

6. CHAPTER SIX: CREATING A PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE FOR THE VVA (PCA)

6.1 CREATING A PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE: DRAWING FROM OTHER CHURCH MANUALS

The denomination of the VVA (PCA) has no manual and, therefore, no pastoral committee which governs, and cares for marriages, divorce, remarriages and other serious issues, per se. In order for the author's denomination to be effective pertaining to pastoral care, especially divorce in a pastoral family, we are obliged to look to other denominations in order to ascertain how they handle incidences such as the divorce phenomenon. The following denominations will be of great help to the author and his denomination. They are:

- The Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa; and
- The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa

The above denominations have a system of caring for their clergy, especially during divorce time. The author will explore and discuss their manuals pertaining to marriage, divorce and remarriage fully in the following paragraphs and see how these will be of help to the denomination of the VVA (PCA).

6.2 The Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa

The above mentioned church regards ministers as servants of God, who are called to a special vocation with great responsibility. The denomination expects from their minister:

- To uphold the church' teaching on marriage;
- To set a good example to others in their own marriages;
- To do what they can do to enrich the marriages of the members of their congregations; and;
- To be good pastors to people whose marriages are in difficulty or under strain (UPCSA, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage 2007).

However, there are a lot of factors, as earlier mentioned in this dissertation, which lead to marital distress in families and finally, to divorce. Thus, it is of the utmost importance that denominations, as custodians of pastoral care and as the body of Christ, are prepared and ready to guide individuals; especially pastoral families who are faced with the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon.

This section is looking at how the denomination of the VVA (PCA) can learn from the Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa on how it can incorporate

a pastoral care committee into its system in order for the church to be an effective shepherd for those under its care. The following aspects stand out like a pinnacle for the author and can be useful to the author's denomination when faced with divorce or other ethical issues. The following needs our attention:

- Presbytery Pastoral Committees;
- What is the responsibility of the Minister, spouse and Presbytery when a Minister's marriage threatens to break down;
- Responsibilities of the Presbytery and Session when the marriage of a Minister, in a pastoral charge, breaks down;
- Responsibilities of the Presbytery when the marriage of a minister, who is not on a pastoral charge, breaks down;
- The Ministerial Marriage and Family Care Committee: its composition;
- The Ministerial Marriage and family Care Committee: its role and responsibilities;
- The Ministry Committee: its responsibilities (UPCSA, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage 2007).

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

6.2.1 PRESBYTERY PASTORAL COMMITTEES

Every Presbytery shall appoint a Pastoral Committee provided that:

- If a Presbytery is too small and lacks suitable personnel and resources to form such a Committee on its own, it may form a combined Committee with a neighbouring Presbytery or neighbouring Presbyteries;
- If the members of the Presbytery have to travel great distances and its finances are limited make it difficult for the pastoral Committee to function, it may appeal to the neighbouring Presbytery or to the Ministerial and family care Committee for help;
- If deeply conflicting relationships in a Presbytery complicate a particular case, it may likewise appeal to the Pastoral Committee of a neighbouring Presbytery or to the Ministerial and family Care Committee for help.

The following tasks are assigned to the Pastoral Committee ministry:

- Selecting suitable people from within their Presbyteries to be trained in counseling, including marital counseling;
- Arrange for training;
- Arrange for retreats/seminars/workshops on marriage enrichment or making a success of marriage for Ministers and their wives;

- Acting as a support group for the ministerial couple, whose marriage is experiencing difficulties;
- Acting as an agent of reconciliation and healing in case of marital conflict;
- Referring couples (and their children) to Christian or professional counselors to help them seek reconciliation or cope with divorce or remarriage;
- Facilitating discussions between Ministers, their sessions and Congregations, when ministers' marriages break down;
- Arranging whatever practical aid they can for ministerial couples in need of help;
- Submitting a report on each case of ministerial divorce within the bounds to the Presbytery with recommendations on how the Presbytery should deal with it. This includes:
 - Whether to sever the pastoral tie or not;
 - Whether to suspend the Minister temporarily from ministry in the Congregation and, if so, how long;
 - Whether the Minister should be granted leave and, if so, for how long;

- What persons should be appointed as counselors to the couple concerned.

The aim of the above is to care for minister and family as they go through difficult times in their lives.

6.2.2 WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTER, SPOUSE AND PRESBYTERY WHEN A MINISTER'S MARRIAGE THREATENS TO BREAK DOWN

- If a Minister's marriage threatens to break down, the Minister, or preferably, both spouses together, must in the first instance, before taking legal advice on what to do, approach the Moderator of the Presbytery or any member of the Presbytery Pastoral Committee for help. However, if for any reason the Moderator or the Pastoral Committee fails to act speedily on the approach, the Minister should contact the Ministerial Marriage and family Care Committee. The two committees then inform the Moderator of the Presbytery of the approach.
- Should any Elder become aware of any serious strains in the marriage of the Minister in the Congregation or any possible threat of a break down in the marriage, he/she should confer with the Minister, or else

approach the session clerk with a view of conferring with the Minister. If the Elder, or the session clerk, then deems it appropriate, he/she should consult with the moderator of the Presbytery or any member of the Presbytery Pastoral Committee about what can be done to help the couple;

- As soon as the Moderator or the Presbytery Pastoral Committee becomes aware that a Minister's marriage is in danger of breaking down or that a ministerial couple has separated to live apart, the Moderator and/or clerk or the Pastoral Committee is to discuss with the couple whether a qualified counselor or counselors should be engaged to help them resolve their problems or, if that is rejected, to help them work through the process of separation or divorce and all its implications and effects. Where it is customary to regard marriage as a contract between two families rather than just two individuals, the counselor(s) should seek to counsel the two families as well.

6.2.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESBYTERY AND SESSION WHEN THE MARRIAGE OF A MINISTER IN PASTORAL CHARGE BREAKS DOWN

Whenever a Presbytery intends taking decisions regarding a divorce or divorcing Minister, the Moderator of the Presbytery, as soon as possible informs the convener of the Ministerial Marriage and Family Care Committee of the date, time and venue of the meeting and invites the convener to send one or two members of the Committee to attend the Presbytery meeting and be associated with it, at the Committees expense. The following is important to note:

- If adultery or some other sufficient for discipline such as physical abuse of a Minister's spouse is alleged against the Minister, whether or not this lead to divorce or separation between them, the Moderator of the Presbytery, on behalf of the Presbytery, consults the Minister and spouse without delay. If there is any evidence for, or witness to, what is alleged, the Moderator of the Presbytery refers the matter to Presbytery to deal with it according to their manual;
- The Moderator of Presbytery also instructs the Minister to call a special meeting of the session, including the Minister, to inform it of what is happening and, if possible, further ascertain the facts of the case. The Moderator of the Presbytery or his/her appointed deputy chairs this meeting. The Session then decides whether to call a special meeting of the Congregation to inform it of the situation. If it decides to do so, the

Moderator of the Presbytery or his/her appointed deputy also chairs this meeting. At both meetings the Minister is allowed to address the meeting and answer questions, if he/she wishes to, but must leave, so that discussion can take place in his/her absence;

- If the Minister is suspended temporarily while the case is being resolved, and the resolution is likely to take three (3) months or longer, forthwith appoints an interim Moderator to the Congregation;
- If the Presbytery or the General Assembly or Executive Commission finds the minister guilty of misconduct warranting the Minister's suspension from serving the Congregation for a time or from the ministry or warranting the severance of the pastoral tie between the Minister and the Congregation, The Presbytery forthwith announces the suspension or severance to the Congregation. If the Minister is suspended from serving the Congregation for more than three (3) months or suspended from the ministry or if the pastoral tie is severed, the Presbytery appoints an interim Moderator to the Congregation, if it has not yet done so. If the pastoral tie is severed, the Presbytery announces that the minister is excluded from being called to the same Congregation at any time in the future. However, if the minister is suspended from the Presbytery the moderator:

- Declares that the Minister is to cease exercising any public ministerial function, holding any office as a Minister, wearing any ministerial dress or acting in a way that infringes the suspension;
- Sets a minimum period for the suspension and;
- Refers the case to the Ministerial Marriage and Family Care Committee (with all detail and with or without its own recommendations it may further choose to make).

The Committee invites the Minister to meet with it in order for it to monitor him/her. The Minister remains under suspension unless, and until, the Committee decides to recommend that he/she be declared eligible to accept a call or an appointment or to resume the exercise of public ministerial functions again and the Presbytery within which he/she is residing then decides to carry out the recommendations. A Minister, being so monitored, may not apply more than once a year to re-enter the ministry. This however, depends on the outcome of judgement.

6.2.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESBYTERY WHEN THE MARRIAGE OF A MINISTER WHO IS NOT IN A PASTORAL CHARGE BREAKS DOWN

If personal counseling fails to resolve the marital problem of a Minister who is not in a pastoral charge and either spouse issues summons for divorce, the

Presbytery forthwith instructs its Pastoral Committee to meet with the Minister and anybody in or for which he/she works as a Minister in order to discuss whether his/her work for it can continue to be effective.

The Pastoral Committee makes its recommendations to the Presbytery. The Presbytery then calls a special meeting to consider these and to decide what ruling to make. It then informs the Ministerial Marriage and Family Care Committee of the action taken. If as a result of the Presbytery's ruling the Minister is unable to continue in his/her work, the Presbytery should seek to provide temporary financial support to the Minister and his/her family and may approach the Assembly for assistance.

6.2.5 THE MINISTERIAL MARRIAGE AND FAMILY CARE COMMITTEE: IT'S COMPOSITION

This Committee is composed of:

- A convener appointed by General Assembly;
- The General Secretary or his/her deputy;
- The convener of the General Assembly's Ministry Committee or his/her deputy;

- Two other members of this church appointed by General Assembly, at least one of whom shall be a trained marriage guidance counselor, if none of the preceding is one, and;
- Such other members as the committee choose to co-opt.

Both genders shall be represented on the committee. In addition, each Presbytery appoints a member of its Pastoral Committee to be a corresponding member of the Committee. When the Committee concerns itself with any Minister's marriage, the corresponding member appointed by his/her Presbytery attends the meeting.

6.2.6 THE MINISTERIAL MARRIAGE AND FAMILY CARE COMMITTEE: ITS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The duty of the above mentioned Committee is to:

- Work with the Pastoral Committee of Presbyteries in order to develop pastoral resources for strengthening marriage and dealing with divorce;
- Generally be available to assist or to be consulted by an Presbytery;

- Meet four weeks after any Presbytery request it for assistance with a Minister's marital crisis, or have its subcommittee meet, with the Minister and, if possible his/her spouse, separately and together;
- Consult anyone who in its view may be able to assist it with the case; and;
- At the invitation of the Moderator of the Presbytery, send one or two of its members to any Presbytery meeting that is to decide what action to take with regard to a divorcing or a divorced Minister.

6.2.7 THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE: IT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

When deciding whether to accept an application from any divorced person to become a student for the ministry, the Ministry Committee takes into account the recommendations of the Presbytery within whose bounds the applicant resides. It may also seek advice from the Ministerial Marriage and Family Care Committee.

When a student for the ministry or a probationer divorces, the Ministry Committee requests the Pastoral Committee of the Presbytery from within whose bounds he/she comes to investigate the matter and advise it whether his/her status should continue to be recognized. It may also seek advice from the Ministerial Marriage Family Care Committee.

The above guidelines pertaining to marriage, divorce and remarriage are very informative and well balanced and thus will go a long way in helping the VVA (PCA) in bringing out their own manual pertaining to a pastoral care committee, which can be of help to those individuals who struggle with marital problems and divorce. The above will surely goes a long way in preventing a scenario such as the one described in the introductory notes of this dissertation and the story in chapter five where the pastoral family was left entirely on its own to deal with the pain of divorce. Thus, the above system place ways of caring for the clergy and their families.

6.3 THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Let us now evaluate the Apostolic Faith Mission's Pastoral manual on marriage, divorce, and remarriage and explore how it can be of help to the VVA (PCA).

Botha, a minister in the above mentioned church who himself went through the trauma of divorce, reports that there is no clear cut guidelines or pastoral committee in the AFM at present (2004: 9-10). However, the National Leadership Forum (NLF) acknowledges that there is a huge onslaught on marriage in our post-modern day and age; especially in the pastoral family and

are earnest in their efforts to address this short coming in their pastoral care endeavor. The following needs our attention:

6.3.1 MISSION STATEMENT

- The National Leadership Forum makes its objective to provide skill based marital courses (covering pre-marital counseling, enrichment and recovery) for the total church, taking into account cultural diversity on this matter. That Pastors be trained to implement this course;
- This course be skilled based;
- That these courses be made available to pastors;
- That the NFL be requested to fund these programmes when it comes to pastors;
- That these courses be jointly taken by both the pastor and the spouse.

6.3.2 RETREATS

- That Regional Committees be requested to include marriage enrichment retreats for pastors and their families in their annual programmes.

6.3.3 MINISTRY CULTURE

- Provision must be made for pastors and their spouses to come together for fellowship and marriage enrichment purposes;
- Provision must also be made where pastor's spouses and children are invited to participate on issues related to ministry pressures on pastor's and families.

6.3.4 BIBLICAL PRICIPALS

The church re-affirms the following Biblical principles of marriage:

- **DIVINE INSTITUTION** – Marriage is a divine institution which originated with God as part of the order of creation;
- **COVENANT BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN** – Marriage is a heterosexual covenant between a man and a woman;
- **MONOGAMOUS RELATIOSHIP** – Marriage is a monogamous affair for life between a man and a woman;
- **PROCREATION** – Procreation has to be within the bounds of marital life. Even in situations where there are no children, this would not mean that the original intention of marriage has not been complied with (Ibid: 32-33).

The above is a practical guideline for the AFM in case of divorce and remarriage in their denomination. However, the VVA (PCA) can learn a great deal from the above in order to set its own rules and guidelines in setting up a pastoral care committee which deals with marriage, divorce and remarriage in the author's denomination. The author of this dissertation believes that the guidelines of the above mentioned churches (Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa and Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa) pertaining to a pastoral care committee which governs marriage, divorce and remarriage, will go a long way in helping the denomination of the VVA (PCA) to be effective in their pastoral duty; especially to pastoral families.

In the next section, the author will make a brief comparison between the pastoral care manuals of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa and the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. After the comparison, the author will come up with a pastoral care model which can be of help to the denomination of the VVA (PCA).

6.4 COMPARISON: MANUALS OF UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA AND APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA

When one analyzes and takes a closer look at the pastoral manuals of the above mentioned denominations, it becomes clear that the pastoral manual of UPCSA pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage is well balanced and

informative. As mentioned earlier, there are no clear cut guidelines or pastoral committee in the AFM at present. However, the National Leadership Forum (NLF) of the particular denomination acknowledges that there is a huge onslaught on marriage in our post-modern day age; especially within the pastoral family and are earnest in their efforts to address this short coming in the endeavour of pastoral care. In section 6.2, the author has highlighted those aspects pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage of the Uniting Presbyterian Church on how the denomination of the VVA (PCA) can incorporate a pastoral care committee into their system in order for them to be an effective shepherd for those under its care. The manual of the UPCSA pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage is a brilliant pastoral care manual which can be of great help to any denomination which struggles with the above-mentioned issues. Thus, the pastoral manual of the UPCSA can be of great help to the author's denomination and can further enhance its pastoral capabilities on how to care for its own.

6.4.1 A PASTORAL CARE MODEL FOR THE VOLKSKERK VAN AFRIKA (PEOPLE'S CHURCH OF AFRICA)

As mentioned in this dissertation that there is no manual on how to handle pastoral divorce in the VVA (PCA) at present, the author suggest a model that will be of great help when confronted with the issue of divorce of pastors.

- **DISTRICT PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE** – This committee should be established in all five of the geographical districts within the VVA (PCA). These districts are: Western Cape, Cape Peninsula, Southern Cape, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape. Suitable people should be selected (at least two) from each congregation in the district to serve on above-mentioned committee. These committee members must be people who display a high degree of integrity and should have sound knowledge of the divorce process and the traumatic impact thereof. It is also recommended that these members should be trained in counseling, pastoral care, and marital counseling etc. It is the duty of this committee to see to it that training, retreats, workshops on marriage enrichment or how to make a success of marriage for pastors and their spouses, acting as support group for pastoral families whose marriage are in trouble, work for reconciliation and healing in case of marital conflict, referring couples (and their children) to Christian or professional counselors to help them seek reconciliation or cope with divorce or remarriage, submitting a report on each case of pastoral divorce within the bounds of the district with recommendations on how the committee should deal with it.

- **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTER, SPOUSE AND DISTRICT PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE WHEN A MINISTER'S MARRIAGE THREATENS TO BREAK DOWN** – If a minister's marriage threatens to break down, the minister, or preferable both spouses, must in the first instance, before taking legal advice on what to do, approach the chairperson of the district pastoral committee or any member of the pastoral committee for help. Should any Deacon become aware of any serious strains in the marriage of the minister in the congregation or any possible threat of a break down in the marriage, he/she should confer with the minister, or approach the chairperson of the district pastoral care committee about what can be done to help the couple. As soon as the chairperson of the pastoral care committee becomes aware that a minister's marriage is in danger of breaking down or that a pastoral couple has separated, the chairperson and two members of the District Pastoral Care Committee should discuss with the couple whether a qualified counselor (s) should be engaged to help them resolve their challenge or, if that is rejected, to help them work through the process of separation or divorce and all its implications and effects.
- **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE DISTRICT PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE WHEN THE MARRIAGE OF A MINISTER IN PASTORAL**

CHARGE BREAK DOWN – As soon as the local congregation intends taking decisions regarding a divorce or divorcing Minister, the chairperson of the districts pastoral committee should, as soon as possible, inform the district Superintendent (Moderator of district) who, again, should inform the marriage and family enrichment committee of the date, time and venue of the meeting and invites the chairperson to send two members of the committee to attend the district pastoral committee meeting. The following is important to note: If adultery or some other sufficient for discipline such as physical abuse of a Minister's spouse is alleged against the Minister, whether or not this leads to divorce or separation between them, the chairperson of the district pastoral care committee, on behalf of the committee, consults the Minister and spouse without delay. If any evidence is found, or witness to, what is alleged, the chairperson of the districts pastoral care committee refers the matter to the district pastoral care committee to deal with it according to their pastoral manual. The Superintendent (Moderator of district) and the chairperson and two members of the district pastoral care committee call a special meeting with the Pastoral couple and local church council to inform them of what is happening, and, if possible, he/she has to further ascertain the facts of the case. It is

at this meeting where they will decide whether to call a special meeting of the congregation to inform it of the situation. If the meeting decides to do so, the chairperson of the districts pastoral committee chairs this meeting. At both meetings the Minister is allowed to address the meeting and answers questions, if he/she wishes to, but must leave, so that discussion can take place in his/her absence. If the Minister is suspended temporarily while the case is being resolved, and the resolution is likely to take more than three (3) months, the Ministers council in conjunction with the Moderator of the VVA (PCA), appoints an interim Minister to the congregation. In case of the above steps, the district pastoral care committee must ensure that a spiritual guide is assigned to the pastoral family to journey with them in their time of distress. If the pastoral tie of the Minister is for whatever reason severed, the chairperson of the district pastoral care committee propose to the minister's council and Central board that the particular Minister is excluded from being called to the same congregation at any time in the future. The case is then referred to the marriage and family care committee (with all details pertaining to the case).

- **RESPONSIBILITY OF DISTRICT PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE WHEN THE MARRIAGE OF A MINISTER OR A PROBATIONER WHO IS NOT IN A**

PASTORAL MINISTRY BREAKS DOWN – If counseling fails to resolve the marital problems of a Minister or probationer who is not in pastoral ministry and either spouse issues a summons for divorce, the local congregation, where they worship, forthwith instructs the district pastoral care committee to meet with the minister or probationer to discuss the situation at hand. The district pastoral care committee forwards its recommendations to the local congregation where the particular minister or probationer worships. The church council of the local church calls a special meeting to consider the recommendations and to decide what ruling to make. The church council informs the ministers council and marriage care committee of the action to be taken. If the church council is of the opinion that the minister or probationer is unable to continue in their calling, the local congregation should provide brief financial support to the minister or probationer. They can also approach the Central board of VVA (PCA) for assistance. It is also of the utmost importance that a spiritual guide is assigned to the minister and his/her family as well as to the probationer to journey with them in their time of trauma.

- **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE** – This committee deals exclusively with marriage, divorce, and remarriage, especially

divorce in a pastoral family in the VVA (PCA). The modus operandi (duty) of this committee is to work closely with the district pastoral care committee in order to develop resources for strengthening pastoral marriages and dealing with divorce. It meets on a monthly basis to formulate and compile material which could be of help to enhance marriage and family life, especially pastoral families. It looks in to cases send forward by the district pastoral committee to see how they can assist with a minister's marital challenges. Plays a crucial role where local congregations have to decide what action to take with regard to a divorcing or a divorced minister. Meet regularly with any minister or probationer whose marriage threatens to break down or ends in divorce.

- **COUNCIL OF EXAMINERS** – The above mentioned Council of the VVA (PCA) is the committee which interviews, monitor, and guide theological students for the pastorate. This Council decides whether to accept an application from any divorced person to become a student for the ministry. However, the Council must take into consideration the recommendations from the local church within whose geographical area the applicant resides. It is also important that the Council be guided by the input of the marriage enrichment committee of the author's

Denomination. As soon as the Council of Examiners becomes aware of the divorce of any student for the ministry or probationer, it requests, as a matter of urgency, the district pastoral committee from whose geographical area he/she comes to investigate the matter and advise it whether the particular person should continue to be recognized. Here, the marriage enrichment committee shall play a crucial role in guidance and recommendations.

It is the wish of the author that the above guidelines pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage will go a long way in helping the VVA (PCA) to care pastorally for those individuals, especially pastoral families who struggle with marital distress and divorce. As mentioned in this dissertation, the above recommendations surely go a long way in preventing and mitigating the impact of divorce on affected couples.

6.5 PASTORAL (CLERGY) DIVORCE: WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DENOMINATION

When divorce strikes the parsonage, it causes enormous pain to the pastoral family, congregation and denomination per se. It is a known fact that divorce, for whatever reasons, is interpreted differently by the local congregation as well as the denomination. However, the author believes that the Bible remains every denomination's compass when pastoral families have to deal with the

onslaught of divorce. Thielicke believes that a minister, who is divorced, is greatly hampered in his/her pastoral calling. Hence, he questions the credibility and continuation of that minister in his/her pastoral duty. He says that, “his (sic) message and especially his performance of marriage services threatens to become unworthy of belief coming from his mouth, if his own marriage is broken. To hear the words ‘..till death do us part’ spoken as a vow by one who himself could not or did not satisfy that obligation can provoke offense and seriously increase the already threatening danger that the church’s blessing will be misunderstood as a mere conventional ceremony” (1975: 176). Mace echoes the same sentiments when he declares that, “the married minister with an unhappy marriage is crippled in the performance of his (sic) task (1983: 24). However, Möller in Botha is of the opinion that it is necessary for the church to set clear guidelines pertaining to divorce, especially pastoral divorce. He says that, “guidelines are needed by the church to determine the future of those ministers who are divorced and/ or remarried after being divorced, in the ministry. These guidelines cannot be determined by that which is reckoned by the church as desirable for such ministers. Desirable is too a subjective basis to build on, one should stick with Biblical announcements” He further sets out guidelines which the church can use

when they have to deal with divorce and remarriage of their clergy. The following needs our attention:

- A minister, who is divorced, but is found not guilty, on Biblical grounds, should be accepted by the church as such. Disciplinary acts are not fitting;
- A minister, who is involved in a divorce and is found guilty, should be disciplined. Such a person cannot be reinstated in the ministry unless his/her testimony is restored. Ministers are servants of God, who are called to a special vocation with great responsibility. The problem of divorcing one's spouse, whilst that marriage is still a marriage before God, is to cause your spouse to commit adultery by being married again;
- There is no regulation in the Scriptures concerning divorce; and remarriage is meant to be a command to divorce. Marital partners should always, and first of all, follow the road of possible reconciliation. This should be done in consultation with, and through the approval of the pastor's spouse. The church should appoint someone who will counsel the couple in their troubled marriage and who should try to restore their relationship;

- A minister who enters into a hasty and ill-considered divorce is liable for disciplinary action. God expects us to do everything to restore the relationship, and a minister who has not followed that road first (even if he/she is the innocent party), should face some form of discipline;
- The Bible calls us to follow the road of forgiveness and possible reconciliation; even if adultery was committed. By this, the love described in the Bible is not violated, but protected (2004: 118-119).

Möller also believes that the minister who has received forgiveness and whose witness is restored should not be prevented by the denomination, per se, to work for God and thus live out his/her calling. He says that “the divorced minister, who is forgiven by God and have restored his/her testimony and bear witness to a certain ministry, should not be restrained from fulfilling it.

Nevertheless, the church should never give the impression that sin is not bad, and that there is always an easy way back into the ministry”(2004: 119). Here, as earlier mentioned the author is of the opinion that the pastoral committee who is responsible for marriage, divorce and remarriage should have thorough knowledge of the therapeutic process, Biblical stance of divorce and the divorce process itself. This understanding is vital important here.

The following Biblical guidelines, as set out by Möller in Botha, can further help the denomination of the VVA (PCA) when it is faced with pastoral divorce in as far as discipline and suspension is concerned.

- During the time of discipline, the minister should be guided on a road of restoration by an appointed counselor. This counselor should report, from time to time, on the progress made. These reports should be studied by the church before the minister concerned is re-admission into the ministry is considered. As mentioned earlier, in the VVA (PCA), the particular minister works with the Marriage Enrichment Committee and District Pastoral committee until the minister is fit to be released into ministry;
- A questionnaire should be compiled with the necessary questions asked for re-admission in the ministry. This questionnaire should be filled-in by the local parish where the minister worships, and be send to the denomination for evaluation;
- If a pastor has to pay alimony for children involved, the church should take note of the kind of financial burden that is placed on the minister; and this may hinder the minister in fulfilling his/her ministerial duties;

- If re-admission in the ministry is approved by the church, the pastor should do a year of probation after which his/her position as minister will be finalized (2004: 120).

The above suggestions are only guidelines. However, they can go a long way in helping our denomination to come up with our own pastoral manual pertaining to divorce. In doing so, the VVA (PCA), can move strides towards normalizing our pastoral capabilities; especially towards our clergy and family.

6.6 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF CLERGY (PASTORS)

Wimberley says that, “when pastors embark upon the journey of ministry, family members automatically join the sojourn” (2007: 151). Thus, when the minister is married his/her spouse, inevitably, becomes part of this great calling. Mace is of the opinion that, “there is a urgent need to abandoned once and for all, the concept that a pastor is accepted and employed by the church, which then takes responsibility for him (sic); but that his wife, if he has one, is an attached appendage for whom the church has no special responsibility or concern” (1983: 130). It is, therefore, important that, due to the ever increasing statistics of pastoral (clergy) divorce, more attention should be paid to the capability and well being of the minister’s spouse in the ordained ministry. Mace is, thus, correct when he points out that, “in recruiting future pastors, more attention needs to be paid, not only to the candidate’s personal

fitness for the exacting tasks of the ministry, but also the personal fitness of the spouses (if any) for the exacting task of being married to a minister” (1983: 130). It is a well known fact that many denominations, due to the pressures and challenge of the ministry, have made considerable strides in ensuring that spouses of ministers come to terms with this challenge. Another important factor pertaining to recruitment and training, is the ongoing training of the minister. Ongoing training in the ordained ministry, especially in the science of practical theology, cannot be emphasized more. The church faces many challenges today and divorce is one of them. Thus, to be relevant in the present times and days ahead, the church should place great emphasis on its training programmes for the clergy. Obang cites a few leaders from the early church, who were some of the finest brains of the church in the Roman Empire. These Bishops were “Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Athanasius and Augustine, which were intellectual giants of their time” (2005: 36). Thus, training not only equips and enriches pastors as shepherds of God, the denomination as custodian of pastoral care benefit as well. In many of our congregations, we find highly educated individuals who are members of our parishes. Thus, pastors must be well educated and well informed about their subject. The pastor, as shepherd and therapist, must be seen as a pinnacle of hope to those in pain. Obang is correct when he says that, “we need persons

for specialize ministries, qualified chaplains in the general and mental hospitals, in our schools at all levels, in our industries and all works of life, not just any individual who goes by the title “pastor” (2005: 38).

6.7 THE JOURNEY FORWARD: A MATTER OF TIME

The way the pastor and his/her family manage their time will inevitably have an impact (positive or negative) on their family relationships. Wimberley says that, “time [is]... an attribute of relationships, rather than a “thing” to be exchanged or spent by individuals. Scarcity of time, in that perspective, becomes scarcity of access to relationships.” He further says that, “there also is no question that the realities of parish life for clergy families demand special attention along the way and times of Sabbath (2007: 151). However, it is a known fact that people in our post-modern age are ultra busy people and; it is not different in the ordained ministry. Hence, we use to call out in distress, “Time is our worst enemy” (See Wimberley 2007: 151). Hughes tells of an article in Time Magazine, which ran a cover story titled “*How America Has Run Out of Time.*” It reads:

“If you have a moment to read this story with your feet up, free of interruption, at your leisure...put it down. It’s not for you. If, like almost everyone else, you’re trying to do something else at the same time- if you are stuck in traffic, waiting in the airport lounge, watching the news, if you’re stirring the soup, shining

your shoes, drying your hair...read on. Or hire someone to read it for you and give you a report” (1990:171).

The reality today is the fact that we are part of a “fast paced, technological, productivity, and material-driven social milieu that foments a problematic conception of time. Time consciousness and time economy are ever-present guides to human behavior” (Ibid 2007: 520. It is clear from the above that pastoral families spent less time together, which in the end impacts negatively on their marital setting. The struggle today for both clergy and clergy family members, as for others, is to slow down and “de-clump” our activities (Wimberley 2007: 152).

The question is thus, how can pastor and families re-create steps to ensure a promising family journey ahead? Here, Wimberley is very helpful. He suggests three ways on how pastoral families can enhance their marriage and family life. They are:

- Re-conceptualizing Time;
- Relational Time;
- Sacred Time (2007: 153-154).

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

6.7.1 RE-CONCEPTUALIZING TIME

The first step in the re-conceptualization of time is to admit that the concept of time in our fast-paced, technologized, commodified post-modern society, often functions as an obstacle to purposeful and meaningful pastoral families. It is a known fact that, “the amount of time shared, and the quality of that time, will usually reflect the quality of the relationship” (Mace 1983: 68). Any pastoral family that does not find the liberty for quality family time together, such family is surely in trouble. Wimberley is correct when he says that, “the notion of creating time centers on the formation of moments to be and become related to one another significantly”. He further says, “In this view, time is not a commodity to be utilized or view in economic terms. Rather, time is created for the sake of and in the service of family wholeness” (2007: 153). Concerning re-conceptualizing time, Anne Wimberley in Wimberley says that, “when lived with intentionality, created time becomes relational time and sacred time” (2007: 153). It is a known fact that the clergy normally neglect their family by pastorally caring for congregation, hence time becomes a problem. Thus, when the pastoral family creates and spend time together, they surely embark on the road of intimacy and understanding.

6.7.2 RELATIONAL TIME

Relational time has to do with the experience of family members' intentional and deeply felt receptive and responsive presence with one another. Things such as prioritizing, making wise choices that centre on building and nurturing relationships, guide the expression of relational time. The quality of relational time is that of being present with one another in language conversationally (Wimberley 2007: 153). Thus, when pastoral families enter into relational time, they inevitably "carry out the important function of communicating and interacting with one another" (Ibid: 153). The author is of the opinion that where quality, relational and intimate family time in pastoral families were recognized as a priority earlier on, less families, especially pastoral families marriages, would have end up in the divorce court. Jones in Wimberley is of the opinion that where "relational time in families is practiced as an ongoing practice, communication improves." She further cites observations of family practitioners pertaining to improved communications in families and says that:

- They share common experiences and interests from which they can draw upon to stimulate communication;
- Build enduring relationships;
- Foster a spirit of oneness and loyalty;
- Get to know each other as individuals;

- Learn to appreciate each other's strength and understand the nature of weaknesses;
- Create intimate time friendships due to time...building memories;
- See themselves as part of a team that extends outside of the home;
- Learn more about the problems they face daily, and;
- Define and practice family orals and legends (2007: 154).

When pastoral families embark on the journey of relational time, the bond in the marital setting, inevitably, improves and family members appreciate one another for which they are and what they do in society.

6.7.3 SACRED TIME

In this section, Wimberley is very helpful as he gives families, especially pastoral families, signposts on how to use sacred time to the benefit of the family. Sacred time, according to Wimberley, is time of reckoning that embraces the holy. In sacred time, family members remember God's increasing relationship with us, and we recognize that our home is a holy space and time apart from the church that the clergy person serves and in which the family participates. Sacred time is the space where the pastoral family interprets the nature and meaning of God's relationship with them and His desire for their

life. Wimberley recognize that the parsonage is the church's house and that there are times of the hospitable gathering of members. However, it is also the clergy families' space and time, not simply for remembering the nature of the Divine –human relationship in the family life, but for re-member-ring, experientially, the bonds of family and responding to the trials and triumphs of the family (See Wimberley 2007: 154). The author is of the opinion that sacred time is not only a pastoral family issue but should be extended throughout the denomination of the VVA (PCA) geographical church regions and should result in sacred time for all pastoral families in our denominations. This creating of sacred time can be a quarterly happening in a form of a compulsory retreat for all ministers and their families in our denomination. Wimberley is correct when he says that, "sacred time opens the way for clergy, clergy families, and ecclesial head to see the unfolding nature of clergy family life in a new way." He further says, "Life unfolds moment by moment as opportunity for clergy family members to share one another's stories, to reveal to one another the preciousness and the fragility of life as well as the need and opportunity for sharing compassion, and together, to face into the winds of promise that overtake the winds of challenge" (2007: 155). Sacred time helps pastoral families to foster closer ties with one another and with colleagues. Sacred time in the words of Wimberley, "is a time to listen and self- disclosure; time to

simply be with one another; time to hold and a time to let go; time to pray, and sing, and cry, and laugh, and shout, and dance; time to eat together; time to imagine life not yet revealed with willingness to move on with courage and hope” (2007: 155). It is the hope of the author that ministers, especially those in the VVA (PCA), would foster sacred time as an appointment with God and in doing so; they not only enhance their family life and so prevent dysfunctional families but also strengthen also their bond with fellow colleagues.

6.8 HOW TO KEEP LOVE ALIVE

Just looking at the divorce statistics in South Africa and the world today, we can deduce that intimacy has become one of the real casualties in our post-modern, commodified and, high-tech culture. How then can families, especially pastoral families keep love alive and maintain a sense of passion in their relationship? Page is of the opinion to keep love alive requires:

- Knowledge;
- Focus;
- And commitment (1994: xx11).

However, she says that, “these simply don’t come easily these days.” She further says, “in fact, many people have come to view the idea of achieving a happy, intimate marriage with some degree of caution, cynicism, and

suspicion. Much of our suspicion is based on the knowledge that marriage never really delivers on the romantic images we continue in vain to cultivate” (ibid: xx11). As mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, there are a lot of negative messages about marriage which travel around these days.

Messages such as the perception that the institution of marriage is “outdated” and that “it is high time to seriously re-examine the institution” (Daily Dispatch, May 6, 2011) and that marriage is “hard work” – something that requires just too much personal sacrifice and effort (Craig 2004: 199). Thus, those who consider marriage are, in fact, confronted by statistics that indicate that most marriages fail. Craig says that, “in spite of all our unrealistic expectations and fears, marriage is still very popular. The majority of people who aspire to marital satisfaction and happiness enter the holy estate of matrimony with the hope and conviction that intimacy is achievable and that they will be successful in having a happy marriage. They see the marriage relationship as a wonderful way of meeting their personal need for love, friendship, and belonging”(2004: 199). However, it is a known fact that all successful, blossoming marriages are different. Craig is correct when he says that, ‘they don’t conform to a set formula or function according to the same pattern. They all reveal a beauty uniquely their own” (2004: 200). In our

pursuit to keep love alive in our families, especially in the pastoral family, Craig is most helpful. The following needs our attention:

- How to maintain the love relationship;
- Keys to intentional marital growth;
- Biblical advice on maintaining love relationships;
- Keeping Love Alive (2004: 200-205).

The author will explore and discuss the above, fully, in the following paragraphs.

6.8.1 HOW TO MAINTAIN THE LOVE RELATIONSHIP

A successful marriages do not come by chance or spontaneously. The author, as a married person, knows that it requires a great deal of energy and input from both couples to make it work. Masters says that, “to keep love alive and achieve a sense of passion, commitment, and intimacy, good marital relationships require reciprocity” (1994: 15). Thus, it is an ongoing process in which both couples work together for the betterment of the relationship in which they can experience fulfillment and satisfaction. Craig believes that, “while it is true that many changes in a relationship are inevitable, couples need to recognize that keeping love alive and achieving marital growth is

intentional. They can either allow their relationship to change arbitrarily as other circumstances around them are altered, or they can be intentional about making choices that keep the flame of passion and love alive and that facilitate the course of growth in marriage” 2004: 200). However, Gottman reports that, “couples who do nothing wrong but who do nothing to make things better in their marriage will find that their marriage will tend to get worse over time” (1994: 61). Marital couples, therefore, need to work tirelessly to find ways to keep their marriage fresh and alive and in doing so help their marital relationship to get even better. “Couples who wish to maintain their marriage in a healthy state need to know how to nurture love over the whole marital life cycle by both maintaining and repairing their relationship” (Ibid: 121).

6.8.2 KEYS TO INTENTIONAL MARITAL GROWTH

In our fast-paced era there is a lot of information on marriage and family life. However, there’s an immense lack of knowledge about what maintains the majority of marital relationships. Byrne and Murnen in Craig say that, “While we know a great deal about the factors involved in the formation of relationships and a considerable amount about the causes and consequences of relationships that fail and end in dissolution, little research has been carried out to determine the key factors involved in relationship maintenance.” They further say, “Researchers have tended to assume that we can easily

understand what these factors are by simply extrapolating from the periods of relationship formation dissolution” (2004: 201). Craig agrees with the above when he says that, “a lot of the material written about how to build intimacy and maintain love relationships typically sets forth a menu or list of do’s and don’ts developed from an understanding of what causes marital breakdown-or what factors create obstacles to intimacy in marriage”(Ibid: 201). The above authors strongly reject the idea that, “maintaining a healthy love relationship involves a simple repetition of those variables that initiated attraction in the early formative stages of a relationship, or the mere absence of those factors associated with the failure of the relationship” (2004: 201). They suggest three realms of interpersonal interaction which are vital to maintaining or failing to maintain a loving relationship. The following needs our attention:

- Similarity of attitudes, values, beliefs, interest, and personality dispositions that creates satisfaction and closeness;
- Habituation. Familiarity and endless repetitions which breed both contempt and boredom, rather than enthusiasm and creativity;
- Positive evaluations. The use of interpersonal skills to communicate positive feelings that build and encourage closeness and connection (2004: 202). Where families, especially pastoral families, interact with

one another and behave in ways that are pleasing to each other, the relationship can only grow stronger.

6.8.3 BIBLICAL ADVICE ON MAINTAINING LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

In Chapter three, the Apostles and Gospel writers are clear in their instructions to the Christian church about what it takes to keep marriages and relationships alive, healthy and strong. Craig says that, “their writings suggest a range of attitudes and behaviours designed to maximize the positive (protection measures) and minimize the negative (risk factors)” (2004: 202). The Apostle Paul believed that the marital setting was a special and holy relationship; created by God. He says in the letter to the Hebrews that, “marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexual immoral” (13: 4). The Apostle James encourages his community to “live wise, with understanding, and with humility” (3: 13). Thus, the way families live their lives counts in the end. The Apostle Paul has much to say about maintaining love and restoring a sense of passion and intimacy in our relationship. In the book of Colossians he says, “let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful” (3: 15). Behaviours, which enhance family relationships according to Paul, arise out of a thankful hearts and lives filled with the grace of God. Pastor and spouse, together with their children, should

pour themselves out for each other in love. The Apostle Peter says in his letter: “husbands in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayer” (3: 7). Thus, marital partners should treat each other as equals, each one honouring and delighting in one another to the benefit of the marital setting. Craig is correct when he observes that, “when couples recognize and respect, honor, and support one another, they build a sense of meaning and purpose into their marriage and into their lives” (2004: 203). The author encourages ministers to earnestly study scriptures pertaining to love relationships and prayerfully apply them in their marital relationship to the benefit of all in the family.

6.8.4 KEEP LOVE ALIVE

Nancy van Pelt says that, “many couples fall in love, marry, and assume that the job is completed. They tend to feel that everything else will work out automatically. But hardly anything could be further from the truth” (1980: 14). In the early days of marriage, there are nearly, always, feelings of romance, desire, and passion. However, over time, these feelings may evaporate when the reality of marriage life downs on the couple. Craig says that, “the excitement and enthusiasm that once stimulated the marriage now begin to decline, and the promise made at the start now begins to fade in importance.”

He further says that, “nothing epitomizes this sad loss of love and romance any better than the classic song, You don’t Bring Me Flowers, sung by Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond.” The lyrics of the song are:

*You don’t bring me flowers
You don’t sing me love songs
You hardly talk to me anymore
When you come through the door
At the end of the day.*

*I remember when...
You couldn’t wait to love me
You used to hate to leave me
Now after lovin’ me
It’s good for you babe
You’re feeling alright
You just roll over and
Turn out the light
And you don’t bring me flowers anymore.*

*Baby I’ve remembered
All the things you’ve taught me
I learned how to laugh
And I learned how to cry
Well I learned how to love
And I learned how to lie
So, you think I could learn
How to tell you good-bye
You don’t bring me flowers anymore (2004: 205).*

Craig is also of the opinion that, “most people have never been taught how to keep love alive” (Ibid: 206). Thus, what does it take to keep love alive? What are the factors that develop a greater sense of intimacy in marriage? Gottman helps us when he says that:

- Couples need to reconcile their conflicts or differences constructively;
- Couples need to strengthen the positive side of their marriage;
- Couples should regularly inoculate their relationship against forces that leads to divorce.

He believes that happy marriages are based on a deep friendship in which two people mutually respect and enjoy each other’s company (1999: 22-23). The author believes that the foundation stone of a pastoral family is the unity of husband, wife, and children, if any. They are articulated in the words of Tertullian: “One in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice “ (Mace 1983: 119).

6.9 DIRECT SERVICES TO CLERGY MARRIAGES

Pastoral care to individuals, as well as pastoral families, is an integral part of the shepherding task assigned to the church; which is the body of Christ and which is, in fact, the custodian of pastoral care. Earlier in this dissertation, the

author has referred to the need of pastoral care to the pastor and his/her family. However, I think it is appropriate to spell it out in detail at the end of this dissertation. The following issues, according to Mace, are vitally important for the denomination of the VVA (PCA) if the church is to be effective in its pastoral endeavour.

- Prevention and early detection of dysfunction in pastoral families;
- Marriage counseling services;
- Policies for clergy divorce (1983: 132-134).

In the following paragraphs, the author will take a closer look at the above mentioned issues.

6.9.1 PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION OF DYSFUNCTION IN PASTORAL FAMILIES

Most pastoral marriages could be considerably improved, as earlier mentioned, and that enrichment programmes provide an excellent way of equipping couples to do this. Many denominations in our post-modern era are beginning to offer such opportunities for enrichment. Here, the author singles out the Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa for the manner in which it strives to serve the pastoral family in their charge. Mace is of the opinion that, “these programmes ought to be competent enough to be effective” (1983:

132). It is vitally important that those people who are assigned the responsibility to deal with issues such as divorce should fit the criteria and selection standard set for effective intervention. Mace is correct when he says that, “it is simply irresponsible for a denomination to use leader couples who do not measure up to effective standards in this regard” (1983: 132). From the author’s own experience in his own denomination, there is hesitation among clergy couples to become involved in marriage enrichment. To overcome this, Mace says that, “a great deal of encouragement can be given to subsidizing such participation.” He further says, “The best way of all is for highly placed denominational leaders to lead the way” (1983: 132). It is anticipated that leaders in our denomination take the lead in the enrichment programmes for marriages. In understanding the divorce process, steps can be taken to prevent dysfunction in pastoral families.

6.9.2 MARRIAGE COUNSELING SERVICES

The message should be strong and clear that when pastoral couples find themselves in serious trouble, the denomination stands ready to offer counseling; and that such help will protect the couple’s privacy and, if necessary, the said intervention should include financial aid (Mace 1983: 132).

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, some denominations such as the Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the Apostolic Faith Mission in

South Africa are already providing this kind of service to their members. However, the author is of the opinion that a conducive climate should be established, in which the pastor concerned can ask for help as early as possible, with the assurance that no judgment will be involved. Thus, confidentiality and integrity is of the utmost importance here. The author is of the opinion that those assigned with the important task of counseling should be fully equipped, if not equipped, then training should be provided for six month to year training in order to enhance competence and professionalism.

6.9.3 POLICIES FOR CLERGY DIVORCE

Pastoral divorce is a painful and stressful occurrence for all concerned, the pastor, his/her spouse, the children, if any, the congregation, denomination, and society at large. Thus, it is important for denominations to formulate policies concerning pastoral divorce. Mace reports that, “most of the denominations are now busily framing policies for clergy divorce” (1983: 133). The author can attest to this fact because in his research on pastoral divorce, he discovered a brilliant manual pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage from the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa which, according to the him, is a leader in this field. However, what is actually sad is that the VVA (PCA), with all the technology of our post-modern era, still handles its pastoral care without policies at hand; despite the high divorce rate

in our country. Mace is correct when he says that, “what we want to urge upon the churches is that there are plenty of clergy marriages that will be ripe for divorce in the coming years unless the kind of preventive services for which we are pleading are made available” (1983: 133). It is the duty of the church to have policies in place which can be of great help to the pastor and his/her family when faced with the onslaught of divorce.

6.10 CLERGY CONGREGATIONAL ISSUES

Congregational issues, which concern the pastor as well as his/her family, are very important. These issues cut across the spectrum of pastoral ministry such as expectations from the congregation, work schedules, salaries, housing etc. However, we will only have a brief discussion about two of the issues, as pointed out by Mace. These issues are:

- Contracts with congregations;
- Pastoring clergy couples (1983: 133- 134).

The author will explore and discuss these briefly in the following paragraphs.

6.10.1 CONTRACTS WITH CONGREGATIONS

Mace is of the opinion that, “before a pastor assumes charge of a congregation, he (sic) and his wife should sit down with representative church

leaders and reach agreement about the many and various issues that need to be settled between them” (1983: 133). The above is done in many churches these days. However, in the denomination of the VVA (PCA), which is the prayer setting of the author, it is custom that the minister sits down with the church leaders to iron out the various issues pertaining to the local parish.

Mace is of the opinion that:

- The pastors spouse should share fully in the discussion, as a concerned party, although she may not personally be involved in the final contract;
- The discussion pertaining to the contract should be presided over by a skilled neutral negotiator, hired for the purpose if necessary;
- The contract should be renegotiated during each year of the pastorate and amended as necessary (1983: 134).

If the above is handled with care, a great deal of confusion can be prevented; which will, inevitably, lead to a healthy working environment for the pastor.

6.10.2 PASTORING CLERGY COUPLES

If one takes a closer look at the divorce statistics in South Africa and the world, one can conclude that married couples fear or are too embarrassed to speak out about their marital problems until it is too late. Mace reports that, “an issue that has frequently come to their attention is that clergy couples, in their

relationship with their denominational colleagues and superiors, face the real or imagined risk of losing caste if they admit having marital difficulties.” He further says, “We have found, they avoid making any open acknowledgement of their marital troubles until the conflicts are so far advanced that they may be beyond resolution” (1983: 134). The author is of the opinion that the denomination of the VVA (PCA) should see to it that there is a spiritual guide assigned to take care of its ministers, in a particular, within the districts there should be someone who could be pledged to confidence and yet someone who could help in times of difficulties. If this is done, early detection of dysfunction and marital trouble could be greatly avoided.

It is the wish of the author that the denomination of the VVA (PCA) put into practice the pastoral care model pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage as set out in section 6.4.1 of this chapter, as a matter of urgency, so that the denomination can take up its pastoral role and start to care for its own; especially pastoral families.