continuing on to the lowest paid. Out of the 432 occupations listed, clergy (pastors) are 316. They rank with the lowest paying occupations, such as farm labourers, waiters and waitresses, and cooks (Mace 1983: 83).

In the denomination on which the author belongs, many of the current ministers are being paid under the breadline; with no clear-cut guidelines and rules pertaining to clergy salary scales. The author himself can testify to what can happen when the pastoral family cannot meet the budget at the end of the month. This has led to severe pressure and tension within many a pastoral family within our denomination and in the end, has led to divorce. It is a known fact many pastors, however, is overall strongly calling-orientated and regards the ordained office very serious. Concerning the above response, Mace says, “aware that they are poorly paid, but willing to accept hardships and make sacrifices for the cause to which they have devoted their lives” (1983: 83). However, despite the hardships of the ordained office and the financial difficulties which the pastor and his/her family must endure, Mace says, “it has produced their quota of sly humor.” He further says “One minister is reported to have said that he (sic) didn’t have any money worries, because he didn’t have enough money to worry about! Another was described as having no time to spend looking for the lost sheep, because he was too fully occupied with his search for the lost coin. A third was asked by the pollster, if you had to take a 10 percent reduction in your salary, where would you make the first cut? He replied, across my throat” (1983: 84).

#### **3.8.4 THE MOBILITY FACTOR**

It is a well known fact what disturbing effect the above can have on family life, especially on the pastoral family's circle. Wimberley reports that, "clergy families readily attest to and research affirms the issue of the mobility syndrome in the vocation of the ordained ministry." He further says, "the stories of these families are replete with experiences of grief and loss, a sense of powerlessness or loss of control, anger, fear, about an unknown future and continued transience, strain on family life, and profound loneliness" (2007: 20). In most cases, children are uprooted from their friends and their education is severely disrupted. Let me also stress from the outset that moving is not a new phenomenon. However, as Wimberley puts it, "what is new for clergy (and even more spouses and children) is an exacerbated sense of loss of viable support networks through which families experience belonging, a haven to tell stories that nurture them, and caring others to give them guidance" (2007: 20). Moving is one of the aspects of the pastoral's (clergy) family life that is often tough and which in the end give rise to conflict and tension within the pastoral marital bond. Concerning the moving phenomenon, Wimberley shares an anecdote of a certain pastor's spouse who called out in distress: "were just sent adrift with little recognition that we exist or matter-and by we, I mean me and the children" (2007: 20). Thus, moving has a negative impact on pastoral family life and this creates tension and marital distress in the parsonage. The

author has given the reader insight pertaining to the factors which give rise to conflict and tension within the pastoral family setting. The above section has looked at some of the factorial challenges faced by the clergy which may impact negatively on many families, and can lead to divorce. The Church as the custodian of care should take appropriate action to assist pastors and their families in a constructive and positive manner, in order to prevent marital distress and divorce. In the next section, the author will look at how pastoral families can strengthen their marriages.

### **3.9 HOW CAN PASTORAL FAMILIES STRENGTHEN THEIR MARRIAGE**

Having a successful and happy marriage is something that most people cherish, and eventually work hard for. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, God's original intention for marriage was one of intimacy and longevity for the married partners. However, this ideal picture was shattered by our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Despite this tragic occurrence, it was not God's final word because in the face of destruction, God's grace abounds. In the person of Jesus Christ, God altered the cause of humanity to His original plan. Craig is correct when he points out that, "the Christian message clearly reveals

that God is invested in restoring to wholeness all that fall short of His glorious ideal. It declares that He seeks to restore marriage to its original ideal through the oneness, equality, and mutuality made possible through Jesus Christ. He gives us the assurance that as we stretch towards those ideals, He will empower us to grow and develop the attitudes, skill, and behaviours necessary to experience the security and joy of a meaningful relationship” (2004: 37-38).

The Church as the custodian of pastoral care is called to be the advocate of God’s ideal for marriage and at the same time, to be a forgiving, healing, and reconciling caring community. This shows compassion and dearness when brokenness such as marital distress and divorce strike the parsonage. In the book of Deuteronomy, we encounter how Moses struggle with problems caused by broken marriages in his time (24: 1-5). In the New Testament, we experience the same phenomenon. In 1 Corinthians, we see The Apostle Paul struggle with the same challenges (7: 10-16). It is, thus, apparent that the Church constantly seeks to strengthen marriage by working compassionately and with sensitivity with those married families (pastoral families as well) who struggle to preserve a healthy marriage. Craig believes that the Church “must be committed to encouraging marital partners to realize more and more the personal and relational potential inherent in their relationship.” He further points out that, “In this way, a couples experience through marriage may

become a conscious or an unconscious search for healing and wholeness” (2004: 38). The Church can, through a variety of ministries; especially pre-marital and post-marital counseling, assist married couples (this includes the pastor and his/her spouse) to prepare for a healthy marriage by helping them explore a broad range of issues pertaining to their marriage. Such issues include:

- Effective communication;
- How to manage marital conflict;
- How to manage anger;
- The art of effective listening;
- How to handle marital stress etc.

The above can go a long way in strengthening the marital bond of many couples. It is also the duty of the Church to encourage individuals such as the clergy, whose marriage are in crisis, to resolve their differences peacefully and to build healthy marriages. The Church, in the praxis of everyday life, must also take appropriate steps to protect those who are vulnerable, especially those in their marriage relationship.

### **3.10 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the author helped the reader understand how marriages function within the Christian tradition. The premise of the author in this chapter was in the first instance, to give readers an overview on some definitions pertaining to marriage and family life in order for them to have a holistic understanding of this phenomenon. The author has also looked at some of the different marriage customs performed in the world today and sought a way on how can we, as Christians, learn from these experiences. The main emphasis of this chapter was on marriage in the Christian tradition and how we, as Christians, identify with it. Here, the emphasis was on:

- Marriage as an expression of the relational nature of God;
- Marriage as a journey towards intimacy;
- Key expressions that shaped our view of a successful Christian marriage;
- Marriage as a covenant relationship;

This chapter has also laid a hand on marriage after the Fall and how God restored it to His original plan. The author has also helped the reader to understand the sociological ideas about marriage and family life. This chapter has also discussed some critical opinions about marriage by some of the key role players in this sphere. The author has also looked at the impact of patriarchalism and how it negatively impact on marriage and family life. This

chapter has also helped the reader understand the fact that both male and female are created in the image of God. The author has also guided the reader to have a holistic understanding of the factors which give rise to conflict and tension within a minister's family. This chapter has also looked at the possibility of how pastoral families can strengthen the marital bonds, and help define what the role of the Church is in all of this. In the next chapter, the author will examine the issue of divorce as a process and how it traumatizes families; especially pastoral families.

trouble worldwide. And the prognosis for marriage is not very good if one examines current trends in marital statistics. Marriage used to be the hall mark of stability and