

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF DIVORCE WITHIN A  
PASTORAL FAMILY IN THE VOLKSKERK VAN AFRICA  
(PEOPLE'S CHURCH OF AFRICA)

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor in Trauma Counseling has not previously been submitted by me or by any one for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

**SIGNED** .....

**DATE** .....

**SUPERVISOR** .....

**DATE** .....

## SUMMARY

This dissertation is about the traumatic experience of divorce within a pastoral family in the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa). The intention of the author was to find ways of understanding why this phenomenon happens in a pastoral family. This research was carried out because the author had observed the painful struggle and trauma of a colleague and friend due to the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. The emphasis of this research was on the roll of the denomination of the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's church of Africa) when divorce strikes the parsonage and how the church as a custodian of pastoral care can help those individuals, especially pastoral families therapeutically.

In Chapter Two the author has helped the reader understand the science of methodology and how this discipline functions in pastoral care. The methods of Gerkin, Taylor, and Collins were used to emphasize the high calling of the shepherding model. In Chapter Three the author has helped the reader understand how Christians understand marriage in the Christian tradition. Here the author touched on:

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

In Chapter Four the author outlined the process of divorce and how it impacts negatively on the pastoral family. This Chapter has also looked at the theory of trauma and how it traumatizes pastoral families in the aftermath of the divorce phenomenon. Here the author discussed:

- Divorce as a comprehensive loss;
- Stages in the divorce process;
- The psychological effect of divorce on children;
- The stance of the Bible on divorce

Pertaining to trauma the author cites Means who says that “trauma is something sudden, violent, brutal or catastrophic which touches a person’s life in some intimate way. It comes from the Greek word “wound”, which can be on physical, emotional psychological, relational and spiritual level. These levels are

interconnected; therefore trauma affects one's entire life" (2000: 3). Chapter Five contains a sad anecdote of how divorce has traumatized the author's colleague. This anecdote has exposed the author to the pain and of the pastor and his family, not to mention the congregation, and the community when faced with such a traumatic experience such as the divorce phenomenon.

The closing Chapter of this dissertation suggests ways in which the denomination of the VVA (PCA) can create a pastoral care manual for the church which will specifically deal with marriage, divorce, remarriage, and other issues when it occurs. The church being the body of Christ should be a caring community which should bring healing and spiritual wholeness to individuals affected by the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Author:-** here refers to the person who compiled this dissertation;
- **Care giver:** - here refers to a person who is providing care and management of other people's lives on the daily basis;
- **Divorce:** - here refers to the ending of a marriage by a court decree or any complete separation;
- **Family:** - here refers to a kinship grouping which provides for the rearing of children and for certain other human needs;
- **Marriage:** - here refers to a formal agreement between a man and a woman to live together according to the custom of their religion or society. In this dissertation the Christian religion;
- **Methodology:-** here refers to the study of the methods used in a particular subject (this dissertation);
- **Monogamy:** - Here refers to a marriage form permitting only one mate at a time;

- **Orthodox Jew:** - here refers to a Jew who is very strict in the beliefs of a literal Messiah who is yet to come – a literal restoration of the Promised Land and a literal life after death;
- **Pastoral Family:**-here refers to the minister and his/her family;
- **Phenomenon:** - here refers to the traumatic experience of divorce in a pastoral family;
- **Polygamy:** - here refers to a plurality of mates;
- **Reform Jew:-** here refers to a Jew who's revering sacred writings and the work of rabbis through the ages, and tends to see scripture as writings that are about the ongoing consecration of the house of Israel to God;
- **Sociology:** - Here refers to the scientific study of humanity's social life;
- **Society:** - here refers to a relatively independent, self –perpetuating human group which occupies a particular territory, shares a culture, and has most activities within this group;
- **Therapist:** - here refers to someone who counsels people affected by the traumatic experience of divorce and marital distress;

- **Trauma:** - here refers to anything that is sudden, unexpected and cause discomfort, pain and even death to a person;
- **Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa):** - here refers to the prayer setting of the author which were established in May 14, 1922, Cape Town, South Africa (Reformed Church in South Africa).

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a research on the problematic aspect of divorce and how it traumatizes individuals, especially church pastoral families. The author laid exceptional emphasis on the policy, specifically divorce of pastoral families in the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa) (hereafter: VVA (PCA) and how it is enforced in the praxis of daily life.

Further, this dissertation contains the following:

- An introductory chapter
- Research methodology
- Marriage in the Christian tradition
- Divorce: The process
- Trauma
- An anecdote of clergy divorce in the author's denomination and its impact on the pastor and family. The closing chapter of this dissertation attempts to help the denomination of the VVA (PCA) to create a pastoral care manual for the church which will specifically deal with marriage, divorce, remarriage, and

other issues whenever it occurs. Here the author specifically looked at other denominations such as the Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa. Recruitment and training is an important part of this dissertation. Concerning training, Obang make the following observation 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 walks of life, not just any individual who goes by the title “pastor” (2005: 38). This dissertation has also looked at how the minister and his/her family can journey forward despite the pressures of the ordained ministry. The author has also looked at the aspect of how individuals can keep love alive. The following issues were touched on:

- How to maintain the love relationship
- Keys to intentional marital growth
- Biblical advice on maintaining love relationships
- Keeping love alive

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When the author looks back on the long road of researching on this dissertation, his ever present God is the first to give thanks to. However, my journey thus far was not a very smooth one. My perseverance was tested to the limit because for the better part of my academic journey I was without any congregation and without any financial income. However, I declare here, it is God who made all things possible and I thank Him for His Grace impart on me. I want to echo the words of the Apostle Paul as recorded in 2 Corinthians where he says **“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God” (3: 5)**. It is God who brought me this far.

Let me express my greatest appreciation and gratitude to the following people:

- To my fellow students who journeyed with me and for unwavering support and encouragement, especially during my difficult days;
- To a great man of God, Professor Masango who had confidence in me throughout my studies. I thank for him for his support and spiritual guidance in difficult times. I will always be grateful for the manner in which he guided me academically;

- To my wife and three sons, “I love you all. Thank you for allowing me to study. My God bless you in your own studies.”
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## 1. CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The author was born on a farm, 20km from Oudtshoorn, on the route to the world renowned Cango Caves found in the Southern Cape, South Africa. In this area, farming communities are closely knit. The author was raised within a family which believed that married life is sacred and ordained by God. The author was also taught that whoever is married in our community should be highly respected because he/she is regarded as the custodians of marriage life. Mace observes that “Marriage is an age-old institution. Christianity has from the beginning seen marriage as divinely ordained for good and a necessary purpose. One of the purposes of marriage is to provide a man and woman with an intimately shared life; in which they can develop deep love and companionship” (1983: 23). The author concurs with the above quotation because in our search to develop a meaningful relationship and to experience a sense of love and intimacy in our lives, most of us turn to marriage. However, a successful marriage does not come spontaneously or by chance. Instead, the author believes that a happy marriage involves two people working out their small differences; as well as their major ones.

However, in 1972 the author and his family relocated to an urban town in search for a better life, but the morals instilled from the author’s childhood

remained with him. It was in this urban town that the author learnt of husbands and wives who end their married life in the divorce court. What shocked the author the most was the fact that people of the cloth, ministers of the sacred word of God and leaders of their respected Parishes also end their marriage in divorce. The author could not understand this unnatural phenomenon. Clergy are supposed to be the reflection of God and should live by example. The author was brought up with these values and this is how the author understands the sacredness of matrimony. Furthermore, the author believes that the primary task of the Christian Minister is to help proclaim the message of divine love and to help those in marriage life to respond to that love and to grow in love for one another.

It is precisely for this reason that Mace argues that “the married minister with an unhappy marriage is, therefore, crippled in the performance of his task. He (sic) knows that the message he is proclaiming isn’t working for him in his own inner personal life. He is not getting the healing and support he needs in his home for him to address the burdens of human need and the tragedies that are brought to him, daily. He suffers from disappointment, guilt, and a sense of failure that leaves him inwardly tortured and emotionally drained. His wife also is in trouble. She must either put on an act before the outside world or risk ruining her husband’s career by letting the sad truth be known. They both face

a grim choice of choosing between hypocrisy and public humiliation”(1983: 24).

The above quotation clearly emphasizes the point that no one is immune to the tragedy of marital distress which eventually leads to divorce and that not even men and women who devote their lives to serving God are spared. The same minister who is dependent upon by his flock to provide God’s loving grace during a crisis has no place to turn to when his family experiences the disaster which pertains to his own marriage. However, what affected the author further and haunted him ever since, is the fact that this phenomenon also affected the Denomination of the Volkskerk van Afrika (People’s Church of Africa), to which the author belongs; with devastated consequences for the minister as well as the family during the aftermath of the divorce. What struck the author’s mum is the fact that our Denomination has formulated a “policy” to deal with this particular minister without realizing what sort of trauma this minister and his family have endured due to the divorce. The church also approached the subject with little knowledge and concern for the conditions which result in divorce. What is actually sad is that the church in which the author belongs has no pastoral manual guide to handle divorce, especially for divorce within the clergy. The author has for a long time observed the pain and humiliation this minister has endured at the hands of many of the congregants.

The author's observation regarding trauma and divorce has led to the following conclusion: the subsequent divorce and the inadequacies of the church pertaining to pastoral care for clergy couples, whose marriages ends in divorce, has finally damaged this minister, and eventually the whole pastoral family. The question thus is who then cares for the pastor and the family when they are going through this process? Let alone caring for the minister? The author researched on this issue because he has observed the painful struggle and trauma of a colleague and friend. This issue made the congregation not to deem the said minister fit to serve the church. Several questions arise in the authors mind. Why does this phenomenon occur in God's family? What do we really know about church's pastoral family marriages? Has any Denomination developed policies or programmes to help pastoral families whose marriages are in trouble? The author believes that divorce in a pastoral family is problematic; particularly in our Denomination; and thus researching on the subject is important.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The events of the clergy or church pastoral family divorce (I will use them synonymously) are major causes of deep trauma and suffering a pastoral family. The breakdown of church pastoral families' marriages is a tragedy for all concerned and this includes the pastor, his wife, their children, the congregation, and the denomination and the community. Church pastoral family marriages today are breaking down in large numbers than ever before and the rate is likely to increase. The author wants to highlight prominent news paper headlines, which highlighted this phenomenon. Let me share a few examples:

- *Minister and wife of prominent church in Johannesburg (South Africa) announced their separation. (Sunday Times, 4 April 2007);*
- *Anglican cleric does not want divorce in the news. (Daily Dispatch, 2 September 2009);*
- *Wife of prominent church leader in Gauteng Province file for divorce. (Rapport, 31 January 2010);*
- *Popular world Evangelists wife file for divorce after thirty (30) years of marriage. (<http://www.Yahoo news>. 2010);*

These are just a few examples pertaining to divorce among church pastoral families. The question thus is, why do ministers of the cloth divorce? What

causes church pastoral families to break down into divorce? How can pastoral care, as a science, help traumatized individuals and family members during the traumatic event of divorce? Has the church developed a ministry of caring pertaining to this issue? What is the role of congregants when the church's pastoral family marriages are in trouble or when there is divorce? Are they capable of caring for their pastor during this traumatic time of divorce? The author realizes that these questions need to be explored properly with the exclusive aim of developing a therapeutic pastoral care method pertaining to the effected minister, family and congregation. These questions will be researched in order to create a model of care for the church. Trauma has become a way of life in our daily lives and this has infiltrated the parsonage with devastating consequences. Pearlman is correct when he cites the following idea pertaining to trauma: "trauma is sudden, unexpected and non-normative. It exceeds the individual's perceived ability to meet demands and disrupts the individual's frame of reference and other central psychological needs and related schemas" (2005: 10). Family breakdown is a traumatic event which causes severe emotional damage to the pastor, his/her family and to the church as a whole.

### **1.3 RESEARCH GAP**

The author has established that this research on traumatic experience of divorce in the denomination of the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa) is necessary because church pastoral family marriages, in our post-modern age are breaking down at an alarming rate; and that they are likely to increase in South Africa and other parts of the globe. More and more church pastoral families are traumatized by the devastating effects of divorce. Families as well as congregations are torn apart by this phenomenon. Literature on church pastoral family divorce is actually non-existent. Inquiries by the author, which pertain to this topic have failed to locate any meaning full information. Most of the literature reviewed is mostly in the pastoral psychological field. Mace says: "there were scores of books about ministry. Seldom, however, did we find anything significant about the minister's marriage. The idea that a minister's marriage can be in serious trouble, let alone breakdown, was hardly even hinted at"(1983: 26). There is a gap that the author wants to fill with this research. Thus, the author is of the view that this topic which has its place in the Practical Theology field certainly needs to be fully explored. The gap that the author needs to fill with this research is to establish a pastoral care method which addresses church pastoral family divorce within the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A).Up to now, there has not been any research done on church pastoral family divorce in our denomination. Thus, the intention of the author

is to empower our denomination in order to deal with this trauma resulting from divorce experiences by pastoral families, long before the divorce happens. Furthermore, the author seeks to find ways of how to reduce pastoral family divorce within the church. The pastoral care method of Gerkin is most striking here. He says: “the ministry of care seeks to promote a creative modification of the power arrangements in the existing structure of things. It attempts to reorder the values that are contributing to symptomatic behaviors and It identifies destructive outcomes” (1997: 143). He further says “for the pastoral caretaker, symptomatic crises are an invitation to be participant in changing the fundamental fabric of personal and social reality and to reconstruct the environment” (Ibid: 143).

#### **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH**

The aim of this research was to help the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) to deal more effectively, sensitively and honestly with divorce among the church’s pastoral families. This issue is problematic; and thus researching on the subject is important. The intention of the author was to help the denomination deal with this trauma long before it happens, and to afford pastoral care to the minister and the family involved. Thus, the author sought to develop a pastoral care method that will empower the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) in order to offer care to the pastoral family, therapeutically. The

aim was to make appropriate recommendations to the V.V.A (P.C.A) concerning the church's pastoral family divorce. Then this aim was to offer clergy and their families insight and resources to help them make their marriage as happy and as healthy as possible.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

This research focused on the traumatic experience of divorce by a pastoral family within the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) because this phenomenon is not only a South African problem, which challenges the Christian community, but is also a global problem. Divorce within a pastoral family is traumatic because it traumatizes not only the pastor involved, but also the family, and the congregation and community at large. This research study sought to create awareness on the tragedy that is caused by divorce within a pastoral family; especially in the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A). This research on divorce was not confined to South Africa alone but to the entire world, since this phenomenon is a global problem. Rosenstock (et.al) is correct when they cite the following statistics pertaining to divorce across the board: "divorce is a juncture in the cycle that directly affects tens of thousands in America daily and, by extension-parents, relatives, friends and associates- hundreds of thousands" (1988: 13). In other words, the impact is felt globally.

## **1.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher introduced the reader to the background of the study. The pinnacle point of this study was about the traumatic experience of divorce in a pastoral family in the Volkskerk van Afrika (PCA). The author sought to find ways of understanding why this phenomenon is growing in God's family. In this research, the author sought to understand why ministers of the cloth divorce. What is it that causes pastoral families to break down into divorce? How can pastoral care, as a science, help the traumatized individuals and family members during the traumatic event of divorce? Has the church a ministry of caring, pertaining to this issue? What is the role of the particular local congregation when pastoral family marriages are in trouble or when there is divorce? Are they capable of caring for its pastor during this traumatic time of divorce? The author realized that these questions need to be explored properly with the exclusive aim to develop a therapeutic pastoral care method pertaining to the affected minister, family and congregation.

In Practical Theology, there is a gap pertaining to this topic, as discussed in the section on research gap; and thus, the author's research on it. In the next chapter, I will focus on the methodology which will help when we do therapy with the affected family members, the congregation and the whole community at large. The pastoral care method which is going to be developed in this research will empower the denomination of the V.V.A (PCA) with caring for the

pastoral family, therapeutically. The aim is to make appropriate recommendations to the V.V.A (PCA) concerning church pastoral family divorce. The aim is then to offer the clergy and their families insight and resources to make their marriages as happy and as healthy as possible.

## **2. CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 SHEPHERDING AS A METHOD OF CARE**

The Bible is full of rich imagery to help its readers better understand deep spiritual truths. One of the repeated images of God is that of a shepherd with his sheep. In Psalm 23 God is referred to as our shepherd. The Gospel writers such as John (10: 14) and the Apostle Peter (1 Pet 2: 21-25) as disciples of

Jesus, places Jesus in the same role. Most dictionaries define the term pastor as a minister, clergyman/woman, or one having spiritual care of a number of persons. The Heinemann English dictionary defines the adjective, pastoral: “as something having to do with a pastor; it involves a minister, or clergyman, or his/her duties.” (1979: 782)

In this section, the author provides the methodology of this research study.

The author will make use of Gerkin’s method of shepherding and caring for the individual; as well as the community. In his book, *An introduction to pastoral care*, Gerkin (1997: 27) refers explicitly to the pastor as a caring shepherd of the flock of Christ. The method of caring is understood “as the central metaphor” of life in the Christian community. Thus, the pastor is regarded as the shepherd and the flock of Christ which needs care and nurture all the time. Gerkin goes further and reminds the Christian community (Church) that “although the shepherding motif originates as a metaphor for the role of the king during the monarchical period of Israel’s history, it was never institutionalized as a designated role within the religious community, as were the prophetic, priestly, and wisdom roles. It was first appropriated within the religious life of Israel as a metaphor with which to speak of the care of Yahweh for Yahweh’s people. With the coming of Jesus, who, according to John’s

Gospel identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd, the shepherding image takes its place as a primary grounding image for ministry”(1997: 27).

The above quotation points to the fact that the pastor, as a shepherd and a caring leader, is set aside to care, nurture and to protect the flock of Christ. However, when the tragedy of marital distress and divorce strikes the parsonage, who then cares for the pastor and his/her family? This is where Gerkin’s shepherding method is helpful because its focus is on the individual, the family, which includes the pastoral family, as well as the wider community. For Gerkin “It means placing alongside the image of the wise and caring pastor providing care and concern for the individual and families another image of the pastor as caring leader of a community of worship – a community of care. It also places alongside that image one of the pastor as prophetic leader who cares both for the people and for the tradition that gives the community its identity”(1997: 25). Thus, to care for the family and the community involves care that confronts issues which lead to trauma, especially divorce within a church pastoral family. In this research study, the researcher used Gerkin’s methodology as a way of applying pastoral care to families, especially pastoral families within the Denomination of the Volkskerk van Afrika (People’s Church of Africa); who are traumatized by the tragedy of marital breakdown which ends in divorce. Gerkin further explores the role of the pastor and reminds us

of our earliest pastoral ancestors; who are to be found among the leaders of the ancient people of Israel. He submits that “the priest, a hereditary class that had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life; the prophets; who spoke for Yahweh in relation to moral issues, sometimes rebuking the community and its stated political leaders; and the wise men and women, who offered council of all sorts concerning issues of the good life and personal conduct” (1997: 23). Thus, the pastor of our post-modern and post-Christian era holds various responsibilities pertaining to shepherding. However, as mentioned earlier on in this study, when a pastor is unhappy in his/her marriage, he/she are crippled in his/her performance of the task at hand and; thus needs care and nurture. The author also explored other methods pertaining to shepherding God’s flock. Here, the books: *Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for Peoples Helpers* by Collins (1993), and *Tend My Sheep, Applied Theology 2* by Taylor (1994), were useful. The author explored the above methods because this helped the researcher to reflect a little deeper on the shepherding method which Gerkin was not able to apply. For Taylor to be a shepherd, means to “guide the flock to good pastures and safe resting places. He leads the sheep and provides for all their needs, seeing that they have water to drink and keeping the shepherd fold in good repair. He guides his flock and protect it from wild animals, or thieves, or other danger, even when

this involves danger to the shepherd self. He searches for any sheep that strays or gets lost, until it is found, even if it means going into difficult and dangerous places. He carefully tends any sheep that are sick or weak, and takes special care of nurturing ewes and young lambs”(1995: 9)

Thus, for Taylor, being a shepherd means taking a deep and personal interest in the welfare of the flock, and of each individual in the sheepfold. It calls on the shepherd/pastor’s deep strength, courage, patience and self sacrifice. The shepherd will always protect the sheep, a role the author expects from the church which is indeed the custodian of care, especially within the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A); to which the author belongs. The church as the custodian of pastoral care should have tender compassion for those in their fold. The Pastor, family, together with congregants, should be regarded as of priceless worth within the sheepfold and; thus, should be unwearied in their effort to keep them in a wealthy and flourishing condition. The church is supposed to be the custodian of care and, therefore, must constantly work for the welfare of all families.

This method of Taylor focuses on how pastors, as shepherds and leaders, care for God’s people, and it also includes pastoral therapy and counseling which is important to shepherding and leadership in God’s vineyard. This method by Taylor will not only help the church to do therapy with those who are affected

by the trauma of marital breakdown and divorce, but it will also help to prevent such traumatic events long before they happen or occur. It is, therefore, important that the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) establishes a pastoral care committee that will therapeutically care for the church's pastoral family, especially when divorce and marital distress strikes the parsonage. Collins, on the other hand, sees the Church and its Christian life as "not as a solo experience, marked by rugged individualism and make it on your own mentality, but as the central nerve of care" (1993: 197). Thus, when one member suffers in the sheepfold; all members carry the suffering together with the member. Gerkin and Collin's approach is therapeutic because it puts emphasis on care for those who are traumatized by marital distress and divorce, especially the clergy and their families.

The author will now turn the lens of care in the direction of the term – shepherd; and analyze it. Taylor submits that "the shepherd is a well-known figure among many agricultural people, and in ancient Israel everyone understood what the work of a shepherd was. Flocks of sheep and goats were important possessions, just as they are in many countries today" (1995: 70). Gerkin concurs with the above when he says: "this image originated in a time and place in which the shepherd was a common figure" (1997: 80). The rational of these two theologians pertaining to shepherding is invaluable to

pastoral care. However, as the two theologians are educated and grounded in the U. S. A, they write from a western perspective.

The author grew up on a farm on the African Continent. The image of the shepherd is far more personal and carries deep personal value for him. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the author grew up with this image. Sheep and goats are invaluable and important to African people. The author was brought up on a farm as a shepherd boy where he understood the importance of looking after the flock. Thus, he understands the important role of a pastor as shepherd and leader of God's people. Let me concur with London (et al) when they say: "Every calling, including the ministry, has some compelling force and defining relationship. Health brings physician and patients together. Justice brings lawyer and clients together. Learning brings teacher and students together. Love is the life-giving force that brings pastor and parishioner together" (2000: 12).

Our Lord, Jesus Christ established the church as His society of love on earth. Thus, pastors have the opportunity to give love, to be loved and to lead others (the church) to express Christ's love in the world. The Church of Christ has been purchased with His blood, and everyone in the sheepfold, including the pastor and the family traumatized by marital breakdown and divorce, makes an infinite sacrifice. Each one in the sheepfold should be regarded as of

priceless worth. Thus, it is imperative that the denomination, to which the author belongs, should be unwearied in her effort to keep the members in a healthy and flourishing condition. Thus, the church that understands the important role of pastoral care, which is constantly labour for the welfare for those in her charge.

According to the prophets, “the shepherd feeds his (sic) flock, leads, and guides, bring back the strayed, bring the shattered in one place to watch over them” (Isaiah 40: 1, Ezekiel 34: 11-15). It is clear according to the above scripture that shepherding is a Biblical method of offering pastoral care and is aimed at helping those who suffer and survive; based on the word of God, which is the basic source of Christian living. The shepherding method is what victims of marital distress and divorce seek, especially those traumatized by it. It seeks to empower families affected, as well as the community, on how to deal with marital breakdown and divorce. This method does not only assist the pastor involved, but also helps the church to enter into a dialogue with the community, as well as the congregation, long before the traumatic event happens. A dialogue that centre’s on discussions, nurturing and guided therapy. The author is deeply aware of the fact that the pastor/shepherd of our post-modern and post-Christian era is holding different and huge responsibilities in helping families on moral issues. However, as mentioned

earlier, when the pastor and his/her family are damaged, who cares for them?

The author of this research study believes that the New Testament helps us with this question. The New Testament depicts Jesus as the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep and who is also known by them. Jesus says: “I am the Good Shepherd. I am the door of the sheep” (John 19: 1-16). Thus, the church as the custodian of moral values and care is called to do the same as the Master did with this world.

Gerkin explores the role of the pastor as shepherd of God’s people in a striking manner. He says: “Reflection on the action and words of Jesus as He relates to people at all levels of social life, give us the model *sine qua non* for pastoral relationships with those immediate within our care and those strangers we meet along the way” (1997: 80). This method of Gerkin, provides the church guidance on how to do therapy with a church pastoral family traumatized by marital breakdown and divorce. Shepherding from whatever sphere is, indeed, a demanding task which is an effective method that leads to healing, spiritual wellbeing, wholeness and stability. This research on the traumatic experience of divorce on the church’s pastoral family within the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A), does not only seek to empower the above mentioned church, in which the author belongs, but it also seeks to empower the effected pastoral family, the local church and the community who are affected by this phenomenon,

and assist those who deal with traumatic experiences. The shepherding method challenges the denomination on how to be an effective agent of care to those in their fold. Thus, to afford care is not a simple task; it demands fulltime commitment from the side of the church, in order for healing to be achieved; especially when one is working with families and individuals who are traumatized by marital breakdown and divorce. Gerkins, Taylor and Collin's method of shepherding connects with the ministry of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Jesus felt a deep compassion for all people; especially the outcasts, the down trodden, and the lonely (Matt 9: 35-36). Jesus also felt great pity for those in need (Matt 15: 32, 34). Jesus also cared for people and is evident in the parable of the lost sheep in (Luke 15: 4-7). The parable of the lost coin (Luke 15: 8-10) and the parable of the lost son in (Luke 15: 11-31) are pinnacles of Jesus' ministry. Thus, it is clear from the above examples that Jesus cares for the marginalized, broken and traumatized individuals.

The author employs Gerkins, Taylor and Collins' methods in order to address the traumatic phenomenon of marital breakdown and divorce on a pastoral family within the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A). The Bible as the Christian source shares ways of how pastoral therapy was done by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in His ministry on earth, and how He commanded His disciples to continue His work throughout the ages. Thus, to care for the people of God, is

a command straight from the heart of God. Gerkin states that, “pastoral care of the people became a process of facilitating the individual’s personal relationship with God. Reconciliation of the individual soul to God and guidance in the spiritual life of members of the community of faith became the central pastoral task” (1997: 42). Shepherding means taking a deep personal interest in the welfare of the flock of God, and of each individual in the sheepfold.

The pastor and his/her family is part of the flock of Christ. Marital breakdown and divorce in a church pastoral family leaves the whole church and community in great shock. This phenomenon has a crippling effect on the family involved, the church and the community at large. In this research, the author sought to understand why ministers of the cloth divorce. What is it that causes the family of pastors to divorce? How can pastoral care, as a science, help traumatized individuals and family members during the traumatic events resulting from divorce? Has the church, a ministry of caring, looked at solutions pertaining to this issue? What is the role of the particular local congregation when clergy couples’ marriages are in trouble or when there is divorce? Is the congregation capable of caring for its pastor during this traumatic time of divorce? The author realized that these questions need to be explored properly with the exclusive aim of developing a therapeutic pastoral care

method pertaining to the effected minister, his/her family and the congregation. These questions were researched in order to create a model of care for the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa).

## **2.2 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the author helped the reader understand the science of methodology and how it functions in pastoral care. The Heinemann English dictionary defines the term methodology: "As the study of the methods used in a particular subject" (1987: 675). The Merriam Webster' dictionary, on the other hand, defines methodology: "As the analysis of the procedures of inquiry in a particular field" (Merriam Webster online, 2011). In this chapter, the method of Gerkin, Taylor and Collins were used to emphasize the High Calling of the shepherding model. The author has guided the reader into the art of the pastoral care model, and how the shepherd/ pastor can apply this model therapeutically; especially on those individuals, pastoral families, the church and the community who were traumatized by the phenomenon of divorce. Furthermore, this chapter has emphasized the important role of the shepherd/ pastor and brings to the fore it's self-denying nature. Taylor is correct when he says: "The good shepherd must always put the welfare of the flock before his/her own comfort, even when this means losing sleep, and personal danger or even death." In this chapter, the reader came face to face with the fact that

Jesus Christ, our Greatest Shepherd/Pastor, is the example we must model after; especially in our dealings with the brokenness of our post modern era, particularly divorce in a pastoral setting. Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has entrusted the care of His flock to His Church as a steward shepherd in His vineyard, and he bids the body of Christ (the Church) to have the same interest that He has manifested. God the Chief Shepherd has commanded His Church to be faithful, to feed the flock, to strengthen the weak, to revive the fainting, and to shield them from devouring wolves. This chapter also highlighted the researchers own understanding of the shepherding model because the researcher himself was a shepherd boy. Therefore, the researcher has an appreciation for the work of a pastor/shepherd and how to care, therapeutically, for the flock of Christ.

In the next chapter, the author explores and discussed his understanding of marriage in the Christian tradition. The author will also share some definitions pertaining to marriage. He will then explore different marriage customs in some selected nationalities. The author will also share insights on traditional views on marriage. In the next chapter, he will share some sociological ideas about marriage and family life. The author will also analyze some critical opinions on marriage and factors which give rise to conflict and tension in the minister's family.

### **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

## **4. CHAPTER FOUR: DIVORCE**

### **4.1 DIVORCE: THE PROCESS**

In this section, the author disentangles the divorce phenomenon and how it negatively impacts on family life, especially pastoral (clergy) families. Harvey and Judith Rosenstock are correct when they say, “divorce may be compared to object loss and death itself because, in a marital relationship there is not only the husband and wife but there is also the marriage. It is a tripartite arrangement. The marriage is lost. There is the death of the marriage. To some extent there are losses to each individual-plans, hopes, and dreams that will never be realized-but the main loss is of the third entity” (1988: 14). The divorce phenomenon is, thus, a traumatic occurrence, which evokes a lot of emotions; especially on those who must endure it. Therefore, this section will also look at the traumatic experience of families in the aftermath of the divorce. However, let us first analyze some definitions pertaining to divorce, in order to have a better grasp of this phenomenon.

### **4.2 DIVORCE: SOME DEFINITIONS**

4.2.1 Patricia Diedrick defines divorce “as a highly disruptive life event creating effects that range from devastation to relief” (1991: 33).

4.2.2 Stinett and Walters in Kitching sees divorce “as a way of terminating a marriage situation in which one or both partners cannot relate to each other in a satisfying manner or cannot interact together without psychological injury to one or both” (2008: 30).

4.2.3 The Heinemann English dictionary again sees divorce “as the ending of a marriage by a court decree or any complete separation (1987: 315).

4.2.4 The author of this thesis defines divorce “as a stressful occurrence which results in the annulment of the covenantal agreement of marriage which inevitably leads to psychological pain and trauma.”

It is a painful and traumatic experience when a once happy marriage falls apart. It hurts even more when the marriage ends up in the divorce court.

Harvey and Judith Rosenstock says, “divorce is a juncture in the life cycle that directly affects tens of thousands in America daily and, by extension –parents, relatives, friends and associates-hundreds of thousands” (1988: 13). The

Afrikaans Sunday newspaper, Rapport, connects with the above when it declares that, “in 2008, 186’ 522 marriages were solemnized in South Africa.”

The article, further, reveals that from the above figure, “28’924 marriages” end up in the divorce court and that in “2009, 1’150 people divorced for the third time” (December, 2009). It is thus comprehensible that divorce is not confined to one particular geographical area, but is a social ill which impacts people’s

lives on a global scale. Many marriages breakdown and end in divorce because people do not recognize the early warning signs that the marriage are in trouble. Literature review on divorce demonstrates a number of common causes that lead to divorce in many families. Craig highlights eight main causes which cause divorce in marriage. They are:

- Low commitment to marriage;
- Unrealistic expectations;
- Boredom;
- Interpersonal incompetence;
- An affair;
- A developmental or situational crisis;
- An imbalance in the relationship;
- Poor communication (2004: 194-196).

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

## **4.3 COMMON CAUSES WHICH LEAD TO DIVORCE IN MARRIAGE**

### **4.3.1 LOW COMMITMENT TO MARRIAGE**

For the reader to have a better grasp of the term commitment, let us explore how a few dictionaries define this term. According to the Heinemann English dictionary, commitment “is the act of committing, or is the state of being committed or a promise to do something” (1985: 201). The Merriam dictionary defines commitment “as a responsibility or obligation to do something” (<http://www.Merriam online>). The above sentiments clearly describe the importance of marital commitment in the covenantal relationship. Craig is correct when he says that “when couples get married, they make a commitment to three things:

- Their partner;
- The relationship;
- A belief in the permanence of marriage as a covenant relationship.”

He further says, “If they are not totally committed in all three areas, the relationship will suffer” (2004: 195). It is, thus, clear where there is lack of commitment in the marriage bond; the relationship will not only suffer but will eventually lead to divorce. It is also a known fact when couples “over commit themselves to work or church, or go after things such as sport, or friends, and are not totally invested in making the marriage their first priority, emotional distance, mistrust, and feelings of betrayal begin to emerge” (Craig 2004: 195).

Where the marriage vows are, for some couples, just a ceremony, the conditions under which such marriage was first established may also undermine a commitment to the marriage. Craig is right, and I agree with him, when he says “if couples are immature and marry too young, if they carry a lot of unresolved issues from their family origin, or if they get married for all the wrong reasons (e.g. to escape, to avoid loneliness, because of social pressures, or pregnancy), these can affect the level of bonding and commitment necessary for a stable relationship” (2004: 195).

#### **4.3.2 UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

Couples who lack a sense of realism about their marriage relationship “and hang on to romantic notions of love frequently expect unattainable standards and demand levels of intimacy and togetherness that stifles the relationship and create feelings of frustration and alienation” (Craig 2004: 193). Each couple brings to the marriage setting his/her own unique human traits (individuality) which can enhance the marriage bond. Craig is correct when he points out that, “when married couples collude to avoid facing their differences, they maintain the myth of oneness that negates a balance between connectedness and separateness (2004: 195). This process will lead to misunderstanding, communication breakdown, and finally divorce.

#### **4.3.3 BOREDOM**

It is a well known fact that a great tendency exists for marriage partners to take their mate for granted and become complacent about their relationship. Masters points out that, “Complacency is one of the deadliest enemies of love. So too, self-absorption, neglect, and condescension are insidious ways of undermining love” (1944: 15). Thus, when one partner in the marriage bond drifts along and refuses to deal with these attitudes, the other partner frequently ends up being bored and may end up losing interest in the marital relationship, and thus opts out of the marriage.

#### **4.3.4 INTERPERSONAL INCOMPETENCE**

Many couples fall in love, marry, and assume that the job is completed. They tend to feel that everything else will work out automatically. However, hardly anything can be further from the truth. Craig is right, and I agree with him, when he exclaims that, “a happy marriage depends on two people having the skill to communicate effectively with each other and negotiate their way out of difficulties.” He further says, “Partners with low self-esteem or little or no assertiveness skill cannot contribute strongly and positively to the relationship and often fail to get what they need from the marriage” (2004: 195-196). Van Pelt connects beautifully when she says, “A successful marriage does not come spontaneously or by chance. Instead, a happy marriage- the successful marriage- involves two people, working out small difficulties as well as the big

ones” (1986: 14). When married couples fail to deal with jealousy, in-laws, finances, personal issues and sexuality, it often leads to an enfeeblement of the marriage bond and rob the relationship of its energy, joy and wealth. Some marital partners, who feel inadequate or cannot face the responsibility of sustaining the relationship, resort to abusive and addictive behaviours rather than developing the personal skills necessary for marital growth. (Willemse 2008: 27-33, Craig 2004: 196). These destructive behaviours normally have a very negative effect on the marriage bond and, in the end, lead to separation and finally, divorce.

#### **4.3.5 AN AFFAIR**

Craig reports that: “up to 25 percent of marriages end because of an affair by one of the partners” (2004: 196). Infidelity statistics connects with the above and says that: “up to 53 percent of marriages in the United States end because of an affair by one or both of the partners” (<http://www.Infidelity.com> 2006). Today, in our post-modern era, there are many factors which set in motion or pull individuals towards marital infidelity. These factors are:

- Attraction;
- Novelty;
- Excitement;

- Risk;
- Challenge;
- Curiosity;
- Enhancing self-esteem;
- A desire to escape or find relief from a painful relationship;
- Boredom;
- Feeling neglected;
- A desire to prove one's worth of attraction;
- A desire for attention;
- A desire to punish a partner (Craig 2004: 196).

Researchers are of the opinion that, “working couples are at greater risk of having affairs than any other group” (Andrews 2000: 8). It is, thus, vital for marital partners (pastoral families as well) to strike a balance between their work life and their marriage lives in order to keep their marriages as healthy as possible to avoid divorce and its consequences.

#### **4.3.6 A DEVELOPMENTAL OR SITUATIONAL CRISIS**

It is common knowledge that many marriages, especially those in our post-modern age, do not survive the emotional onslaught that occurs when crisis situations demolish the marital setting. Craig reports that, “situational crisis such as illness, death, or serious accidents to a partner or family member, depression, unemployment, or bankruptcy are difficult events to survive for many couples” (2004: 196). Such difficulties have the potential to destabilize a marriage and cause it to dissolve into divorce. Wimberley is correct, and I agree with him, when he says “as clergy families we are not immune to the ravages and trauma of unseen events and the difficult task of managing our lives in their aftermath” (2007: 135). There are also other causes that can destabilize a marriage and cause it to crumble and break up during the normal developmental stages of the family cycle. According to Craig, these include “having children, parenting teenagers, dealing with mid-life” (2004: 196). All of the above can have a huge impact on the marriage bond.

#### **4.3.7 AN IMBALANCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP**

It is a known fact that as a marriage relationship grows, deepens and changes, there is a change in the balance of power and these cause marital partners to realign their roles and responsibilities. Craig is correct when he observed that “marriages can see-saw out of control when issues arise such as educational inequality, personal dominance and control, differences in earning capacity, a

wife turning to the workforce and becoming more economically independent, or an imbalance in the power and decision-making process within the couple's relationship" (2004: 196). All of the above can have a severe effect on the marriage bond which can lead to marital distress and in the end divorce.

#### **4.3.8 POOR COMMUNICATION**

Nancy van Pelt says "the heart of marriage is in its communication system."

She further says: "it can be said that the success and happiness of any married pair is measurable in terms of the deepening dialogue which characterizes

their union" (1986: 75). It is, thus, obvious that the success and wholeness of

any marriage is vested in its communication. Researchers are of the view that

one of the most serious problems in marriage and a prime cause of divorce lies

in the inability or reluctance of marriage partners to communicate. Craig is,

thus, correct when he observes that: "couples who indulge in using vague and

unclear ways of communicating and who speak indirectly to each other as a

way of avoiding closeness and conflict set the stage to misunderstanding,

frustration, and hurt." He further cites a survey by The Institute of family

Studies, which in 1993 found that "70 percent of people surveyed whose

marriage had fallen apart nominated lack of communication and the resultant

lack of companionship, love and affection, as the main cause of their

relationship failure" (2004: 197). The researcher believes that for marriage to

survive, marital partners need to be able not only to love each other and negotiate a resolution of their personal differences, but they must be willing to adapt to the many demands and challenges that impact on their relationship in our post-modern age both from within and from the society at large.

#### **4.4 DIVORCE: A COMPREHENSIVE LOSS**

It is important to bear in mind that no matter what the state the marriage you are leaving or being forced to leave, every person confronted with the traumatic occurrence of the divorce phenomenon is experiencing a major loss. Thus, divorce represents a loss for almost everyone it touches. De Klerk describes the divorce phenomenon as the end of a long term relationship that leads to a range of losses (2004: 35-40). The following needs our attention:

- There is the loss of a good past, “unless reconstructed and re-interpreted to be viewed as a new past” (Kitching 2008: 31);
- There is the loss of the present. The loss caused by the divorced phenomenon is to be found in the crisis of the marital partner’s identity. It is common knowledge that divorced couples are viewed by society as a failure; especially the pastor as pastoral caregiver and leader of a

congregation. Many women fear to be socially stigmatized as divorcees.

Thus, a new outlook on your current situation is required to explain yourself as person. De Klerk and Kitching are correct, and I agree with them, when they observed that “the challenge to create a new present in which divorcees can blossom provides hope to find a new worth of the self” (2004: 37-40, 2008: 31);

- There is the loss of the future. The dream of unity and a good quality future as husband and wife is lost. Divorce destroys plans, hopes, and dreams that will never be realized. In the end, it leads to feelings of helplessness, fear, emptiness and worthlessness; which leave deep psychological effects on divorced couples. These psychological effects, further, negatively influence the parental ability of divorced couples. Parental stress, anxiety, and depression, in turn, inhibit effective parenthood as well as shepherd hood; especially concerning the pastor as shepherd of his/her flock;
- There is the loss of self-esteem and confidence. Rosenstock is of the opinion that “divorce always usher in winters, regardless of the season” (1988: 13). Thus, divorce can have a devastating effect on the self-esteem and confidence of divorced persons. De Klerk reports that “people who went through divorce question their decision making about

the past and tend to lose confidence in future decision making” (2004: 39);

- There is the loss of sense. It is common knowledge that people who entered the covenantal arrangement of matrimony do so with the prime objective that this arrangement is reciprocal, supportive, enriching, and a lifelong journey. However, when divorce strikes and dreams are shattered, life becomes a painful experience and everything becomes meaningless. In the end, it enhances a feeling of personal failure;
- There is a loss of support. Divorce by its very definition, tears families apart and inevitably destroys the support base which once existed between mutual partners. The knowledge of being suddenly on your own, may lead to feelings of rejection and failure. De Klerk is correct when he points out that, “where there is no support mechanism, feelings of anxiety about decision making, tension to adapt to new circumstances, guilt feelings about the decision to divorce, can cause that the impact of the loss of support will further shove the divorced person into a state of helplessness” (2004: 33). Loss of a once intimate and loving partner and possible loss of contact with children can be a devastating experience. The role of “wife” or “husband” becomes one of “former wife” or “former husband”, and thus one’s social status changes

(Smith et al 1991: 34). The above sentiments clearly demonstrate the fact that divorce is a stressful event and inevitably has a negative effect on those who must endure it. In the next section, the researcher discussed the different stages in the divorce process and how it impacts the life of the divorced person. The above prepares one to deeply understand the trauma and pain brought about by divorce.

#### **4.4.1 STAGES IN THE DIVORCE PROCESS**

It is a known fact that the psychological impact of divorce on those who must endure it, is as severe as that of death in the immediate family. Emery says that, “Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, a pioneer in the hospice movement, first described the stages of grieving about and recovering from a major trauma such as death or divorce.” The word “grief” itself comes from a Latin root meaning “weighed down” or afflicted by heavy wrong” (Taylor 1983: 222).

Thus, a person who grieves is one who feels deep sorrow, distress, or misery.

These stages, according to Kübler-Ross are:

- Denial;
- Anger and resentment;
- Bargaining;

- Depression;
- Acceptance (2004: 26-27).

The above stages are helpful, therapeutically, when dealing with people who are traumatized by events of death or divorce.

Rosenstock in her book: *Journey through Divorce* connects with the above and is of the opinion that “people who experience divorce also experience grief, and go through a series of stages in the process.” These stages each come with their own characteristics and challenges. The stages in the divorce process are:

- Denial;
- Depression;
- Anger;
- Resolution;
- Recovery (1988: 13-107).

Understanding these stages can be very helpful when it comes to talking about divorce and decision making in the countenance of this painful event. The author will explore these stages fully in the following paragraphs.

#### **4.4.1.1 DENIAL**

It is well documented that everyone who grieves goes through some amount of denial, even those whose loved ones die. Rosenstock points out that “denial of the dissolution of a marriage is a natural response.” She further says that: “it forms a protective armor, allowing the self-designated victim an opportunity to be shielded from the searing reality of the marriage’s termination and the resumption of a single life” (1988: 28). However, when denial is protracted, the process of dealing with the loss and moving forward is critically delayed.

Rosenstock is, thus, correct when she says that, “for those who perfect the stage of denial, the necessity to journey forward becomes more threatening than the initial loss” (1988: 25). Thus, the yearning to avoid further pain, unintentionally delays the intensity of the torment rather than to lessen it.

#### **4.4.1.2 DEPRESSION**

The consciousness of being alone plunges one into a state of depression. Craig says that, “depression is one of the common psychiatric illnesses in our world today, and it impinges heavily on the marriage relationship” (2004: 174). With divorce, the pain of loss is usually more severe than with the death of a loved one because the person you have lost is still around. Rosenstock says that, “the

stage of depression after divorce is a time of morning-a time for tears.” She further says that, “so often in a divorce the loss is seen as a failure rather than the death of a commitment and partnership” (1988: 34). Depression describes both an affective state characterized by feelings of sadness, futility, hopelessness and discouragement and by a change in motoric characterized by lassitude and energy. Thus, even the most routine task can seem monumental for the depressed person”(Ibid 1988: 35). It is a known fact that individuals who suffer from depression are usually pessimistic in thought and that decision making is burdensome. Rosenstock says that, “tension and anxiety can mount to the point that the felt depression feelings appear secondary. This stage may even manifest in the form of querulousness and fractiousness where virtually anything is perceived as adversarial” (1988: 36). The author agrees with Craig when he says that, “while being emotional, depression is not a single emotion but a complex emotional state that consists of a mixture of anxiety, anger, guilt, and shame. These are the emotions of struggle that fight against accepting the finality of the loss. The anxiety is about loss of identity, the anger is about resentment that nothing was done to save the situation, the guilt results from feeling that we may be responsible for the failure and loss, and the shame arises from the sense that the loss reflects badly on our character”

(2004: 175). Thus, depression carries with it a variety of emotions which are destructive on the good health of the individual who is trapped in it.

#### **4.4.1.3 ANGER**

Just as the denial of divorce is often a longer process, anger in divorce is usually far stronger than the death of a partner. Rosenstock points out that, “anger as an emotion, serves to catalyze other feelings and work through the pain of abandonment and rejection.” She further says that, “it provides the avenue to safely inspect the remnants of feelings so brutalized in the divorce process- buffering the zone of depression, yet still knowing all of the sadness” (1988: 48). However, there are many positive aspects to anger. Just the fact that one recognizes its existence, means that anger is no longer too threatening to be permitted into conscious awareness (Rosenstock 1988: 48). Emery says that, “anger is perhaps the most complicated emotion for former partners to understand and harness in a divorce; it is undoubtedly the most destructive for children.” He further says, “there are obvious, real-life reasons for the reign of anger: the betrayal of an affair; the threat of losing the children, the loss of a life dreamed about and work hard for” (2004: 30). Researchers agree that there are in fact many emotional reasons why anger keeps working its way to the forefront of the relationship between former

partners; who, in fact, should find a way to parent. Anger is part of four more complicated processes. These processes are:

- Grieving;
- Dealing with hurt;
- Responding to threat;
- And paradoxically, hanging onto loved ones (Ibid 2004: 31).

Rosenstock is correct when she says, “being afraid to display anger and aggression is in fact a denial of the whole divorce process” (1988: 49).

Therefore, with the anger appropriately focused, divorced couples no longer need to bend under the heavy weight of repressed feelings. In agreeing with Rosenstock, I realize that, “the recognition and expression of anger allows for the release of many pent up emotions, including jealousy, bitterness, hurt, and qualified happiness” (1988: 50). Thus, when the source of anger is identified and catharsis (release of strong feelings such as anger) is in progress, there is new energy available for understanding the consequences of the divorce phenomenon on those who must endure it.

#### **4.4.1.4 RESOLUTION**

The stage of resolution in the divorce process is accompanied by a sense of acceptance of the reality of the loss. Thus, there is a natural sense of letting go.

When the above takes place, Rosenstock exclaims that, “the stage of resolution is now in full force.” She further says, “denial is past history.

Depression is only a remnant. Anger is no longer an enemy but rather a recurrent emotion with readily recognizable triggers. Coping skills are sufficiently well honed to deal with the challenges extant” (1988: 63). This stage of resolution is often mistaken for recovery by those in its throes (Ibid: 83). However, what is actually true is that the resolution stage allows the divorced person with opportunities to express self-awareness, self-discovery, and self-fulfillment in the midst of the traumatic onslaught of divorce.

Rosenstock is correct when she says that, “this penultimate stage of the journey through divorce focuses on gaining something substantive out of momentary bursts of depression and angry feelings (1988: 82). Thus, the divorced person feels that there is greater consciousness and acceptance of what it means to live independently in the face of the destruction of the divorce phenomenon.

#### **4.4.1.5 RECOVERY**

The stage of recovery is the final stage in the divorce process and it carries the work of resolution through to triumph. Rosenstock says that, “a triumph presents a full person in full control of senses and faculties, equipped and ready to any challenge: My destiny is mine.” She further says, “Survival is no longer an issue. The divorce is no longer the vector of absolute adversity (1988: 87). Thus, there is a renewed sense of energy and positivity on the side the divorced person, despite the anguish of the divorce. The recovery stage tells of a person who is at peace with him/herself, despite the loss of the marriage bond. The renascence of the self in the stage of recovery includes self-affirmation as a social and sexual being (Rosenstock 1988: 107). Recovery, therefore, inevitably leads to the realization that one is a complete and capable human being with a long-lasting and unshakable faith in yourself and the future.

The researcher has helped in guiding the reader through the different stages that occur during the divorce process. Understanding these stages can be very helpful, especially for the clergy (pastoral families) when they are confronted by the devastating onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. Each of the above stages brings its own characteristics and challenges to the fore. By identifying with these stages in your own divorce and the feelings contained within each,

the divorced person may find consolation, meaning, reassurance, hope and direction what may otherwise seem entangled by fear and failure.

#### **4.5 THE EFFECT OF DIVORCE ON PASTORAL FAMILIES**

Of all the stressful events in life, divorce is one of the most painful occurrences; not only to the couple involved but to each member of the family unit. It is, therefore, a known fact that pastoral (clergy) divorce causes a severe emotional damage to the pastor and his/her family, as well as congregants. In addition to the agonizing personal pain of a marital break-up, there is also the public humiliation of having the pastor's leadership abilities challenged before the church (denomination and local parish) and the community. Mace reports that "a pastor who develops problems in his (sic) family life is significantly downgraded." He further says that, "a pastor involved in separation or divorce, apart from a few very atypical exceptions, plummets to the lowest level of public esteem" (1980: 53). In addition, divorce as a stressful event may also lead to feelings of rejection and failure within the pastoral family. Thus, the impact of divorce on pastoral (clergy) families becomes a dual tragedy personally and professionally, causing severe emotional damage to the pastor and his/her family. Wimberley is correct when he says that, "clergy families are not immune to the ravage and trauma of unforeseen events (such as divorce) and the difficult task of managing our lives in their aftermath" (2007: 135).

Diedrick is right when she says that, “divorce causes pain through the loss of intimacy; it shatters one’s daily routine, and causes one to emphasize one’s loneliness” (1991: 34). Thus, the loss of a one intimate and loving partner, and possible loss of contact with children, can be devastating. It is also a known fact that one party, in many instances the non-initiator of the divorce, is likely to feel rejected and doomed. Albrecht is, thus, correct when he says that, “the most common cause of stress after divorce was a feeling of personal failure” (1980: 59-58). It is, thus, comprehensible that such feelings of failure inevitably lead to low self-esteem in the pastoral family and affect them negatively. Along with the loss of a one’s intimate partner, as mentioned earlier, and possibly of self-esteem, divorce involves the creation of a new life-style, new roles, and thus, changes in self-concept. Diedrick is correct when she says that, “adjustment to a new life is more difficult than the loss of the marriage” (1991: 35). Divorce has a negative and devastating effect on the normal function of the pastoral family. It is apparent that clergy and their families are not immune to the human tragedies that infect us all. Divorce is one of those catastrophic happenings which brings, “deep anguish, long-lasting emotional trauma, and memory flash backs” to the pastoral family in the aftermath of the divorce (Wimberley 2007: 136). Divorce, as a traumatic occurrence, leaves deep

psychological effects on those who must endure it; especially to the pastoral family.

#### **4.5.1 THE IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN**

Children caught in the divorce process undergo a lot of trauma. It is, thus, obvious that the divorce phenomenon manifest itself as a major crisis in the lives of children. Emery reports that, “experts on divorce tend to fall into one of two camps.” He further says, “There are those who contend that divorce inevitably and invariably devastates children and sets the stage for a life time of emotional problems, period. In the other camp are those experts who assert that divorce is one of life’s challenges that ultimately has little substantial emotional impact on most children” (2004: 62). However, “the truth is much more complex and subtly shaded than either extreme” (Ibid 2004: 62). The fact is that many children are pained greatly by the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon on their family life. When divorce enters a family a constellation of emotions surface. Feelings of abandonment rage, psychological pain, and enormous anger are but a few of the overwhelming feelings children experience. Thus, divorce has the potential to damage children badly and the parsonage is no exception. Emery points out four painful divorce stresses which impact negatively on children’s daily routine. The following needs our attention:

- Divorce introduces huge changes into the lives of most children: direct involvement in parental conflict, economic hardship, changes in residence and school, and damaged parent-child relationships, because of lost contact, lost love, and lost parental authority;
- Divorce is a great loss for most children. The centre of their world is shattered through their family been torn apart. As a result, children must not only grieve, but they must also search for a new foothold as they battle to come to grasp with the loss of security, they once had in their lives;
- Divorce increases the risk for psychological, social, and academic problems among children. This increased risk is a legitimate concern for children, parents and the community;
- Divorce is painful. Despite one's fervent desire to protect one's children, one cannot prevent them from feeling the pain of divorce. No matter how hard one tries, no matter how much one sacrifices, no matter what one may want, no matter what one is willing to do, this is going to hurt one's children (2004: 63-64).

The following statistic, pertaining to the impact of divorce on children, needs our attention. Emery compared children who are in stable marriages with those whose parents are divorcing. The outcome was that they are:

- Twice as likely to see a mental health professional;
- Up to twice as likely to have problems managing their behavior;
- Perhaps 1.25 to 1.5 times as likely to have problems with depressed moods;
- Twice as likely to drop out of high school before graduation;
- Up to 1.25 to 1.5 times more likely to get divorced (2004: 64).

Thus, from the above, we can clearly deduce that for most children, divorce is bad news in itself and impacts negatively on them.

#### **4.5.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN**

Trauma, which masquerade as stress and anguish, is in many instances the first to manifest in a child, causing them to feel despair, hopeless, and lost. Emery is correct when he says that, “divorce is correlated with more psychological problems among children” (2004: 65). When the child suffers such devastating personal loss resulting from the divorce of his/her parents, depression and the erosion of self-esteem, is usually the first to occur. Van Wyk is quite correct

when he says that, “in many instances the child blames him/herself for the demise of the family union and is overwhelmed with grief” (1984: 33-34). It is a well known fact that the traumatic experience of divorce for children can produce oppressive feelings such as:

- Sadness;
- Recurring anger;
- Self-blame;
- And, even violence (2007: 41-70, Willemse 2008: 43-45).

The above clearly indicates the negative effect that the divorce phenomenon has on the personhood of children. Children exposed to the painful occurrence of divorce are inevitably deeply affected in their inner being. It is also worth sharing with the reader a national study conducted by the department of Health and Human Services in the United States of America in the late 1990’s, which has concluded that:

- Children under the age of 18 suffer 40% more anxiety as a result of their parents’ divorce, and the rate is doubled if the parents divorce multiple times;

- After a child is diagnosed with depression, there is a fifty percent chance of recurrence if the problem is not ameliorated; and,
- Three quarters of children under the age of 18 who were polled stated they would rather live with a relative than endure the stress and trauma or another divorce or combative parents (<http://www.Divorce Source, Inc, 2007>).

Many children who are exposed to divorce grapple alone with related overpowering thoughts and feelings. Pastoral counseling as a therapeutic means is an effective way of affording assistance and help to children who are traumatized by divorce; especially those within a pastoral marital setting. Here, the role of the local parish and; especially the denomination of the Volkskerk van Afrika (Peoples Church of Africa), as custodian of pastoral care, is critical. Taylor's shepherding method is therapeutic, here. He admonishes the church when he says, "a shepherd guide his (sic) flock to good pastures and save resting places. He leads the sheep and provide for all their needs, seeing that they have water to drink and keep the shepherd fold in good repair. He guides his flock and protects it from wild animals, or thieves, or other danger, even when this involves danger to the shepherd self. He searches for any sheep that strays or gets lost, until it is found, even if it means going into difficult and dangerous places, however, dark the night or bad the weather. He knows and

names each sheep individually, so that they too know his voice and follow when he calls. He carefully tends any sheep that are sick or weak, and takes special care of nurturing ewes and young lambs” (1995: 9). Thus, being a shepherd means taking a deep personal interest in the welfare of the flock, as a whole, and looking after each individual in the sheepfold. Here, the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) is the shepherd and the children of the pastoral family is the flock that needs care and nurture all the time. They are the young lambs which needs special care; especially during the stressful occurrence of divorce. In the next section, the author analyzes scriptural passages about divorce.

#### **4.6 THE STANCE OF THE BIBLE ON DIVORCE**

The Bible is full of scriptures referring to divorce. In the book of Matthew, we see how Jesus holds matrimony and the sacredness thereof in the highest regard (19: 5). However, despite this high regard on marriage, the bill of divorcement exist (Matt 19: 7). According to the New Testament, it was never God’s intention for marriage. However, it is written, “Because your hearts were hard” (Matt 9: 8a). Thus, this law was brought in because of the stubbornness of the human heart. The following scriptures refer to divorce and need our attention:

- Deuteronomy 24: 1-4;

- Matthew 19: 2-9, 5: 31-32;
- Mark 10: 2-9;
- 1 Corinthians: 7: 10-17;

Kitching is correct when he says that, “it is important to understand, despite certain pronouncements about divorce, that divorce must not be seen as part of creation.” Thielicke in Kitching is of the opinion that, “divorce is not in line with God’s will for marriage.” He, further, says: “Here it is clear that the legal ordinance of divorce is a mark of ‘this *aeon*’; it is definitely not an order of creation, but rather-like all law-a regulation of necessity for the fallen world in the sense of the Noachic Covenant” (2008: 34). In the next paragraphs, the author will discuss the above Biblical statements, pertaining to divorce, in order for the reader to have a better grasp of the issue at hand.

#### **4.6.1 Deuteronomy 24: 1-4**

“If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her

again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.”

This part of scripture allows for the discourse on divorce. However, this portion of scripture creates the impression that Moses permitted, instituted and instructed the principle of divorce. According to Deuteronomy 24 such practices did exist within the Jewish society. The Bible Dictionary is correct when it says that, “Moses did not command divorce, but regulated an existing practice) (1975: 790). Möller is of the opinion that “Deuteronomy 24: 1-4 specific deals with the whole question of divorce, although it is not the pinnacle point of verse 1-4” (1990: 1). Botha connects when he says that, “ons het hier met ‘n voorwaarde sin te doen met die protasis verse 1-3 en die apodosis (actual regulation) verse 4” (2004: 59-60). Möller is of the opinion that, “The stipulation pertaining to divorce as set out by Moses in Deuteronomium 24: 1-4 was only a civil regulation to promote respect and justness among people, and that divorce was never the intention of God for marriage” (2000: 147). Up to today, it is still the intention of the Old Testament to protect and honour the marital bond as an exclusive lifelong and covenantal agreement between husband and wife.

#### **4.6.1.2 THE DIVORCE LETTER**

A man was permitted to divorce his wife and to give her a divorce letter, if he found that she had committed an indecent act. However, this letter would indemnify her if she wishes to remarry someone else. What is true of Deuteronomy 24, however, is that divorce was not permissible? However, for the reader to have a good grasp of the above, the author wants to clarify the preconditions which pertain to the divorce letter.

According to Adams, divorce was only final when:

- There was a written bill of divorce (Dt 24:1ff, Jer 3: 8 etc). This bill of divorce (lit. of “cutting off”) had to be;
  - a) Written;
  - b) In a form that said it clearly;
- The bill must be served (Dt 24: 1). The one who divorced another had to;
  - a) Deliver the bill personally;
  - b) Put the bill in the others party hand;
- The person who is being divorced must be sent home (Dt 24: 1).

Adams sheds more light on the giving of the divorce letter when he, further, says: “if this actually approximates the Biblical bill of divorce”, then the following points may be noted:

- The bill of divorce was a formal, public document, signed by witnesses, and intended to stand as a legal record for any necessary future issues;
- The stated intention of the divorce bill was not only to effect the permanent separation of the divorce parties, and thereby relieve them from the obligations of the covenant of Companionship, but also to expressly give the divorcee the freedom to remarry;
- The bill itself – not just writings about divorce – plainly uses a variety of terms to express the concept of divorce (divorce, expel, separate) as do Greek divorces in the New Testament, and the Biblical writings themselves (1981: 28-30).

Möller in Botha explains the requirements or stipulations whereby a husband was permitted to lawfully divorce his/her spouse. He says:

- There must be an adequate reason;
- There probably should be a public official to carry out a legal function;
- A proper legal document was prepared and presented to the wife;
- The man sends his wife away (2004: 61).

From the above, it is clear that the Old Testament law does not forbid a woman to get married after being divorced. The second marriage is not seen as

some form of adultery, otherwise she would be stoned. The only restriction was that she could not return to her former husband (Möller 2001: 3).

#### **4.6.1.3 MATTHEW 5: 31-32 & MATTHEW 19: 2-9**

Matthew 5 reads: “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce. ‘ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery” (31-32).

Matthew 19 reads: “Some Pharisees came to Him to test Him. They asked, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason? 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? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joint together, let man (sic) not separate. Why then, they asked, did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away? Jesus replied, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife except, for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery” (2-9).

Möller in Botha reports as follows, concerning the above portion of scriptures. He says, “both the above verses refer to the bill of divorce in Deuteronomy 24: 1-4. A bill did not approve or recommend divorce and remarriage, but regulated it as something already practiced by the Israelites” (2004: 71).

Schweizer says that, “Jesus found Himself in conflict with the Pharisees who were trying to trap Him.” He further says, “Their question is now a typical question of how to interpret the law” (1978: 381). By the first century CE, the law of divorce based on Deuteronomy 24: 1-4 was interpreted in many ways:

- The Shammai school taught that a man could divorce his wife if she committed adultery;
- The Hillel school taught that the man could divorce the wife if he found anything disagreeable in her (Douglas (et al): 790 and Barkley W 1975: 239).

However, Jesus did not fall in the trap by choosing either side, but pointed out the sin of divorce. The model of marriage presented in Genesis 1: 27 and Genesis 2: 24 clearly outline God’s original plan and purpose for marriage (Craig 2004: 23). Divorce was never God’s idea from the beginning of the creation of human beings. Therefore, Jesus’ rejection of divorce on the basis of Gen 1: 27 and Gen 2: 24. Louw says that, “scriptures as found in Mat 5: 22,

Mat 19: 9 and Mt 5: 43-48 confirms that Jesus wants to normalize marriage” (2008: 35). What is obvious is that Jesus is against the notion of validating divorce, but He rather seeks to restore marriage to its original ideal of love and companionship.

#### **4.6.1.4 MARK 10: 1-9**

Mark reads: “He left that place and went to the region of Judea and between the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around Him; and, as was His custom, He again taught them. Some Pharisees came, and to test Him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her. “ But Jesus said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate them” (1-9).

In this portion of the scripture, Jesus again refers back to the bill of divorce as set out in Deuteronomy 24: 1-4. Barkley is correct when he says that, “this law was being laid down for a definite situation and being in no sense permanently binding.” He further says, “It was Jesus view that in the very nature of things

marriage was a permanency which indissolubly united two people in such a way that the bond could never be broken by any human laws and regulations. It was his belief that in the very constitution of the universe marriage is meant to be an absolute permanency and unity, and no Mosaic regulation dealing with temporary situation could alter that” (19 75: 240). Craig raises an interesting topic, which the author aligns with, when he says, “Jesus endorsed God’s original concept of marriage and instructed individuals and couples to embrace a proper understanding of its nature and purpose” (2004: 20). However, because of the advent of sin, many people are still divorcing today. This onslaught of the divorce phenomenon has finally entered the parsonage with devastating consequences for the pastor and his/her family.

In the next section, the author will be looking at trauma in the aftermath of divorce.

## **4.7 TRAUMA**

In this section the author is going to explore ways in which divorce can lead to traumatic experiences. However, the reader must first understand how researchers define the term trauma. Several authors articulates trauma in the following way.

### **4.7.1 SOME DEFINITIONS OF TRAUMA**

4.7.1.2 Jones in Sandhu submits that trauma, when defined diagnostically, “is when a person experience, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved or threatened death or serious injury or threat to the physical integrity of self or others” (2000: 379).

4.7.1.3 Mitchell on the other hand defines trauma, “as a wound which caused physical injury by some direct external force or psychological injury caused by some extreme emotional assault” (1983: 814).

4.7.1.4 Perlman and McCann defines trauma, “as sudden, unexpected and non-normative, exceeds the individual’s perceived ability to meet demands, and disrupts the individual’s frame of reference and other central psychological needs and related schemas” (1990: 10).

4.7.1.5 Krystal says, “trauma is a paralyzed, overwhelmed state, with immobilization, withdrawal, possible de-personalization, evidence of disorganization” (1987: 90).

4.7.1.6 Means reports that, “trauma can be defined as something sudden, violent, brutal or catastrophic which touches a person’s life

in some intimate way. It comes from the Greek word “wound”, which can be on physical, emotional psychological, relational and spiritual level. These levels are interconnected; therefore trauma affects one’s entire life. (2000: 3).

4.7.1.7 While Figly says that, “trauma is an emotional state of discomfort and stress resulting from memories of an extraordinary, catastrophic experience which shattered the survivor’s sense of invulnerability to harm” (1985: 18).

#### **4.7.1.8 THE AUTHORS OWN DEFINITION OF TRAUMA**

The author defines trauma as a sudden, devastating occurrence produced violently in on a person and results in physical and psychological conditions. It is an abnormal event which can happen to any person, anywhere.

One of the most prevalent causes of trauma, in our post-modern age, is the divorce phenomenon. Divorce not only affect the adults involved, but also the children; leaving behind seeds of issues that will, in the end, blossom into fully-fledged problems, e.g., anger, psychological pain, and feelings of abandonment. When divorce hits the family, the traumatic impact of the trauma increases on those who must endure it. The emotional and mental trauma pertaining to the divorce is bound to affect the personal lives of both

couples. Be it the family; and especially children. The divorced individuals' coping skills are never sufficient to handle their trauma. Roos is of the opinion that, "trauma causes feelings of helplessness which divorcees also experience" (2002: 1-10). The trauma of divorce can inevitably leave one or both couples, and the children in a state of depression. It is known facts that from here on, many other psychological symptoms begin to occur. This is the experience of many divorced individuals and it does not exempt the pastoral family. The word trauma, as discussed earlier, means "wound" caused by an external person and/or force, and cause injury to the body, soul and mind, and produces discomfort.

The author of this thesis believes that in order for the reader to have a better grasp of the term trauma, we must explain what physical trauma is and what psychic trauma is. These concepts will help to clarify the impact of trauma among couples.

- Physical trauma is an injury or wound produced violently, and the resulting physical and psychological condition.
- Psychic trauma is an emotional shocking experience which has lasting psychic effect, usually categorized as post traumatic stress disorder (Kaplan 1985: 25-27).

A person, who has been exposed to a traumatic event such as divorce, has in fact been traumatized. If the person does not get help in dealing with the overpowering emotions regarding the trauma, they may develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Divorce traumatizes individuals who are exposed to it. Brown and others define PTSD as follows: here PTSD is classified as an anxiety disorder and consist of a constellation of symptoms associated with exposure to extraordinary traumatic events such as:

- Childhood physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Adulthood sexual assault;
- Combat;
- Natural and technical disasters (1984: 51-59).

Post traumatic stress disorder is a complex health condition that can develop in response to a traumatic experience, a life threatening episode or an extremely distressing situation that causes a person to feel intense fear, horror or a sense of helplessness. PTSD can cause severe problems at home or at work (Ibid: 58-59).

Traumatic events such as divorce produce profound (deep) and lasting changes such as psychological and emotional changes on the people who must endure the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. Researchers agree that traumatic

events cut the normally integrated functions of the human body from one another. When this event happens, certain symptoms which traumatize survivors emerge:

- Emotions without clear memory of the event;
- Remembering everything in detail but without emotions;
- The traumatized victim may find him/herself in a constant state of vigilance;
- Irritable without knowing why (Herman 1997: 16).

Disconnection of individuals from their emotions is common in couples who endure the stressful event of divorce. Individuals exposed to the traumatic impact of divorce have, in many instances, a tendency to disconnect from their source and take on a life of their own. This reaction is a common reaction to trauma and is called “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder” (Barnett 1997: 217).

#### **4.7.2 SYMPTOMS OF POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Today, in our post-modern age, it is a known fact that divorced couples suffer from PTSD. As a result, they are not able to relate properly to family, friends and society. They are constantly affected with stress.

Herman highlights three categories of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among trauma survivors.

The following issues emerge:

- Hyperarousal;
- Intrusion;
- Constriction (1995: 35).

The author will explore these issues fully in the following paragraphs.

#### **4.7.2.1 HYPERAROUSAL**

Hyperarousal is the persistent expectation of danger. After a traumatic event, the body goes on permanent alert as if the danger might return at any moment. Psychological arousal continues unabated. Sandhu is correct when he says that, “Hyperarousal is one of the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the traumatized individual startles easily, reacts irritable to small provocations, and sleeps poorly” (2000: 379-381). This kind of observation has been made in Chapter one about the divorce of the author’s colleague and friend, and how our denomination dealt with this minister without realizing what sort of trauma the minister and his family had endured due to their divorce. It is common knowledge that traumatized individuals such as

divorcees suffer from a combination of generalized anxiety symptoms and other fears. It is for this reason that Herman points out that, “they do not have a normal “baseline” level of alert but relaxed attention. Instead, they have an elevated baseline of arousal: their bodies are always on the alert for danger” (1997: 36).

Thus, individuals who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder take longer to fall asleep, are more sensitive to noise, and awaken more frequently during the night than ordinary people. Traumatic events such as divorce, “appear to recondition the human nervous system” (See Hampton 1993: 103).

The above has become a pattern of life for the clergy who got divorced in our denomination. Thus, he (and his family) needs pastoral care.

#### **4.7.2.2 INTRUSION**

Herman asserts that intrusion “reflects the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment” (1997: 35). Thus, long after the event of danger is past, traumatized individuals re-live the event as though it were continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume the normal course of their lives, for the trauma repeatedly interrupts. The traumatized individual feels as if time stops at the moment of the trauma. “The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness,

both as flash backs during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep” (Ibid 1997: 37). Small, insignificant reminders can also provoke traumatic memories. Thus, the traumatized individual is re-traumatized by it.

Herman argues that, “re-living a traumatic event may offer an opportunity for mastery, but most traumatized individuals do not consciously seek or welcome the opportunity. Rather they dread and fear it. Re-living a traumatic experience, whether in the form of intrusive memories, dreams, or actions, carries with it the emotional intensity of the original event” (1997: 42).

Individuals who are exposed to the onslaught of divorce, especially within a pastoral family, have a tendency to avoid their traumatic experiences because of their prominent roles in society. This is clearly evident in the ordained life of the author’s colleague. For many years, he remains within the Church’s role but without being able to offer ministry to any congregation. Not one congregation deemed him fit to lead them. What also struck the author is that he never demonstrated the courage to confront the leadership of our denomination concerning his situation. Maybe he regards himself as inferior to the rest of the other ministers. However, it is only when one confronts ones situation that true healing is possible. Let us now analyze the next symptom, which affects individuals who are traumatized by the divorce phenomenon; especially when care is not provided.

#### **4.7.2.3      CONSTRICTION**

Constriction reflects the numbing response of surrender. When a trauma victim is completely powerless, and any form of resistance is futile, the traumatized individual may go into a state of surrender. Herman is correct when he says that, “the system of self-defense shuts down entirely. The helpless person escapes from the situation not by action in the real world, but rather by altering the state of consciousness” (1997: 42). Constriction or numbing of trauma victims is the third symptom of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Traumatic events continue to register in the conscious of the individual, but it is as though these experiences have been disconnected from ordinary meaning of life. When individuals who are traumatized by the divorce phenomenon avoid situations pertaining to trauma, or avoid any initiative that might involve future planning and risk, they deprive themselves of new opportunities for successful coping that make less intense the effect of the traumatic experience. Herman points out that, “constrictive symptoms, though they may represent an attempt to defend against overwhelming emotional states, exact a high price for whatever protection they afford. They narrow and

deplete the quality of life and ultimately perpetuate the effects of the traumatic event” (1997: 47).

It is, thus, important that individuals who are traumatized by divorce seek pastoral and therapeutic help in order to deal with those overwhelming traumatic experiences. This will become a challenge to pastors who are not equipped to deal with such problems. This dissertation is about divorce within a pastoral family in the Volkskerk Van Africa (PCA). Thus, when the denomination, per se, has no pastoral committee which could be of help to the pastoral family therapeutically, the only way of dealing with this issue is then to refer them to therapists.

#### **4.7.3           TRAUMATIC EVENTS CALLS INTO QUESTION BASIC HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

It is a known fact that apart from those individuals exposed to traumatic events, there are many more people such as the community, who are directly and indirectly traumatized by the divorce phenomenon, especially of the clergy who cares for them, pastorally. The people who are directly or indirectly traumatized, “are the people who care about those who have experienced violence or some type of trauma” (Sandhu 2000: 379). Herman is correct when he says that, “traumatic events breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed

and sustain in relation to others. They undermine the belief system that gives meaning to human experience.” He further says, “They violate the victim’s faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis” (1997: 51).

This section is dealing with people who are traumatized by the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. As a result of the above, the reader will understand that when the safe foundation of human beings is shattered, such as their faith in God or their belief in the divine being, traumatized individuals feel abandoned, isolated, alone and feel lost in the very system (home) that is supposed to care and protect them. Thus, people who are traumatized by divorce, especially in a pastoral family, feel that the home which is supposed to be a safe place, is the very place that violates their dignity and their human rights. Thus, they are double traumatized. Herman is right when he says that, “when trust is lost, traumatized victims feel they belong more to the dead than to the living” (1997: 52). The effect of this process affects many divorced couples for years. The divorce has finally left deep emotional and psychological scars on them.

#### **4.7.4 TRAUMATIC EVENTS VIOLATES THE AUTONOMY OF THE SELF**

A secure sense of connection with caring others is the foundation of personality development. Thus, when this connection is shattered, the

traumatized individual loses the basic sense of self. Traumatic events, therefore, have a harmful effect on those individuals who must endure it and in the end shattered the self image of the person traumatized. Sanders is thus, correct when he says that, “traumatic experiences frequently disrupt fundamental assumptions of personal security, self worth and world order” (1993: 260-270).

Thus, when the foundation of care is shattered, the traumatized individual loses the basic worth of self. It is common knowledge that traumatic events violate and rob trauma victims from their God-given self worth. Herman is correct when he points out that, “traumatic events violate the autonomy of the person at the level of basic bodily integrity.” He further says, “The body is invaded, injured, defiled and the person’s point of view count for nothing” (1997: 53). Divorce, just as violence, destroys the belief that people can be themselves in relation to others. Individuals traumatized by divorce suffer damage on the basic structure of the self.

Divorced persons not only lose their trust in themselves but that their self-esteem is assaulted by the experience of humiliation, guilt and helplessness. The safe environment is compromised by intense and contradictory feelings of need and fear. Their God-given identity, as described in Genesis 1, prior to the

trauma event, is destroyed by the divorce phenomenon. The trauma of divorce has the potential to kill the value in people exposed to the traumatic event.

The above challenges the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa) to come up with a methodology of caring for its clergy. The main question to ask is: who cares for the caregiver of the Volkskerk van Afrika?

#### **4.7.5 SOCIAL SUPPORT INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE TRAUMATIC MOMENT**

Because traumatic life events invariably cause damage to relationships, people in the divorced social world have the power to influence the eventual outcome of the trauma on friends, extended family, and colleagues. Thus, the community, as a support base, plays vital role and have the power to mitigate the impact of the traumatic moment. Herman is correct when he points out that, "in the immediate aftermath of the trauma, rebuilding of some minimal form of trust is the primary task" (1997: 61). Thus, assurance of safety and protection are of great importance. The community is the sphere where traumatized individuals can feel safe because they provide a safe space and are in the forefront in challenging negative events such as the divorce phenomenon. When traumatized individuals experience support from the wider community, it help to ease the impact of the trauma event. However, what is also true, is when the support from the community is absent, the

damage can be even greater. Herman says that “in the aftermath of traumatic life events, survivors are highly vulnerable. Their sense of self has been shattered.” He further says, “That sense can be rebuilt only as it was built initially, in connection with others” (1997: 61). Researchers agree that emotional support that traumatized individuals seek from close family, their communities and close friends, takes different forms and changes during the course of the trauma. Thus, safety and protection are of the great importance to trauma victims. Herman articulates this idea by saying that, “once a sense of basic safety has been established, the survivor needs the help of others in rebuilding a positive view of the self. The regulation of intimacy and aggression disrupted by the trauma must be restored” (1997: 63). It is, therefore, important for the community, especially the church community in which the traumatized individual socialize, that there is a sense of tolerance and understanding towards the person who wants to establish a sense of self control. It is, thus, of vital importance that those individuals who are traumatized by divorce need help from others in order to mourn their losses. They need to be helped through support structures that will help them rebuild their lives.

#### **4.7.6 THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY**

People exposed to trauma can never carry the traumatic event alone. Herman says that, “sharing the traumatic experience with others is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of a meaningful world” (1997: 70). The community, as co-helpers, can share the traumatic experience with those traumatized by it. The community can once again help foster a sense of meaning in this world again for the trauma individual. Herman hits the nail on the head when he says that, “the response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma” (1997: 70). This is where Nick’s Pollard theory of positive deconstruction could be helpful pertaining to the role of the community. (1997: 44). According to Pollard, positive deconstruction is positive because it is done in a positive way in order to replace one thing with something better. Nick’s theory for praxis helps those in pastoral care understand that individuals exposed to trauma, are still God’s people who needs help to become whole again. Positive deconstruction helps the community to understand the impact of trauma on the lives of those who must endure it. It helps the community to enter into the lives of traumatized individuals from a positive perspective. Thus, helping those exposed to traumatic events; especially the pastoral family in a positive and constructive manner. Herman highlights two factors that are of the utmost importance in

the restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community.

- The community must first acknowledge the traumatic event;
- There must be some form of community action (1997: 70).

Once the community recognized that a person has been harmed, the community must take action to assign responsibility in whatever form and repair the injury. Thus, the role of the community pertaining to traumatic events such as divorce, is of vital importance. This process challenges the Volkskerk community, which failed to care for their own clergy and family. Hence, the author is searching for ways of reconstructing a caring structure for the church.

## **5. CHAPTER FIVE: CLERGY WHO DIVORCED**

### **5.1 A CASE STUDY OF VOLKSKERK VAN AFRIKA (PEOPLE'S CHURCH OF AFRICA) CLERGY WHO DIVORCED.**

#### **5.1.1 THE STORY OF THE BENFRED FAMILY (PSEUDOMYN/FICTIOUS FAMILY NAME ATTACHED TO THE TRUE EXPERIENCE)**

As mentioned in the introduction, the author grew up on a farm where communities were closely knitted together. The author was raised in a family which believed that married life is sacred and ordained by God. The author was also taught that whoever was married in our community should be highly revered because they are the custodians of married life. The Benfred family was no exception on the rule. This family was one of the model families and was widely respected in our denomination. Today, I am also an ordained minister but still respect this particular minister and his ex-wife because they are human beings, made in the image of God (Imago Dei).

The experience of this family is shared so that the reader may understand why the Volkskerk failed to minister to them. The Volkskerk church's conservative theology makes it impossible to care for the clergy family. For many years, there was this perfect picture of this perfect pastoral family. Throughout their married life of many years, there was never any sign of trouble or distress

evident in their marriage as it seems from the outside. Here was a pastoral family on face value happily married without any sign of marital problems. Then the news broke: The Benfred family has filed for divorce. The researcher could not understand what was happening to this once happy pastoral family which was held in high esteem by members of the author's denomination. The reader will be aware how the expectation of the churches on pastoral families made people to react negatively instead of responding to their pastoral needs. The researcher could not understand this phenomenon. To the researcher, divorce was an unnatural phenomenon which impacts negatively on family life. Clergy are supposed to be the reflection of God and should be the protectors of married life. Conservative theology plays a role in getting to the heart of the problem. The author was brought up with these kinds of values. This is how the researcher and community understand the sacredness of matrimony. The researcher and the whole denomination were struck helpless by this divorce and thus, entered the stage of denial. The researcher realizes now that they were not only in shock but they were actually traumatized by the divorce of one of their senior ministers. What complicated the matter further was that there was no policy in place to deal with the matter at hand. Looking back now, the author realizes how traumatic this occurrence has been for the pastor and his family. Not only had the divorce surrounded them with great shock,

they were traumatized by this tragic act of divorce, which left them helpless.

What actually struck the author's mum, is the fact that our denomination has formulated a "policy" to deal with this particular minister without realizing what sort of trauma this minister and his family has endured due to the divorce, and with little knowledge and concern for the conditions which give rise for the divorce in the first place. What is actually sad is that the church, which the author belongs to, has no pastoral manual guide pertaining to divorce; especially clergy (pastoral) divorce. After a couple of years of suspension, the author's denomination suddenly decided to bring this particular minister back to the ordained ministry without any pastoral care guidance in place. It has never prepared the local parishes of our denomination beforehand of the return of this particular minister to the fulltime ordain ministry. However, the misunderstanding towards divorce, particularly the divorce of this minister and his family, is still evident in our denomination. The author has for a long time observed the pain and humiliation this minister has endured at the hands of many of our congregation members. No congregation in our denomination deems him fit to be called to serve them. Now at retirement age and with no congregation and no income, the author realizes that the divorce has severely damaged this minister as well as his family. What

bothers the author the most is that our denomination is completely helpless pertaining to divorce and this particular incident is no exception.

This tragic story of the Benfred family has haunted me ever since it occurred and now I am researching on it in order to find some ways to care for individuals, especially pastoral families, in order to deal and endure the unnatural onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. I am also sure it had an impact in moving me to study the science of Practical Theology which deals, particularly, with such issues.

### **5.1.2 AUTHOR'S REFLECTION ON ABOVE STORY**

In looking back on this tragic experience of my colleague and friend, it sends shivers through my body now that I really understand the impact thereof.

Practical theology, as a science, has helped me to understand and unpacked the impact of a traumatic event such divorce. I realize now how traumatic divorce would have been for this particular pastoral family. Barnett helps us to understand the impact of post traumatic stress disorder on individuals when she says, "post traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder produced by an extremely stressful event" (1997: 217). Every time when there is a discussion concerning the past divorce of my colleague, the pain of that occurrence is written all over his face. It is as if he relives the stressful event of his past divorce all over again. However, the author realized how this story confronts

the church's pastoral capabilities. The question is thus, how does the church (denomination) care for pastoral families who were traumatized by the onslaught of divorce? When tracing back this tragic occurrence of years ago, the author realized how important shepherding as a method of caring is of great need to the church. The author realized that through the happening of divorce, the affected pastoral family as well as the local parish, need therapy and guidance from the denomination-as the shepherd of the flock. The author is deeply aware of the onslaught of divorce in our post-modern age. Divorce does not only tear families apart but has infiltrated the parsonage with devastating consequences. Wimberley is correct when he says that, "clergy families are not immune to the ravage and trauma of unseen events (such as divorce) and the difficult task of managing our lives in their aftermath" (2007: 135). Thus, individuals exposed and traumatized by divorce need a therapist who cares; especially the family. The emphasis in this chapter is on the pastoral family, the local parish and the denomination as a whole. Pastoral families who go through divorce are in special need of pastoral care. Gerkin rightly says that, "pastoral care needs to have as its primary focus the care of all God's people through the ups and downs of everyday life, the engendering of caring environments within which all people can grow and develop to their fullest potential" (1997: 88). Mageza connects beautifully when he says that,

“pastoral care means to ‘accompany’, to ‘walk with’, to ‘travel with’” (2005: 219). Thus, many people need the help and support of an understanding and caring shepherd, who is prepared to accompany, to walk with them, to travel with them in time of distress or whatever challenge, and the assurance that God is with them in their time of desolation. In this instance, the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) is actually the shepherd and the pastoral family is the people who need nurture in their time of trauma. The author is aware that they have failed from this role. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the great importance of the comforting shepherd when he proclaims in 2 Corinthians that, “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God” (1: 3-4). When confronted with experiences such as our story under discussion, Gerkin is valuable when he says that, “the pastor is the caring shepherd of the flock of Christ” (1997: 80). This is, indeed, a great expectation from the V.V.A (P.C.A) as a denomination, especially during tragic times. It is important to note that people need care and nurture all the time; especially individuals exposed to the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. When looking back, the author realized the devastating impact that this particular incident had on the pastor per se, not to mention the wife,

children, local congregation and the community at large. The author realizes now that there was no pastoral intervention from the church and, in the end, the family was further traumatized. As colleagues, we had observed the unfolding of the whole event, but it was in fact a new problem for us, hence we were paralyzed. The author asked, “Is it because of the lack of information on how to shepherd in instances of divorce?” This act clearly shows that Practical Theology, as a specialized science, and more so that trauma counseling is of the utmost importance towards shepherding the flock of Christ. The caring shepherd (denomination) needs to understand the background to each situation if the church is to effectively help and council those who go through divorce. Gerkin’s shepherding method is helpful because the focus is not only on those who must endure divorce but it also includes the wider family and the community at large. Thus, to care for the traumatized individuals (family), the people affected need a sensitive ear and deep understanding from the denomination per se. When we, as a denomination, listen to these traumatic stories and reflect on them, the church, as shepherd, starts working therapeutically on the experiences of those individuals who are traumatized by divorce; a role the author should have expected from our denomination during the time of the divorce of the pastoral family. Thus, when the denomination, as the caring shepherd, listens to these stories, it starts to

care for the family by being present in their distress. It is for this reason that Taylor says that, “a shepherd guides the flock to good pastures and safe resting places. He (sic) leads the sheep and provide for all their needs, seeing that they have water to drink and keeping the shepherd fold in good repair. He guides his flock and protects it from wild animals, thieves, or other danger, even when this involves danger to the shepherd self” (1995: 9). The author wants to agree with Taylor because he, himself, hails from a village deep in the rural parts of South Africa, in the Southern Cape. The author was a shepherd boy and thus, understands the task of looking after the sheep. To be a shepherd means to take care of the needy and distressed especially families, and in this thesis, the author refers to pastoral families who are on the receiving end of the divorce phenomenon. To be a shepherd of God’s flock, means taking a deep and sincere interest in the welfare of the flock and of each individual sheep in the flock. The pastor, his/her spouse and the family belongs to the sheepfold of God. It is the duty of our denomination to take care of each one in the sheepfold and work with them in such a way that healing occurs. When shepherding people, especially pastoral families traumatized by divorce, it is the denomination’s duty to take special care of all involved; pastoral family, local parish and community where the affected family resides. It is important that the Volkskerk Van Afrika (People’s Church of Africa) creates a community

that will focus on caring for clergy families. This will become a supporting structure of caring for the sheep. Wimberley is, thus, correct when he says that, “our sense of who we are is forged in relationship to God through conversation, not just directly with God but also with friends, family and caring professionals. Whether through the empathy offered through pastoral counseling or caring friends and family, God is present offering God’s grace. And God can be counted on especially during difficult times” (2003: 65).

Wimberley articulates what the author needs to share because Christ, who is ever present in times of pain and suffering, has entrusted the care of His flock to the church and He bids the church, His body, to have the same interest that He has manifested. This is the sacred responsibility of the charge that He has entrusted to them. God has commanded the church to strengthen the weak, to revive the fainting, and to shield the sheep from devouring wolves; especially pastoral families who are traumatized by divorce. The pastoral family needs gentle, caring and understanding support and encouragement as they go through the crisis of coming to grips with their situation. Collins sees the church and its Christian life as, “not as a solo experience, marked by rugged individualism and make it on your own mentality, but as the central nerve of care” (1993: 197). Thus, when one suffers in the sheepfold, every member of the church carries the suffering together with the family. The above quotation

helps the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) to care for God's flock; especially in cases like our story under discussion. Thus, it includes pastoral therapy and council, which is important to shepherding and leadership in God's vineyard. A caring church is a proactive church which reads between the lines when there are signs of a marriage in trouble. A proactive church will also prevent such traumatic events long before it happens. The church of Christ has been purchased with the blood of Christ, and every shepherd (here the denomination) should realize that the sheep under its care cost an infinite sacrifice. Everyone, especially the pastoral family, should be regarded as priceless worth and the church should be unwearied in its effort to keep them in a healthy condition. Shepherding means taking a deep and personal interest in the wellbeing of all God's people, especially those who must endure the pain of divorce. Jesus rightly says in John that, "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me" (10: 11-14). To save His sheep, Christ laid down His own life, and He points His shepherds to the love thus manifested, as their example. The church of Christ has been

purchased with His blood, and therefore every shepherd should realize that the sheep under his/her care cost an infinite sacrifice. Thus, the denomination of the V.V. (P.C.A) should regard each sheep in the sheepfold as of priceless worth and should be unwearied in its effort to keep them in a healthy, flourishing condition. The church that walks in the footprints of Christ will follow Jesus' self-denying example and constantly labour for the well being of those who suffer because of the divorce phenomenon. If the denomination of the V.V. (P.C.A) sees themselves as true pastoral caregivers, they will be prepared to 'accompany', to 'walk with', to 'travel with' (Mangeza 2005: 291) those individuals who succumb under the heavy burden of divorce.

In the next section, the author will propose a model which will be of help to the V.V.A (P.C.A) when dealing with pastoral (clergy) divorce because, at present, there are no guidelines governing this phenomenon in our denomination.

## **5.2 PROPOSE MODEL OF CARE ON HOW TO HANDLE THE PASTORAL FAMILY WHEN THEY ARE CONFRONTED WITH DIVORCE IN THE VOLKSKERK VAN AFRIKA (PEOPLE'S CHURCH OF AFRICA)**

Because there is no manual on how to handle pastoral divorce in the V.V.A (P.C.A), the author is of the opinion that the following guidelines will be of

great help to our denomination, when it is confronted with the issue of clergy divorce.

- The particular minister to present his/her marital case to the district Superintendent (Chairperson). This person must be someone with a high degree of integrity, honesty and can keep confidentiality;
- The Superintendent convenes a pastoral discussion with the pastor and his/her spouse in order to ascertain him/herself of the background of the situation at hand;
- From here, the case is reported to the pastoral committee which deals with incidences such as divorce. However, these committee members must also be people of a high degree of integrity and should understand the divorce process and the traumatic impact thereof. This committee should consist of not more than seven members (balanced of laity and clergy, women included);
- The first priority of this committee should be to work towards offering healing between those individuals involved. However, if the situation is irreconcilable, the denomination should

compassionately journey with the couple and help them to come to grips with the imminent divorce. As mentioned earlier, there was no pastoral intervention program in place pertaining to the divorce of my colleague and friend. Thus, pastoral care for the pastor, his/her family and the local church, is of the utmost importance. This committee should report to Presbytery and could have a synod committee;

- It is also important that the denomination put guidelines in place, in case of a suspension, so that the particular minister could know how long the suspension would last. If there is a suspension, the committee must ensure that spiritual guidance is assigned to the pastor and his/her family in order to journey with them in their time of distress. There must also be a clear set of rules, which spells out how and when the minister will be back in the ordained ministry of the church. It is also worth mentioning that the author's denomination has no standard manual pertaining to disciplinary laws and thus, this manual needs attention in order to be able to offer pastoral care, especially to pastoral families;

- The committee must also spell out clearly that after the completion of suspension, the particular minister is ready to return to the ordained ministry. However, all parishes in the denomination should be prepared, beforehand, of the minister's return to make it easy for him/her to take up his/her duty again;
- Workshops on how to strengthen marriage and keep it in a healthy and flourishing way, should be a regular phenomenon in our church; especially for new ministers who want to enter the ordained ministry through the V.V.A (P.C.A);
- Marriage enrichment retreats for pastors and their families should be an annual programme on the denomination's yearly calendar.

This model can be expanded into a standard manual which deal specifically with marriage, divorce and remarriage in the VVA (PCA) after an in-depth study of the manuals of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa and the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa guidelines, which will be examined and set out in chapter six. The section: Pastoral (clergy) divorce: What is the responsibility of the denomination also in above mentioned chapter, will

further enhance the establishment of this committee for the author's denomination.

### **5.3 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the author has presented a story pertaining to the traumatic experience of divorce within a pastoral family in the Volkskerk van Afrika (People's Church of Africa). The author has given the reader some insight into the traumatic experience of a particular family.

The author has further guided the reader into the art of pastoral care and how the denomination of the V.V.A (P.C.A) can apply this method in the lives of those exposed to the divorce phenomenon. The chapter highlighted the fact that the denomination of the V.V. (P.C.A) is, in fact, the shepherd pastor and it emphasizes the important role the church plays in the lives of the people of God. The author has highlighted the fact that the pastoral family belongs to the family of God.

The author has also proposed a model of care to the V.V.A (P.C.A) on how to handle the pastoral family when they are confronted with the onslaught of divorce. Pastoral care models are suggested as a way of dealing with caring ministry within the VVA (PCA).

In the next chapter, the author will explore and discuss other denominations pastoral care manuals, in order to incorporate some of their elements in order to create a model for the V.V.A (P.C.A). The author will also make recommendations to denominational officials in order to give them insight and resources to make their marriages as happy and healthy as possible. The author also discusses what the responsibility of the denomination is, when divorce strikes the parsonage. The author will also suggest how to handle divorce in pastoral families. Recruitment and training will also feature prominently, in this chapter. The author also discusses the journey forward for the clergy and how to keep love alive.

## **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 comes down 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.

## **7. CONCLUSION TO STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 RETROSPECT**

This section gives a summary of the important points discussed in this dissertation. The aim of the author is to; further, tabulate the conclusion he has reached pertaining pastoral family divorce in the Volkskerk van Afrika (Peoples Church of Africa).

#### **7.1.2 OUTLINE**

The central focus of this study was on the traumatic experience of divorce within a church pastoral family in the VVA (PCA). The intention of the author was to find ways of understanding why this phenomenon happens in a pastoral family. This research was carried out because the author has observed the painful struggle and trauma of a colleague and friend due to the impact of the divorce phenomenon. The emphasis of this research was on the role of the denomination of the VVA (PCA) when divorce strikes the parsonage and how the church, as custodian of pastoral care can therapeutically help those individuals especially pastoral families.

In Chapter two, the author has helped the reader understand the science of methodology and how this discipline functions in pastoral care. In this

dissertation, the methods of Gerkin, Taylor and Collins were used to emphasize the high calling of the shepherding model. The author has guided the reader into the art of the pastoral care model, and how the denomination of the VVA (PCA), as shepherd/ pastor, can apply this model, therapeutically, on those individuals, especially church pastoral families who were traumatized by the unnatural phenomenon of divorce.

In Chapter three, the author has helped the reader understand the sacredness of marriage. The author has also helped the reader understand the different marriage customs in the world today and how, if at all, we can learn from them. However, the main emphasis was on how we understand marriage in the Christian tradition. The following aspects have been emphasized. They are:

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

This Chapter also discussed marriage after the Fall and the redemption thereof. It also discussed the sociological ideas about marriage and family life.

This Chapter has in addition looked at some critical opinions of marriage and

discussed the impact of patriachalism on marriage and family life. Factors which give rise to conflict and tension within the minister's family and how pastoral families can strengthen their marriages have been discussed.

In Chapter Four, the author has helped the reader understand the impact of divorce on pastoral families and how, in the aftermath, it leads to trauma. The author has also discussed the common causes which lead to divorce in marriage and highlighted divorce as a comprehensive loss on those who endure it. The author helped the reader understand the stages in the divorce process and looked into the effect of divorce on pastoral families. The impact of divorce on children was also discussed in this dissertation. The author guided the reader in the psychological effect of divorce on children. The stance of the Bible pertaining to divorce was touched on. The author has also looked at trauma in the aftermath of the divorce phenomenon. The author has also guided the reader into the psychological aspects pertaining to trauma and how the community can be of positive help towards traumatized individuals, especially church pastoral families who have to endure the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon.

Chapter Five of this dissertation contains a sad anecdote of how divorce has traumatized the author's colleague and friend. This anecdote has brought the author to the realization of how the church's pastoral capabilities were

confronted by this tragic occurrence. In looking back on this painful divorce which took place years ago, the author realized how important the shepherding tool, as a method, is in the hands of the church. This anecdote has also exposed the author to the pain of the pastor and his family, not to mention the congregation, and the community, when faced with such a traumatic experience such as the divorce phenomenon. This Chapter has also proposed guidelines to the author's denomination on how to handle pastoral divorce whenever it happens or occurs. As a result of the above story, the author became aware of the lack of pastoral care by the VVA (PCA) towards its clergy, hence this study.

The closing Chapter of this dissertation suggests the creation of a pastoral care manual for the VVA (PCA) which will specifically deal with marriage, divorce, remarriage whenever it occurs. The author, specifically, looked at other denominations on how they deal with divorce and how the denomination of the VVA (PCA) can learn from them. The Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa were used as a model. This Chapter also called for the recruitment and training of the clergy; and how ministers can journey forward despite the pressures of the ordained ministry. The author has also looked at the aspect of how individuals can keep love alive. The author moved the lens of healing in the direction of the denomination and

how they can give direct services to clergy marriages and, in doing so, foster stronger and healthy families within our church. The church, being the body of Christ, should be a caring community which should bring healing and spiritual wholeness to those individuals affected by the onslaught of the divorce phenomenon. It is anticipated that this research will in due course stimulate further research on trauma in the clergy in South Africa.

## **7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The author recommends the following to the denomination of the VVA (PCA) in order to enhance their pastoral capabilities.

- That the author's denomination compile a pastoral manual which deals specifically with marriage, divorce, remarriage and other issues in order to avoid a situation like the one discussed in chapter five of this dissertation;
- That the denomination ascertain itself of what is its responsibility when divorce strikes the parsonage;
- That the denomination re-examine its recruitment and training criteria of pastors for the ordained ministry;
- That the denomination introduce, as a matter of urgency, retreats for clergy which is in fact a marriage enrichment seminar;

- This marriage enrichment retreat should be a quarterly event and should be compulsory for all pastors and their families;
- That the denomination provides direct services to clergy marriages; which could help with prevention and early detection of dysfunction in pastoral families;

That the denomination, as a custodian of pastoral care, takes up its God given calling and become the shepherd pastor to pastoral families.

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