

THE ART OF MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE IN THE SEVENTH-  
DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

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DECLARATION

Student number **34936386**

I declare that THE ART OF MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE IN THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## ABSTRACT

Making a successful Christian marriage is a major challenge that faces the Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA Church) of Malawi. The colonial government of Nyasaland (Malawi) created weak marriages, promoting high divorce rates by its own practices during its era, which have remained to this day. The failure of secular marriages endangers the success of SDA Christian marriages.

Little has been done by the Church to educate its members concerning successful Christian marriage. This study focuses on educating the church to deal with the problems that cause marriage failure in the SDA Church. The Malawi government is another tool that the church could use to address marriage failure. I have used the Bible, and scientific research methods to suggest workable solutions for Christian marriage.

KEY WORDS: Marriage, oath of covenant, companionship, loves, SDA Church, adultery, education, leaving, cleaving, becoming one flesh, Practical Theology, marriage seminars, communication, temperament, premarital counseling.

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Florence Tembo, the ever-charming best friend. Through her encouragement, I have been able to pursue my educational dreams. May this document serve as one of the precious tools in building our marriage relationship. Florence, may you become sweeter every day.

## CHAPTER 1: MARRIAGE FAILURE IN THE SDA CHURCH OF MALAWI

### 1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MARRIAGE FAILURE IN MALAWI

This empirical research was done in Malawi. The Malawi nation has a population of 9,933,868 (Malawi Population and Housing Census, 1998) with a growth rate of 2.0 % annually. The 1988 census indicated that from 3,742,162 people that were married, a total of 321,910 were divorced or separated. Some of the divorcees probably were SDA Church members. These figures indicate that 9% of the married people were divorced or separated. According to some of the information collected from the Regional court offices in Malawi, (Appendix 2), half of the cases judged per month are marriages, which end in divorce. Some marriages get divorced in homes without appearing in courts. The southern region has the highest divorce rate per year. The central region is second while the northern region ranks third.

There are more than thirty tribes in Malawi. These tribes have their own culture, which also contributes to marriage failure through inter-marriage.

Two types of marriages are practiced in Malawi. Monogamy and polygamy are practiced in both matrimonial and patrimonial societies respectively. In the matrimonial (Kraft 2003: 294) marriages, dowry is not usually paid to the parents' bride in most societies. The husband is expected to abandon his home and stay with his wife at her home in the matrimonial system. In the patrimonial system (Kraft 2003: 294), the wife stays with her husband at his home and in most cases dowry is paid to the bride's parents.

The history of marriage failure in Malawi can be traced to two time periods. These times are pre-colonial and post-colonial. From pre-colonial times a lot of changes have taken place in all the societies of Malawi. Morris (quoted by Kaler 2001: 530) says: "Marriage in Malawi is a fragile institution and divorce is common... and all the women I know well in Malawi have had children by several different husbands or partners". Morris (quoted by Kaler 2001:531) continues to speak of marriage in Malawi that "marriage as an institution is presently in a crisis situation."

Several factors contribute to the crises within marriages in Malawi. One of these is the absence of the bride's dowry in matrimonial societies to seal the marriages. The second factor has to do with cultural ideologies when someone marries outside of his/her tribe (Kaler 2001: 531). During the colonial days, the Blantyre Native Association among the many Native Associations advocated the payment of Lobola (dowry) to the colonial government. To them (Native Associations) Lobola formed an ideal marriage; the payment of Lobola was an indication that the man takes full responsibility for the wife even though he has not bought her (Chanock 1998: 204-205). The process of modernization has created towns and cities in Malawi. People move from rural areas to urban and live individualized lives, creating new marriages, which do not require dowry. Modernization of the towns has disrupted communalism as a Malawian way of life. Young people as well as the old ones are no longer under the control of village communalism. "These changes make it hard to live in traditional ways and there is a pull between the old beliefs and ... the new ways of living."(Brooks and Yandila 1987: 13).

In the new societies created by modernization, the economy has been totally altered. In the olden days before colonization, people depended upon hunting and farming. Today money is the commodity for survival. The one, who has money, has control over the other regardless of gender (Brooks and Yandila 1987: 13,15).

Malawi is now infiltrated by new ideas, such as women liberation movements that challenge the normal treatment of women (Brooks and Yandila 1987:15). A combination of old beliefs of the status of women and the new one of equality has influenced marriage both negatively and positively.

The missionaries started education in Malawi followed by colonialists. Education has lifted the status of women in the society to a higher level. Men cannot dominate educated women anymore. Men are now afraid of educated women (Waruta 2000: 110-111). Traditional values no longer control women in today's societies.

Education has brought a new form of marriage based on romantic love and courtship between two persons of the opposite sex. The romantic marriage is a western form of marriage. Romantic marriage has replaced “the traditional foundations of communal customs and the moral integrity of the individuals and families entering into marriage relationship” (Waruta 2000: 110).

Education “takes young people away from their homes for many years.” (Brooks and Yandila 1987: 15). As they get educated the ‘young people’ are not bound by norms and customs of the villages. They interact with people from different societies such as fellow students, lecturers and professors. This interaction changes the behavior of educated folks, which becomes different from the village customs that govern any society.

The missionaries also emphasized monogamous marriage rather than the common polygamous marriages in Malawi. This emphasis created nuclear families that became individualistic. Many of the women found themselves in a situation they could not be married because men became scarce due to monogamous relationships. The unmarried women fell in the trap of illicit relationships with married men (Waruta 2000:109).

Waruta (2000:109) says: “Sex scandals within the Christian community are common... Prostitution and teenage pregnancies continue to escalate in areas supposedly permeated by Christianity, demonstrating the general failure of the new Christian sexual morality.”

Traditional values have lost hold on the Malawian people. Many of the people are embracing “the modern life-style.” (Waruta 2000: 112).

The arrival of slave trade and Zulu invaders in Malawi from South Africa “pulled asunder strong family structures that existed before the Mfecane and before colonialism.”( Kaler 2001:532). The people of Malawi experienced wars from the Zulus and slave traders were politically disorganized. The indigenous people were forced by the situation or by the Zulus to abandon their customs that governed marriage.

Commercial sex is common in Malawi (Kaler 2001:533). The culture of sexual immorality is developing among Malawians. The Malawians in the early days of colonialism blamed the British administration for the way they treated cases of adultery. Adultery was a capital offence in Malawi before colonialism. The culprits of adultery suffered capital punishment in which they were hanged, burned in the presence of the public, and their body parts mutilated. The harsh punishment prevented people from engaging in sexual immorality. The colonial administration changed the capital punishment to civil case. The British administrators punished the offenders of adultery by flogging, two years imprisonment and a fine of money. The consequence of this was an increase in adultery, which has become worse today contributing to the escalation of HIV/AIDS in Malawi (Kaler 2001:533, Chanock 1998:196).

The colonial government blamed the matrimonial societies for higher divorce rate. It was observed that men were not willing to work hard for their wives because they were afraid that they could be chased away by their in-laws and wives anytime. In matrimonial societies, marriage is unstable and divorce is frequent since 1940 (Kaler 2001:530, 531).

Today, young people enter into marriage informally and casually. They are not seriously concerned about their marriages. Parents are sometimes not involved in the marriage arrangements. The boy and girl enter into marriage without involving the community (Kaler 2001:537-539).

The migrant labor in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), hut tax demanded by the colonial government, as well as famines have contributed to marriage failure in Malawi. Husbands tend to stay abroad longer. In their absence, they may not be sending money to their wives. As a result women may turn to prostitution to earn a living (Kaler 2001: 539, 543). The above marriage crises have also influenced the SDA Church.

Colonialism, “the influence of western missionary Christianity ... education, the new socio-economic realities, and the increased mobility and urbanization” (Waruta 2000: 108) have greatly affected and altered contemporary marriage in Malawi. Thus many of

the traditional values have been eroded. All the factors that have been discussed above, so far; have affected the SDA Church in one way or another.

## 1.2 MARRIAGE FAILURE IN THE SDA CHURCH OF MALAWI

This topic deals with the SDA church theology of marriage. The SDA Church had a membership of 237,519 at the end of September, 2004 (Chilunga 2004). Monogamy is the only accepted form of marriage in the Church. This type of marriage is allowed to be practiced in the matrimonial and patrimonial systems in the SDA Church. According to the SDA Church Theology, “In lands where polygamy is lawful, the Christian church often finds it difficult to apply the principle of monogamy. However, even in these countries, monogamy is held as a marital ideal.”(Rock 2000:728). In the Malawian case, only the monogamous marriage is allowed. Anyone who marries the second wife, has his name removed from the church membership. Those in polygamous marriages are allowed to attend the church, but cannot be baptized or be accepted as full-fledged members.

The SDA Church was started in Malawi by the American missionaries. The first missionaries advocated monogamous marriages.

Marriage failure leads to divorce if remedies fail to restore the damaged marriage. Thus, cultural forces and the colonial background have contributed to the formation of shaky marriages in the church. Many marriages in the Church are fractured.

The church allows a person to remarry for the following three reasons. The first one is when his/her spouse has died. The second reason is when one spouse commits adultery. Lastly, the spouse would be allowed to remarry when he she/he has been abandoned by the unbelieving spouse. The church encourages that earnest endeavors be made so that the spouses reconcile. Spouses have to be taught to forgive and restore each other (Seventh Day Adventist Church Manual 2005:204). The church is silent on how to deal with the erring spouse that is found HIV positive.



The church teaches that the marriage of Adam and Eve was intended to be a model “for all future marriages.” (Seventh Day Adventist Church Manual 2005:204). The Manual however does not explain what was to be a pattern for future marriages. The major patterns advised by the church is monogamous, a covenant relationship of love.

To a certain extent, I would say that the marriage of Adam and Eve fails to be a pattern for future marriages because firstly they did not have in-laws. Secondly, their environment was not the same as today. For example there were no political or government regulations that interfered with their marriage. They had not experienced colonialism, economic hardships, current liberation movements etc, as contemporary marriages. Marriages that came after Adam and Eve’s and modern marriages have some challenges that are similar. However, there are some challenges that modern marriages face in Malawi and the church, which Adam and Eve did not face.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

From observation in SDA Churches during camp meetings, where I was either one of the guest speakers or attendants, many couples came for counseling. Some of these couples seem to be in good regular standing with the SDA church. Couples who have problems in their relationships fail to relate effectively to God, the church, fellow believers, etc. Married couples with marital problems become harsh, gloomy, prostitutes and may encounter psychological problems. Some continue to stay in the marriage because of their children. They are married theoretically but do not relate to each other as husband and wife. This problem is growing rather than declining. There was a time when church members feared to be divorced, but today some take it as normal. Fractured marriages heavily affect the church negatively. The couples affected feel as if God is no longer taking control of their situations and doubt His existence. Nominalism creeps up in the affected family. The door to temptations by Satan is then opened (1 Cor. 7:5). What happens in the current marriage may be transferred to the next generations. Children reared in such a home where there is much bickering also may often reproduce the same type of homes. A divorced couple may have children who are potential divorcees. It has been said: “Children of divorced parents are likely to experience divorce themselves”

(Balswick and Balswick 1989:264). Van Pelt (1982:162) says: “Most likely the pattern you have already learned, you will carry into your own marriage. If you were raised in a family of constant bickering between parents, brothers and sisters, you will probably carry the same behavior over to your relationship”.

Broken marriages destroy good reputation and bring shame to the church. Outsiders claim that the SDA Church does not teach her members well in issues related to marriage. Those who want to join the church are repelled because they think the SDA Church does not contribute positively to marriage relationships.

Fractured marriages have existed in the SDA Church in Malawi for a long period of time. The creeping in of the western influences in education, human rights and media in Malawi worsen the growth of marriage failure. Some church members pretend to have no marriage problems whereas in fact, behind the doors, there is chaos.

Van Pelt (1982:20-21) has lamented the failure of educational institutions and churches and their negligence to prepare the “young people” for their marriages. According to her, “the main reason” for marriage failure is “lack of preparation” (Van Pelt 1982:20-21). This “lack of preparation” means lack of training of the “young people” concerning marriage. If the church and educational institutions are failing to prepare the youth for their marriages, what can be done to help them fulfill their duty to teach the young people about marriage? Just blaming them without giving them advice cannot resolve the problem.

Couples who experience marriage failure could also be blamed for failing to successfully manage their marriages. However, many of these couples may not have knowledge about how to run their marriages. If the SDA Church and its institutions do not teach them then there is no way out for them apart from groping in ignorance which may lead to marriage failure. There is a need to provide alternative teaching for church members about marriage.

The major problem in this research is to find and suggest ways of maintaining and enriching marriages in the SDA Church. Four functions have been devised to accomplish tasks. Firstly, it is to identify and discuss factors that contribute to marriage fracture and failure in the SDA Church. Secondly, I will give a comprehensive description of the traditional view of marriage. Thirdly, I will make recommendations to solve the prevailing problems in marriage. Lastly, I will suggest an example of a Christian model of marriage.

#### 1.4 HYPOTHESIS

Better marriage education and focused counseling will contribute to a reduction of marriage failure in the SDA Church in Malawi.

#### 1.5 METHODOLOGY

I will use three methods in this research. Firstly, in this research, I will use an exploratory descriptive study. Secondly, I will use the first method with a personal anecdotal-illustrative method. Thirdly, I will do a survey as part of this research study. Lastly, I will operate in the “second world” described by Mouton (2001:138). This world is called a “world of science and scientific research” to inquire and systematize about marriage (Mouton 2001:138). These methods will help me to tie together many of the themes that will be discussed. There will be an exploration of different kinds of marriages to formulate a Christian model.

#### 1.6 LIMITATIONS

Since I am dealing with marriage related to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, I needed many books from the authors that belong to the church. It has not been easy for me to find such books written on SDA marriage.

#### 1.7 DELIMITATIONS

“Practically all Seventh-Day Adventist beliefs are held by one or more Christian groups” (Knight e.d. 2003: 21). Many of the views on marriage of the SDA Church are similar to

those of some Christian churches. I have used books, which are similar to the beliefs of the SDA Church on marriage.

#### 1.8 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher aims at creating an awareness of how marriages can be maintained and enriched in the SDA Church. This dissertation will become a tool for pastors, scholars, members of the SDA Church and others who do not belong to the SDA Church. Various people will be enlightened by various issues discussed in the dissertation. They will be guided on how to counsel people in different types of marriages. Those contemplating marriage will have a reservoir of knowledge to draw for successful marriages.

The research study is also a personal enrichment in knowledge and in my marriage. As a minister, I am confronted with couples that need counseling on marriage issues. With the knowledge gained in this research I will be able to minister to married and unmarried couples effectively.

This dissertation will provide resource material for marriage. It will alleviate the scarcity of marriage books.

#### 1.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed how the traditional marriage in Malawi had been disrupted by western education, missionaries, colonialism, the Zulu invaders, and the economic migration to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). These factors have heavily affected the traditional marriage in Malawi, producing high levels of fornication, adultery, commercial sex and divorce.

The changes brought to the traditional marriage through modernization, have negatively affected the SDA Church marriages. The marriage problems that the SDA Church members have affect their relationship with Christianity and their faith in God. The marriage problems discussed above create a negative image of the SDA Church to the

non-believers that the church wants to win to its fold. It is the hypothesis of this dissertation that education and more focused counseling could produce better marriages.

The approach to this research study has been identified. It has been formulated as the exploratory approach together with personal anecdotal-illustration.

The scarcity of books, the failure of the SDA Church and its educational institutions in teaching the people has been discussed. Needless to say, therefore, that this study will be an important documentation for marriage maintenance in the SDA Church.

## CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH OF MARRIAGE FAILURE AS PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

### 2.1 DEFINING PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Practical Theology is one of the fields of theological study. It is that part of theology that concerns itself with this event- the encounter between God and humanity- and particularly with the role of human beings in this encounter (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:6). Other fields of study in theology such as New Testament (NT) and the Old Testament (OT) concentrate on the text and its correct interpretation by the preacher. The OT and NT focus understands a text whereas the practical theologian aims at knowing “whether the preacher understands the audience and its contexts properly, their experiential and thought worlds, their hopes, fears and experience of God in order that he may communicate the message effectively.” (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:7).

### 2.2 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AS DIALOGUE BETWEEN MARRIAGE COUNSELORS WITH MARRIED COUPLES

There are two groups of dialogue in the theology of marriage, who are marriage counselors and the married couples. Marriage, as a Practical Theology research in this research, engages marriage counselors and married people in practice and dialogue. Practice builds theory and knowledge. This research provides a theory and knowledge which may be put into practice by married people and marriage counselors.

Theology-based marriage means that the principles practiced in marriage should have an origin in Theology. Marriage theology should be transformed into practice while the dialogue takes place with marriage counselors who belong to practical theology.

It is necessary that the Bible, Theology, and social sciences be combined together to form practices that should guide better marriage practices.

### 2.3 APPROACHES IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

In this unit, some of the approaches in Practical Theology will be outlined.

### 2.3.1 THE CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

This approach engages practical theologies that were born as the answer to the problems that people are experiencing. Some of these theologies are Black Theology, which had its origins in South Africa and North America, Liberation Theology which had its origins in Latin America and the Feminist Theology, which had its origins in the United States. Feminist Theology has revolted against many of the practices done by patriarchal or traditional marriage.

These theologies were suspicious that western Theologians interpreted theology to suit their own interests. Hence these theologians decided to formulate their own theology, which could suit their own interests in their own contexts (Bosch 1991:424).

These theologians did not accept their situations of poverty and oppression as legitimate. They engaged themselves to get out of suffering and poverty by doing theology. They were aiming at changing their status in the world (Bosch 1991:424). In this research, the context is the traditional marriage in Malawi.

### 2.3.2 THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

This approach uses the Contextual Approach's methodologies. Practical theologians suggest that everyone living in the community, and not only theologians, should be able to do practical theology. Day by day experiences lived by the people in different communities is the focus of Practical Theology (Poling 1991:186) in this research.

### 2.3.4 THE CONFSSIONAL APPROACH

This approach derives its norms from the Bible. The social sciences are of secondary importance. The services of the church are considered to be central to practical theology. Training of ministers in the Reformed theology is a very important work to be done in this approach of practical theology (Van Wyk 1995: 88).

The praxis of this research is “The art of maintaining a successful marriage in the Seventh Day Adventist Church.” The Confessional Approach to Practical Theology is the approach used in this research. The Bible and social sciences have been used to offer possible solutions to problems identified by empirical research. The solutions from the Bible are in relation to the beliefs and practices of the SDA Church.

Thus, primarily, the Bible and confessions of the church have been integrated with social science perspectives to offer solutions for the art of maintaining a successful marriage.

#### 2.4 CLAIMS OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Firstly, Practical Theology has established itself in the “theory of praxis” ...with *right actions*, with correct way of doing things” (Janson 1982:311). Thereafter, Practical Theology has added to the discipline the concern for “the knowledge of *procedural rules*” (Janson 1982:311). Schleiermacher thought that philosophy and theological history should be used as a reservoir of knowledge to be sought in Practical Theological application. Philosophy and theology were the sources of the academic studies for Schleiermacher (Heitink 1993:23, 27-28). The time it became a university discipline, Practical Theology concerned itself with the practice of the theories it taught.

Secondly, Practical Theology claims itself as a science. “To be a science and to be scientific, it must have its own object of study, its own method, its own theory, all which studied and developed, researched and theorized”. This is refraining from “merely oiling the church machinery and having more to do with it” (Janson 1982:312).

Thirdly, Practical Theology claimed itself as a theological discipline. To be theological, it must speak about God. The third claim clarifies the activities of Practical Theology that should be concerned with theological issues. In such issues “God’s acts in which man and every dimension of his existence-personal and social, spiritual and physical- are involved” (Janson 1982:322).



Fourthly, after the Second World War, Practical Theology opened doors for Pastoral Counseling as part of the discipline. Psychological methods have been appropriated to enable Pastoral Counseling to be well-established in marriage counseling (Janson 1982:311).

Fifthly, Practical Theology analyses the empirical data that it collects from the research. Practical Theology has to “continually scrutinize and assess the praxis”(Janson 1982:316). It should involve itself in the hermeneutic in the “exposition of the biblical message” (Janson 1982:317). With the additional claims said above, Practical Theology aims to bring relevance of the message and its activities to its communities.

In the issues that involve the society, “Practical Theology cannot remain neutral: it must have a particular interest in society, a political interest - so that here we might as well label Practical Theology ‘political theology” (Janson 1982:319). In political theology, Practical Theology concerns itself with the liberation of the suffering and the oppressed.

## 2.5 TASKS OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

I will outline five tasks of Practical Theology. “The task of practical theology is not to discover the clear and distinct ideas of truth to which communities must conform their lives. Rather the task of practical theology is to discover more adequate ways of articulating the depth, richness, and possibilities of life as they are found in concrete communities” (Poling and Miller 1985).

Firstly, at this stage, there is a focus “visional or metaphoric” (Browning 1987:42). The focus of the first stage is on the development of faith in members. Developing good practices is also important for the faith of church members. The church structures are made in such a way that their praxis result in the development of their faith.

Secondly, this stage is the obligatory level, which centers on moral development. At this stage there should be an internalization of values. The target is to transform the individuals into the community of faith (Browning 1987:94).

Thirdly, there is a tendency of needs. The focus here is the development of emotions. The “emotional development is the subject pole and faith development, the object pole of the self –world interaction or dialectic that marks the nature of experience” (Browning 1987:92, 95).

Fourthly, the context plays a very important role in the development of the ego. The cognitive process in learning plays a very important role. Browning (1987:95-96) says, “At level 4, knowledge of a sociological, ecological, or economic kind about our contexts is more properly informational than the kinds of knowledge required at the three higher levels of character formation”.

Lastly, the fifth task is called “Rule-Role” which is also called “Rule-Role Development”. When we reach “the last level, we learn roles and concrete rules most-easily when we actually enact them” (Browning 1987:92, 96).

These five tasks of practical theology are not exhaustive. However, they should be integrated. They should become “the primary goal of theological education within the Seminary to educate practical theological thinkers and actors” (Browning 1987:96). Rules should be practiced in a marriage relationship. Each spouse has to know the role that has to be played.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have defined and discussed the approaches of Practical Theology, and lastly, the tasks of Practical Theology.

The Confessional Approach has been chosen as the approach in Practical Theology through which this research will be conducted.

Practical Theology aims at presenting the message to the marriage couples who live in church and society in skillful ways. The skilful presentation will lead to the expected

outcome. The major outcome is the transformation of the society to have faith in God. Lastly, Practical Theology provides methods of how people can practice their faith in the church and in the communities.

The next chapter develops the foundations and characteristics of the biblical Christian marriage. This chapter also gives guidelines for the successful Christian marriage.

## CHAPTER 3: A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN MODEL OF MARRIAGE

In this chapter the researcher will present his own interpretation of the Bible and an interpretation of the Greco-Roman ideas of marriage to develop a model of Christian marriage. The chapter responds to some problems caused by the interference of parents and relatives in marriage such as lack of love and interfaith marriages among others.

### 3.1. BASIC CONCEPTS OF MARRIAGE

#### 3.1.1 PATRIARCHAL MARRIAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the OT, the man in marriage was master or baal and Lord to his wife. Sarah called Abraham 'my master and Lord' (Gen. 18:12). Baal is an "epithet of Yahweh, for baal means master ..." (de Vaux 1978:45). In both the OT and NT, the wife "addressed him, in fact as a slave addressed his master, or a subject to his king" (de Vaux 1978:39). This was a patriarchal marriage in which the husband ruled his wife as father, or a king rules his subjects. The wife was to submit without question. It was blind submission. It was a marriage not on equal basis. The man had more privileges than his wife or wives. He could divorce her, have extramarital affairs, make decisions for the wife, while she could not divorce him (Deut. 24:1, Mark 10:12). Divorces were common among the Jewish people.

Esau, Jacob, and Abraham were all polygamists (Gen. 26:34; 29-30). These polygamous marriages had their own practices. During the time of Moses (Deut. 24), marriages had several practices, which were still carried on in the time of Jesus. One of the Pharisees asked Jesus the validity of all these practices in accordance with God's word (Matt. 19:3-9). To answer the question, Jesus bypassed all the practices done by the Old Testament heroes. He quoted the first monogamous marriage in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve as valid. By so doing He rejected the heroes marriages, that they were not according to God's will of the monogamous marriage established at the beginning of the world. The great Old Testament men such as Abraham, Jacob, and David violated monogamous marriage by marrying many wives. This does not annul the premarital chastity of God's plan that He had designed for human sexuality.

Apart from monogamous marriage, the Bible describes polygamous marriage. The first polygamist mentioned in the Bible was Lameck (Gen. 4:19). Lameck describes his polygamous experience as similar to someone who is wounded (Gen.4: 23). Biblical heroes like King Saul, David and Solomon were polygamists (2 Sam. 3: 2-5; 1 Kings 11:1-8). Israel was “a society that tolerated polygamy, the possession of a large harem was a mark of wealth and power. It was also a luxury that few could afford, and it became a privilege of kings. Saul had at least one concubine ( 2 Sam. 3:7), and elsewhere there is mention of his wives ( 2 Sam. 12:8). Even when David was reigning in Hebron, he already had six wives (2 Sam. 5:13, 2 Sam.19:6), including Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:27). When he fled from Absalom he left ten concubines in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15: 16; 16:21-22; 20:3). According to 2 Sam. ch 11:21, Roboam (Rehoboam) had eighteen wives and sixty concubines” (de Vaux 1978:115). Kraft (2003:306) says: “In Jewish and many traditional societies to this day, however, polygamy is considered legitimate marriage, not adultery”.

### 3.1.2 MARRIAGE IN THE INTER-TESTAMENTAL TIMES

In the intertestamental times imposed a lot of restrictions on married women and virgins. “It was considered preferable for a woman, and especially an unmarried girl, not to go out at all ... It was suitable for women to stay indoors and to live in retirement” (Jeremias 1969:360).

A woman was not allowed to greet a man in public, not even her own relatives. If she did so, she was considered a prostitute. A husband was allowed to divorce her if she was greeted by men in public (Jeremias 1969:360). The same practices were found among the Greco-Roman cultures (Kretzschmar 2001:41). The first century marriage practices were even more radical than the OT, when women or girls were allowed to go outside and even become shepherds (1Song of Solomon 1).

Marriage in the Jewish setting was entered upon without love. “Young people did not normally decide whom they would marry. It was marriage first and love afterwards” (Gower 1987:64).

### 3.1.3 THE GREEK AND ROMAN MARRIAGE

The Greeks and Romans had colonized the Jews. This topic compares the Jewish marriages to the two empires that had colonized them. As far as marriage was concerned, the Jews were extreme compared to Greek and the Roman marriages. The Jews were allowed to divorce their wives anytime they wished. “The Greek ideal (even though not always practiced) was that marriage to one’s wife is for eternity” (Kraft 2003:306). The Romans did not practice polygamous marriages. In most cases “having more than one wife was illegal in the Roman Empire” (Getz 1988:146). Major similarities between Greco-Roman marriages and Jews are: Firstly, men had “authority over women in all matters outside the home and with ultimate authority within the home as well” (Kraft 2003:325). Secondly, women were excluded from the public. Thirdly, women were to serve men rather than men serving them. Lastly, women were regarded as of low status to men.

In the first century, the Greeks and the Romans legally allowed monogamous marriage to be practiced among their people. Moreover, they were allowed to marry concubines (Hastings 1975:8).

### 3.1.4 MARRIAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

Many of the restrictions imposed on marriage in the intertestamental times were the ones that guided marriages in the NT era. The cultural practices of the intertestamental period, regarding the relationship of a man and woman, affected even the early Christian church. For example, women were not counted (Matt. 14:21). They were chattels. Women called their husbands baal, the term used by wives in the OT (de Vaux 1978:45; Eph. 5:22).

The NT teaching of Jesus and Paul advocated a monogamous marriage (Matt.19: 5-6; 1 Cor. 7:3-4; Eph.5:23). The Greek and Roman law that people in their provinces should

marry one wife influenced the monogamous marriage in NT (Hastings 1978:8).

“... Judaism in Jesus’ time... had a very low opinion of women ...”(Jeremias 1969:374). Women were excluded from the public. “The woman’s position in the house corresponded to this seclusion from public life. In their father’s house daughters came behind the sons” (Jeremias 1969: 371). The woman had an inferior status equivalent to a slave. If the husband owes someone, the wife could be sold to pay the debt. The woman was even lower to her own sons born to her. The wife was similar to any property the man owned (Jeremias 1969:363; 371).

Universally, among the Jews, it was held and believed that women were inferior to men (Morris 1990:202). Women were not recruited as disciples in the rabbinic order. The rabbis “did not teach women” (Morris 1990:202). Rabbis regarded the teaching of women to be sin (Morris 1990:202).

In the first century, “it was a scandal for a man to appear in public with a woman. A woman’s word was considered useless in court. It was better to burn a copy of the Torah than to allow a woman to touch it” (Sider 1992: A-86). In other words, women were not used as witnesses among the Jews in the first century.

The spiritual aspect of marriage was denied to a woman. In other words the man was exposed to the spiritual teaching of marriage and other spiritual resources whereas women were not. Their marriages were not a model of the covenant marriage propagated for God’s people.

### 3.1.5 JESUS’ REACTION TO THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN THE FIRST CENTURY

Jesus rejected male prejudice. He “treated women as equals. Jesus appeared with women in public (John 4:27). He allowed a woman that everybody knew was a sinner to wash his feet with tears, wipe them ... kiss and perfume them – all in public!” (Sider 1992:A-86).

This is a model that should be emulated by any man, showing to how he should treat his wife and the other women.

### 3.1. 6 TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE IN MALAWI

In Malawi, many of the people have practiced the traditional marriage which, to a certain extent, is similar to patriarchal marriage. Some Christian churches that advocated for one-man one-wife broke away from the polygamist marriage but still retained the mastership of the husband as in the OT setting. The wife is not equal to the husband. She has to kneel before the husband, exempted from decision making in the marriage etc. Refusing to kneel is counted as disrespect, and the husband is free to divorce her. The durability of the marriage is tied to her if she conforms to traditional values. The traditional or patriarchal marriage fails to meet the standards of the Christian marriage. God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), polygamy (1 Cor. 7:1-2), and inequality (Eph. 5:21) etc. The Bible (Gen. 24; 29) describes dowry that patriarchs practiced but there is no command from God that the husband or wife has to pay it. God did not command Adam to pay dowry for his wife, Eve (Gen. 2:18-24).

Men and women or opposite sexes are not culturally separated from each other as in Greek, Roman and Jewish societies of the first century. They attend school, work, shop together, and attend entertainment together. Such mixture of opposite sexes has its values such as giving chances for the unmarried people in the choice of partners, learning the behavior of the opposite sexes etc. Some negative influences are that the mixture of opposite sexes leads to women abuse, rape, sexual immorality etc because of the proximity of the two sexes.

### 3.1.7 MODERN DEVIATIONS FROM THE LEGAL BIBLE MARRIAGE

In the contemporary world “gays and lesbians are pressing for the recognition of their sexual orientation as acceptable alternatives to heterosexuality within the Christian community” (Rice 1997:127). The Bible says: “Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with a womankind, it is abomination”(Lev. 18:22, Authorized King James Version). Such types of people were surely to be put to death in the OT times (Lev. 20:13). The practice



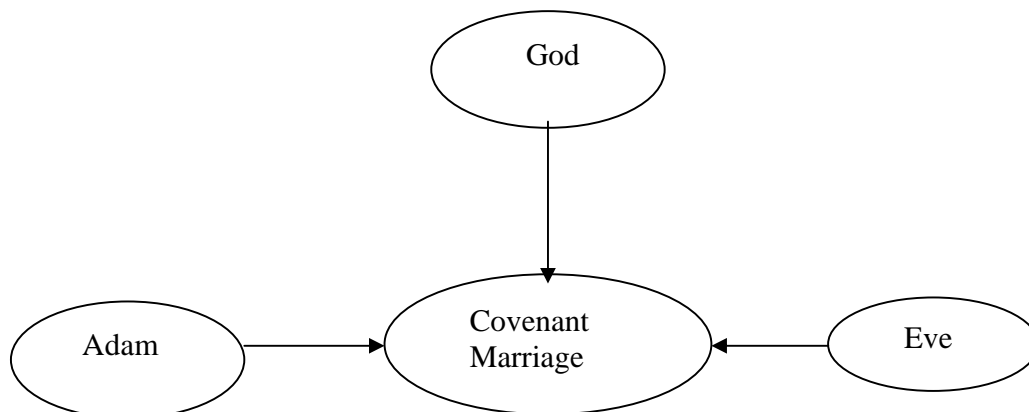
of homosexuality was also present in Sodom (Gen. 19). The NT also condemns the practice (Rom. 1:26; 1 Cor. 6:9). The original institution of marriage in Eden was between opposite sexes (Gen. 2:24-25), not same sexes.

There is also a modern marriage called the open marriage found commonly in the United States. The partners practice self-pleasure and do not submit to each other (Balswick and Balswick 1989: 80). The Bible requires partners in the Christian marriage to submit to each other (Eph. 5:21). They are expected to be concerned with the well-being of each other (Gal. 6:2).

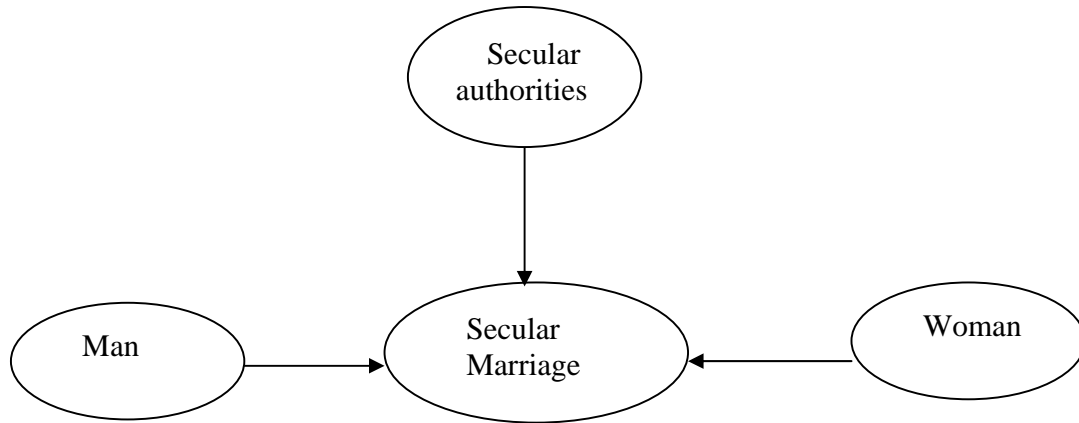
Cohabitation is also found most commonly in the United States. The couples live together before they are officially married. They may even have children out of wedlock. The Bible condemns fornication (Jude 7; 1 Cor. 6:9). The couple should be wedded officially. Vows should be exchanged made to each in the church. At the officially wedded marriage, God Himself becomes the unseen bridegroom (Mal. 2:14).

### 3.1.8 LEGAL CONTRACTS OF MARRIAGE

The first marriage was formed by three persons: God, Adam, and Eve. Any marriage, be it secular or Christian, is contracted by three persons. God guided Adam and Eve's marriage from the beginning. Once God has been displaced, His place is taken over by the devil (Rom. 6:16). Figure 1 describes the marriage of Adam and Eve at the beginning.



The presence of God in a marriage brings positive results but the presence of Satan brings negative results. No marriage can be successful without God. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1 RSV).



The above model is an example of secular marriage.

The signing of a legal contract agreement between the political government or secular authorities and the married couples forms a secular marriage. Anyone that does not belong to Christ forms a secular marriage (Rom. 8:9; 1 John 5:19). The unconverted person is under the direct control of the devil (Rom. 8:9). Political systems of governments are under the control of the devil (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19). The newly married couple is required to abide by the rules of the political government or traditional authority. What regulates the secular marriage are rules and norms of the political government and traditional rules (tribal rules). Thus the government stipulates do's and don'ts for the couple. The society has unwritten rules for the couple. Each couple is obliged to fulfill certain expectations. The success of marriage is determined by whether the couple abides by the stipulations of the political government or the traditional society. The legal contract, which the married couple signs, has no representative who signs on behalf of God. His place is then taken over by the secular authorities of secular marriage.

### 3.1.9 DEFINITION OF THE BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Defining the Christian marriage is not an easy task. Some people think that because they are Christians their marriages are Christian. To them for a marriage to qualify as

Christian, partners should belong to a Christian denomination. The following are some six definitions of a Christian marriage:

Firstly, Wayne Oates from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said: “Marriage is a covenant of responsible love, a fellowship of repentance and forgiveness”(Oates in Wright 1980:6).

Secondly, Dwight Small defines the Christian marriage as a “One new life existent in two persons” (Small in Wright 1980:5).

Thirdly, Elton Trueblood says a Christian marriage is “A system by means of which persons who are sinful and contentious are caught up by a dream and purpose bigger than themselves that they work through the years, in spite of repeated disappointment, to make the dream come true” (Trueblood in Wright 1980:5-6).

Fourthly, David Hubbard who was the Fuller Theological Seminary President in the 1980s, defined Christian marriage as “an institution of sinners ... it finds its fullest glory when sinners see it as God’s way of leading us through His ultimate curriculum and righteousness” (Hubbard in Wright 1980:6).

Fifthly, the Mennonite minister, David Augsburger says: “The Christian understands marriage as a covenant made under God and in the presence of fellow members of the Christian family” (Augsburger in Wright 1980:5).

Lastly, Norman Wright (1980:5) asserts that marriage can be called Christian when the husband and wife have the third person named Jesus in their relationship.

The six definitions given above do not fully define Christian marriage. Wayne Oates (in Wright 1980: 5) and David Augsburger (in Wight 1980:5) use the word covenant as identification for Christian marriage. The Longman Dictionary of English (1995:317) defines covenant as “a formal agreement between two or more people”. This definition

does include God as one of the parties in the covenant. It was an arrangement done between one person or a group and another group. However, “The notion of covenant, then, implies that the parties establish a relationship that is sealed by means of an oath. The oath is binding and involves certain obligations as well as promises of certain blessings” (Kretzschmar 2001:87). The covenant in Christian marriage is made between the Christian husband and wife in the church when the two take oaths before the minister and the congregation. The covenant is made by the two who get married before God who is the third party in the relationship (Flowers and Flowers 2004:41).

The heathens as well as the Israelites had covenants between them. In today’s world, a covenant can be defined as the unchanged memorandum of understanding formulated by two groups or more. To be a Christian covenant, it has to include God as the other party. (I am using the word “covenant” in this research to include an agreement between God, man and the woman). The covenant was used amongst the secular people as well as the chosen people of Israel. Thus a covenant, even though necessary in forming a Christian marriage, is not adequate.

Dwight Small’s (in Wright 1980:5) definition is general in that both unbelievers and Christians, when they have married, form a new life. Small does not define how the oneness of life is formed between the married male and female who have different backgrounds, and their different behavior due to their gender. The two who form a new life have not been identified in the definition of small (in Wright 1980:5). It leaves us to speculate who the two persons might be, such as two homosexuals, man and woman etc.

David Hubbard’s (in Wright 1980:6) definition is also too general because everyone in this planet is a sinner. It does not give us the genders that marry. It can also mean marriages between homosexuals who are also sinners. It does not specify how many spouses a person can marry.

Norman Wright’s (1980) definition is close to the reality. However, it misses two necessary ingredients for a Christian relationship; which are companionship and covenant

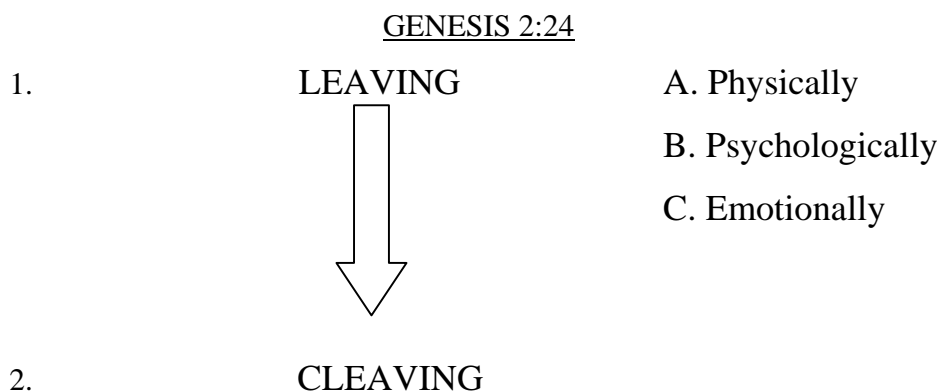
(Proverbs 2:17). The correct definition is that a Christian marriage is a companionship, and covenant relationship between three people: Jesus, the husband, and the wife. This is a “heterosexual monogamy-marriage involving ...one male one female” (Rice 1997:126).

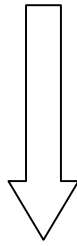
To be called Christian a marriage must be built on Christian values of equality. The marriage that advocates hierarchical values falls short of the Christian level. Christian marriage has to provide “permanent companionship” (Landis 1975:5). “Marriage is a union of two persons on a spiritual level” Jack Rozell (1995:211). Many marriages in the Christian churches propagate traditional values. The man behaves as master that rules with decrees. The wife relates to her husband as the slave does to her master.

God expects spouses to share their lives in common. They have to help each other and meet the needs of each other. They are expected to live in partnership (Kretzschmar 2001:86). The partners should have mutual privileges in the marriage relationship (1 Cor. 7:3-4).

### 3.1.10 THREE STEPS IN BUILDING A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The theory of the three steps in building Christian marriage comes from the Bible (Gen. 2:24). From the beginning of the first marriage, God gave three steps that the marriage has to be built on in order to be successful (Genesis 2:24). These steps are leaving, cleaving, and lastly becoming one flesh. This order should be followed without skipping or alternating. The diagram below illustrates the stages to be followed:





### 3. TWO BECOME ONE FLESH

The goal of Genesis (2:24) is that the husband and wife should become one flesh. One step leads to another. The failure to move from one step (leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh) to another leads to disengaged marriages. Barriers will have been set between the parties. Divorce becomes inevitable.

Norman Wright (1980:9) selects two words in Genesis (2:24) which are “leave and cleave”. Norman Wright (1980:9) says: “The word ‘leave’ means to abandon, forsake, to sever one relationship before establishing another. Unfortunately, many individuals do not make this break. They leave home physically but remain there psychologically. The attachment to home and parents should be replaced with one’s mate. This does not mean disregarding or dishonoring one’s parents, but rather breaking a tie” from one’s parents and assuming the responsibility of caring for the spouse. God expects the two that form a new marriage to enter into the work of destroying the ties that join them tightly to their parents. Just as the midwives do at the labor ward, when a new baby is born, in cutting the umbilical cord, the two should detach or cut any physical connection with their parents.

Norman Wright (1980:9) turns again to the word ‘cleave’. He says it “means to weld, grip or adhere together. When a man “cleaves” to his wife, they become one flesh. The term “one flesh” is a beautiful capsule description of the oneness, completeness and permanence God intended in a marriage relationship. “One flesh” suggests a unique oneness – a total commitment to intimacy in all life together, symbolized by sexual union”. Children cleave to their parents from fertilization in their mother’s womb. Some of them only want to be touched by their mother. They don’t want to be touched by

strangers. Once a stranger touches them, they feel insecure and run to their parents for protection. They cleave to their parents. God wants this cleaving that a child has to her/his own parents to be done to the spouse in marriage. As a child looks to parents for safety, the newly married couples should look to each other for everything else in life.

Mitchell (1980:26) says: “The Biblical purpose of marriage is oneness ... The Hebrew word for ‘one’ used in this verse refers to a composite unity – a unity that consists of more than one person, but that produces a blending of persons into a mysterious and wonderful unity. It literally means the two shall become one person”. Jesus also emphasized the teaching of Genesis (2:24) that they should be leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh.

Leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh should be done in three areas namely physically, psychologically, and emotionally. There is no cleaving if there is no leaving. There is no becoming one flesh if there is no cleaving.

Each spouse has a responsibility to see to it that she/he leaves her/his own parents and family to cleave and become one flesh with the partner. The parents of each of them are put on the top priority of their list before marriage. After marriage, the spouse should take the top priority list occupied by one’s parents. Physically, the newly married spouse should vacate from the parents’ house and establish their own house. They should not relocate in one of the father’s room as the Jewish custom (Jeremias 1969:368). Leaving should make the new family independent from the parent’s house rules and control. They should move their own belongings from the father’s house to their own new home.

The new spouses should know that their former homes were governed by rules and these should not be transferred by each of them to their marriage. They have to sit down together and make rules that will govern them. They are independent from their parents. It is necessary that they should equally contribute to the making of the rules. No one should dominate the other.

The Biblical Law requires children to obey their parents, then secondarily to respect them (Col.3: 20; Ex. 20:13; Eph. 6:1-3). This type of respect and obedience has its own boundary in life. Parents have to be given this respect by a child when he or she is not married. Once in marriage young women are to transfer their first obedience and respect to the spouse (Eph. 5:22,24). Parents deserve high respect more than anyone else with the exception of God. As a child leaves his or her home, she or he should carry obedience and respect and give them to the spouse.

Moving out physically helps the new spouses to have time for each other and avoid interferences from parents, brothers, sisters and relatives who may be offended to see the couple kiss, hug, sleep on each other's bosom etc, in the African culture. The newly married couple should also understand that parents also need good time together to sustain their own love affair between each other. Some acts like kissing, playing etc cannot be easily done in the presence of their children. Leaving the home physically gives benefits to parents and the children's marriage so that they are both free in their own homes.

Strong successful families "Desire to spend time together. Strong families do a lot of things together... Another important point is that these families actively structure their life-styles so that they can spend time together" (Cox 1990:5). Developing a marriage relationship needs enough time together. In spending time together, the couples will have a chance of knowing the needs of each other and devise means of restructuring their lifestyles to meet those particular needs.

It is also important that the new couples leave their homes psychologically and be blended to their spouses. They should cleave to their spouses in their thinking. They should think more of their spouses than any other. Their emotions should accompany the physical leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh. Thus the three aspects (physical, psychological, and emotional) should move hand in hand from stage 1 up to stage 3. None should be left behind at each stage.



Many scholars, as demonstrated above, concern themselves, with interpreting “leaving” mainly from parents. It has been understood that “leaving” in the modern context goes further than simply “leaving” the parents. Adam and Eve did not have fiancées before their marriage, as it is today. The modern context demands that before engagement the prospective married couples must abandon their former spouses. The text (Gen. 2:2-24) would have further demanded that in future the married couple must not have any dealings with their former fiancées. In other words the text would have advised that prospective couple end any close attachments and form their strongest attachment between them.

After “leaving” the other relationships, some couples bring to their new relationship a load. Luecke (1983:183) says: “People move into marriage carrying a load of “baggage”- often more than is realized. Such baggage includes attitudes, opinions, and values on such issues as the use of money, importance of status, social causes, politics, sociability, choice of friends, sex roles, parenting methods, work, play, use of leisure time, religion and much more”. Such baggages, if not blended with those of the spouse, cause friction at the end of the day. Each couple should be aware of the baggage carried by the other. Luecke (1983:183) further advises that “such accumulated attitudes, opinions, and values from the past need to blend with those of the partner. At times, the combined baggage may fit easily together; at other times adjustments are needed and sometimes the conflicts may seem irreconcilable”.

No one can easily know the contents of the cultural baggage of the other. Most of the cultural baggages are unwritten. They are known through interaction. Even though the owner can explain his/her own cultural baggage, it cannot be fully known. However, it does not mean that you have to abandon the contents of the unknown baggage. It has to be a duty of both to continue investigating each other, and keep on searching for any cultural baggage that has been discovered.

### 3.1.11 THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT

As already said elsewhere Christian marriage is a covenant between God, man and a woman (Pro. 2:17; Mal. 2:14). As a covenant: “Marriage is to be permanent, for life. When two become one flesh, there is to be no division, no severing, because of the irreparable damage that will occur” Norman Wright (1980:11). ‘Leave’ and ‘cleave’ (Gen. 2:24) are covenant words. ‘Leave’ means the shifting of authority from one person to another. The man has to abandon his loyalty to his parents or guardians to start another relationship with his wife. After leaving his parents he has to unite with his wife. The unity was established by oaths or vows which enforce and cement the marriage covenant (Heth 2006:60-61).

God is displeased when the marriage covenant is broken (Mal. 2:16). As a covenant, marriage should be entered with unconditional commitment between the couple. The breaking of a covenant marriage results in the breaking of hearts (Lowery 2002:86).

In the essence of a marriage covenant “Two become one. “I” becomes “we” “Me and mine” are replaced by “us and ours” (Lowery 2002:69). The two fractions of people are made into a whole of one person. The two wills are bound together as one (Lowery 2002:69). The husband and wife “start with two personalities, two minds, two souls, and two backgrounds ...Becoming one is a process that takes time, hard work, desire, love and the power of God” (Lowery 2002: 73).

To have a successful marriage death should be experienced in several arenas. It is true that “the marriage relationship is based on a “walk of death” – death to certain freedoms, death to dependence on parents, death to prior relationships, and death to self, all of which are necessary for the marriage to have a life of its own and a new wholeness as two become one” (Lowery 2002: xvii). I agree with Lowery (2002:xvii) that the death in the areas pointed above will lead to divorce-proofing a marriage.

It is true that marriage will be short-lived for those who chose not ‘die’ in the areas mentioned above (Lowery 2002: 13). Self and individualism have been popularized in the

modern world by some of marriage experts. This is to be concerned with self fulfillment first. They do not have a regard for the fulfillment of the needs of the other. Such a concept is foreign to the Bible (Gal. 6:2; Eph. 5:20-27; 1 Cor. 13:5).

Frank D. Cox (1990: 68) believes that those who marry their friends have better chances of forming successful marriages. He maintains that a friend can also become a lover. But not all friends can become lovers. Practices done in friendship are necessary for lovers (Van Pelt 2003: 50). There is an opinion that we should marry someone whom we are sexually attracted to (Self and Self 1998:91). These authors emphasize the fact that “You don’t want someone just to be your roommate or housekeeper or breadwinner” (Self and Self 1998:91). Sex cannot be detached from love affairs. Ellen White (1980:43) advises against marrying a person one does not love.

The couples have an obligation to satisfy each other. “The expression of love that is demonstrated between Christ and His Church should be the model for the marriage relationship between a man and a woman” (Royer 2000:201).

### 3.2 FORMING MARRIAGES ON DANGEROUS GROUND

Both the OT and the NT forbid a believer like the ancient Israelites and Christians from marrying non-Israelites and unbelievers. God said to ancient Israelites “You shall not make marriages with them, giving your daughters to their sons, or taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods...” (Deut. 7:3-4 RSV). This commandment was given to Israel in the wilderness when Israel became a nation. When the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity, the injunction was still outstanding (Neh. 10: 30; Ezr. 9:1,2, 12). Even at the close of the Old Testament period, in the book of Malachi (2:11), marrying non-Israelites was still forbidden.

The Israelites sinned against their God because of marrying foreign wives (Mal.2: 11; 1 Kin. 11:1-8). Thus kings such as Solomon, Ahab (1 Kin. 16:31-33) and the whole nation of Israel were disobeying God by marrying non-Israelites. The judge, Samson, decided to

disobey God's injunction by marrying the daughter of the Philistines called Delilah (Judg. 16:4-5). His parents tried to restrain him but he did not take their counsel. They said, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your kinsmen, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me; for she pleases me well" (Judg. 14:3, RSV).

The parents allowed Samson to marry a Philistine woman after his insistence, but the results were terrible. He lost his sight and became prisoner to the Philistines (Judg. 16:21). These results show how dangerous it is to disobey God by marrying unbelievers. The OT closes with accounts of miseries suffered by those Israelites who married unbelievers.

Christians are forbidden from marry non-believers (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Paul said, "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?"(RSV). The verses demonstrate that Jesus and Satan cannot dwell peacefully in one house. The believer and non-believer do not have many things in common. The uncommon things bring tension in their marriage, causing disagreements which could lead either to divorce, or the godly person forsaking Christ.

White (1980: 68) advises: "it would be better to remain unmarried than to link your interest for life with one who chooses the world rather than Jesus, and who leads you away from the cross of Christ". Sinful people in the world are dragging young men and women "down to perdition by marriage with those whose character is such that they throw themselves directly across the road to life" (White 1980: 64). Another fearful observation from White (1980: 64) says: "Very few come out from this entanglement triumphant".

Just as the Israelites did in disobedience to God in the OT "Hundreds have sacrificed Christ and heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons" (White 1980: 66).

Young women and men should know that “To connect with an unbeliever is to place yourself on Satan’s ground”. As a result of this deed, “you grieve the spirit and forfeit His protection” (White 1980: 67). Christians, by marrying an unbeliever, should know that they have made a great mistake in their life (White 1980: 504).

The next unit has been designed to help those who are in courtship or contemplating to be in courtship or get married. It gives the characteristics of the love that can mature to successful marriage. False characteristics of love have been separated from genuine love.

### 3.3 CONTRASTING SOME OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GENUINE LOVE AND PSEUDO-LOVE IN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

The contrast helps to identify true love from pseudo-love. The contrast given here is not exhaustive. It gives an insight to those contemplating marriage through premarital counseling. It could also help those in marriage to know the origin of problems in marriage if they were deceived by pseudo love. It could also help them know how to correct the deficiency. The Flower’s (2004:39) admitted that for you to “Know for sure if you’re in love can be very difficult.” The comparison in the chart below distinguishes between true love and false love.

GENUINE LOVE	PSEUDO-LOVE
(a) It begins or is built on friendship. Friendship starts by being a helper or caring for someone’s life (Prov. 17:17).	(a) Built on feelings aroused by instant seeing of the person. Physical appearances may attract the feelings of the onlooker, arousing his/her feelings (Melgosa and Melgosa 2005:30-31).
(b) Takes time to grow. It is patient. The attraction comes from physical care and the good character of the person.	(b) Not concerned with physical care. This love has no patience.
( c) It matures from friendship. A true friend sticks closer than a brother could do in times of crisis and good times (Prov. 18:24). Friends like to spend time with each other.	( c) Comes from infatuation. It is a short time love. Decision to fall in love does not depend on full knowledge of the person. The moment he/she begins to discover the bad side of the person, love wanes away.

(d) It is built on trust. Partners are faithful to each other (White 1930:301).	(d) It is concerned with physical attraction. This concerns physical appearance.
(e) Makes mature and thoughtful decisions that do not exploit the other in the relationship.	(e) Makes hasty decisions or promises without weighing the long term implications.
(f) Built on Christian principles. Includes God in all the planning (White 1980:50; Prov. 1:7).	(f) Does not care about behavior but depends on beauty only. An individual might have a relationship with a non-believer as Samson to Delilah (Judg. 14:2-3).
(g) Concerned with long-term results. Wants someone with whom they could spend their lifetime together in marriage. Develops activities to satisfy the needs of the other partner (Van Velde 1979:26).	(g) Concerned with immediate results. Does not want to commit oneself to a longtime relationship. This love “quickly moves on to sexual relations.” (Megosa and Melgosa 2005:43).
(h) Grows in love gradually (Landis 1975:140). They know that they are not perfect and anticipate growth. Love “grows out of reason and choice” (Chapman 2004:37).	(h) Falls in love without thinking about the implication of doing so. Such people are indecisive. Others influence them in decision making. They do not develop ways to satisfy the needs of the other. They are “not genuinely interested in fostering the personal growth of the other person” (Chapman 2004:35). They believe the other partner is perfect and does not need further growth. They disengage their reasoning abilities (Chapman 2004:35).
(I) “Love ends slowly ...Just as genuine love takes time to develop, so it takes time for feelings to vanish” (Van Pelt 1982:90).	(I) Infatuation ends rapidly. It ends “much the same way they begin – fast- with one exception. Infatuation will not end rapidly if you have become involved sexually” (Van Pelt 1982: 91).
(j) Love is based on an individual person who has the qualities that you think are important (Van Pelt 1982:92).	(j) “An infatuated person may be “in love” with two or more persons” (Van Pelt 1982:91). Such person might have little care for such relationships.
(k) Understands existing differences and	(k) Does not take initiative to investigate differences

accepts them.	and accept to work with them. They are not willing to have the full information about the other.
(l) Concerned about the well-being of the other. It loves altruism (Gal. 6:2; Van Velde 1979: 40).	(l) Concerned with self-satisfaction. Feels unconcerned with problems that face the other partner (Van Velde 1979: 40).
(m) Allows suffering for the well being of the other (Phil. 2:4).	(m) Refuses to suffer on behalf of the partner.
(n) Does not hide personal realities in life. There is self-disclosure to the other lover.	(n) Hides personal realities in life. Refrains from self-disclosure. The other lover does not know what he/she could do to provide the needs of the other.
(o) Concerned with making the right decisions.	(o) The reasoning capacity is blinded. Their senses are benumbed (White 1948:368).
(p) Reacts constructively to danger signs. He/she may decide how positively to respond to warning signals such as ending the relationship, investigating more about the person etc.	(p) Ignores danger signs. Some people think that others who warn them about dangers in their relationship are jealous of their relationship.
(q) Takes necessary precautions against dangers. It enjoys “the approval of family and friends” (Melgosa and Melgosa 2005:43).	(q) Rejects all advices regarding the relationship. They think their decisions are always correct.
( r) Has the control of the mind in making the right decisions.	( r) “... power of the mind is brought under the slavery of passions” (White 1980:51).
(s) “It is calm and deep in nature ...” (White 1980: 51).	(s) It is “a strong fiery, impetuous passion” (White 1980:51).
(t) It “is attracted by qualities alone” (White 1980: 51).	(t) Concerned with externals such as body structure or beauty. Lacks “balanced judgment” (Melgosa and Melgosa 2005:43).
(u) Accepts “the voice of reason and conscience ...” (White 1980: 51). The	(u) “Bound in the chains of infatuation often deaf to the voice of reason and conscience ...” (White 1980:

partners unite reason and emotions in their conduct of their relationship (Chapman 2004:37).	51). It is not obsessed (Chapman 2004: 37).
(v) Mutual contribution to the growth of the relationship (Gal. 2:6).	(v) Partners exploit each other. They are concerned with self-fulfillment.
(w) Unconditional. They work hard to overcome challenges faced in the relationship. Partners are available for each other in times of crisis (Van Velde 1979: 27).	(w) Conditional. They are not able to survive in times of crisis. Desert the other when he/she is in trouble.
(x) Permanent (1 Cor. 13:8). Challenges in life do not remove their love. Love “overcomes the test of time” (Melgosa and Melgosa 2005:43). They develop mechanisms to cope with problems in life.	(x) Temporary. Challenges in life destroy their love for each other. Love fails to withstand the test of time. There may be weak plans or no plans for the relationship.
(y) Commitment is dominant. Commitment is both to the partner and the well being of the relationship. Passions are controlled (White 1948:223).	(y) “Passion is dominant” (Balswick and Balswick 1989: 60). The commitment is to the satisfaction of their feelings than the partner and their positive contributions to their relationship.
(z) It is built on realities. They do not take risks when they fully know what might be the possible consequences.	(z) It is full of fantasy. They expect love to sustain their relationship without their own effort.

How can love be used in a marriage relationship? Why do people want to be in a love relationship? To what extent has love been used in the marriage relationships in the communities of Greece, Rome, Israel until the present time in the contemporary world? These are some of the questions that the section “Using four loves in marriage” addresses.



### 3.4.0 PRACTISING OF FOUR LOVES IN THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

#### 3. 4. 1 THE USE OF LOVE IN GREECE, ROME AND THE REST OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT

This section deals with how love has been practiced in different cultures. This could help us to know the differences between the cultural marriage relationship and the Christian marriage relationship. Before developing a Christian model of love, it is important to know how love has been practiced in different societies. It is also important to know how other scholars perceive the best way of applying love in marriage.

The Greek and Roman marriages began and functioned without love. The Greeks looked at love as madness, which should not be tolerated in marriage. “The early Romans took much of their view of love from the ancient Greeks. Love was seen as undesirable torment that occurred outside of marriage” (Brehm 1985: 94). Greece and Rome were conquering powers. Their ideas influenced the conquered peoples. This means that many of the areas conquered by these nations adopted the beliefs and practices of the conquering nation. Countries on the European continent were heavily influenced due to their proximity to Greece and Rome. No wonder Sharon Brehm (1985:95) says: “It was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that Europeans especially the English, began to connect love with marriage...” Marriages in Europe functioned without love for a period of one thousand and nine hundred years.

Managing a marriage affair without love is unbiblical. Love is compulsory in a Christian marriage (Eph. 5:22-25).

#### 3.4.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOVE IN MARRIAGE

Is love important for marriage? Why do people see love as an important aspect in their lives? This unit answers these questions and many more to help us understand why love is very important in relationships.

In modern days, the availability of love means the livelihood of a successful relationship. “Love in a marriage relationship can diminish or even die” (Wright 1993:67). The death of love means the death of a marriage relationship. It is important then that “Love must be carefully nurtured and cherished if it is to endure the stress of two imperfect people living together” (Wright 1993:67).

What was God’s answer in providing love? God created marriage so that man must have a companion. God saw that man was lonely. Lonely people become miserable and unhappy. It is a sign of missing something in life. “Loneliness and isolation are contradictions to the purpose in God’s creative act. God made man to live with others and the first “other” was a woman” (Wright 1980: 8). Riek (in Brehm 1985), in his research conducted in 1944, discovered that people fall in love “to escape from internal discontent” and to find “personal courage and security about self” (Brehm 1985:119).

People have three needs to be fulfilled to live happy lives (Brehm 1985:4-5). The fulfillment of these needs can only be realized “through relationships with others” (Brehm 1985:4, 5). The following are the people’s needs:

Firstly, people need someone to assist. Secondly, they want to have someone to nurture and “take care of.” Lastly, there is a “need for reassurance of our own worth - someone who will tell us that we matter”.

Each couple should know the most important needs of the other. The love that they have for each other should be demonstrated in fulfilling the needs of the other. “The right needs are so strong that when they’re not met in marriage, people are tempted to go outside marriage to satisfy them” (Harley 2003:9). The couples who “fail to make each other happy... make each other unhappy”, as a result they usually have conflicts between themselves (Harley 2003:9). While men need sexual satisfaction, women need affection as their top priority. On the second level, men need to have a companion, whereas the women need to have someone to talk to. Men need to have an attractive spouse. Women

need to have a man who is honest and open to them. Men need a woman who is a domestic supporter; women need a man who is able to support them. Men need someone who admires them, as their last greatest need. Women need a man who is committed to the well-being of the family (Harley 2003:12-13). In a conversation, women have a great need “to be heard” (Gray 1993:125). When women express their feelings, they want a listening husband. By listening to her, she feels cared and loved.

Although these needs can be realized by having friendship with others, it is in the marriage relationship that couples teach each other how these needs can be fulfilled. God intended that a wife should become a companion to the husband (Mal. 2:14). Love is an ingredient of a happy successful marriage. “One of the greatest needs of personality is to beloved” (Weatherhead 1963:466). Homes without love produce dictators and tyrants (Wieland 1980:72). “Human beings without love become worse than animals, for they become actually cruel ... an evil spirit possesses human hearts which are devoid of love, and become demons”(Wieland (1980:72). Van Pelt (1966:28) says, “Love is necessary for all human survival...” Love is compared to “the golden chain” (Whelchel 1992:86) that binds human relationships.

Marriages without love negatively impact on the society and the world at large. “When love fails, marriages fall into ruins and impossible frustrations deluge those involved and those around them. Such emotional pressure results in juvenile delinquency, adult crime, alcoholism, and various drug addictions. Finally, the attempt to destroy oneself may end this ruinous cycle” (Van Pelt 1986:28). When children of tyrants and dictators grow up and become leaders in their societies, they can be very dangerous and destructive.

### 3.4.3 DIVISIONS OF LOVE

Froom (in Brehm 1985: 119) divided love into two phases. The first one is the immature love whereby the individual “exploits the beloved in order to satisfy the lover’s needs” (Brehm 1985: 119). This type of love is self-centred. An individual does not care what happens to the other. Tyrants’ and dictators homes have self-centred love. The second

love discussed by Fromm is called a “mature love”. In this love, “the lover has, a genuine concern for the beloved’s welfare” (Brehm 1985:119).

The English language has one word for love. It is not easy to define love. Benokraits (1996: 112) says that for us to know that there is love, “three elements are necessary ... (1) a willingness to please and accommodate the other even if this involves compromise and sacrifice; (2) an acceptance of the other person’s faults and shortcomings; and (3) as much concern about the loved one’s welfare as one’s own”.

Love comes instant or grows gradually. “Romans called eros cupid, and as we know, cupid shoots the arrow of love into our hearts ... Erich defines love as an active power that breaks through the walls that separate people from each other. In love we find the paradox of two beings becoming one yet remaining two” (Cox 1990:58,59). Their unity is tied with cords of love.

The Greek language divided love into four categories. These are eros, phileo, storge, and agape. The three (eros, phileo and storge) loves are called human loves because they are practiced amongst humanity. Sequera (1993:23) says: “human love is conditional; God’s love is unconditional. Our human love is changeable; God’s love is changeless. Our human love is self-centered; God’s love is self-sacrificing”. God’s love is agape. God uses agape love in dealing with sinful human beings in everything they need (Matt. 5:45).

#### 3.4.4 EROS OR ROMANTIC LOVE

Eros is also called platonic love, romantic love accompanied by sexual feelings, beauty love, and infatuation (Sequera 1993:20; Mitchell 1990:74,75; Self and Self 1998:24; Van Pelt 1982:89-90). Eros is needed in a Christian marriage. It “is certainly needed for a satisfying and fulfilling marriage” (Self and Self 1998:24). However, there are dangers in some aspects (romantic and infatuation) of the eros. True eros grows slowly. The eros that grows fast is romantic or infatuation love (Van Pelt 1982:90). A person with romantic love fantasizes himself/herself. The lover is in love not with any other, but himself/herself. There are transferred feelings from the mother, sister, the caretaker, to

the other person. There is a projection onto the other spouse, either of happiness or anything (Hendrix 1988:62).

Cox (1990:64) says that “often we project our beliefs onto another person, exaggerating the characteristics that match the qualities we are looking for and masking those that do not; that is, we transform the other person into an unreal ... heroine to fit our personal concept of a romantic partner. Thus we often fall in love with our own romantic ideas rather than with a real human being”. Romantic love has a major type of fantasy and expectation which result in a couple being in conflict.

Romantic lovers avoid knowing their partner in reality. It denies the investigation of his or her character. There is an assumption that if the reality is known, then it ceases to be romantic. Hendrix (1988:64) says: “Romantic love does indeed thrive on ignorance and fantasy” After a research, Robert John in 1983 said, “romantic love can never produce a long-lasting human relationship” (Cox 1990:63). This is caused by the failure of an individual to form concrete ties with the other in the relationship. What actually happens is that “the romantic lover looks to the ideal lover to be completed, to have weaknesses made strong, to overcome odds and avoid failure” (Cox 1990:63). Jesus said that we have to know the truth and the truth will make us free (John 8:32). The truth in this context applies to the real character of a person. A Christian marriage relationship should be built by knowing someone fully.

Jack Rozell (1995:212) says, “Both aspects of truth are vital to the marriage relationship. A couple must be committed to honesty about life. They also need to be willing to be real or genuine with each other. Marriages built on dishonesty and deception are marriages that crumble and fall”. Romantic marriage is a marriage built on insufficient knowledge or ignorance of the other partner.

Nijole Benokraitis (1996:120) defines eros as “the love of beauty”. He continues that “Because it is also characterized by powerful physical attraction eros epitomizes “love at first sight”. This type of love hinges on the beautiful appearance of body parts. For an

African black man in Malawi, he looks first at the buttocks of the ladies, if they huge and plumb. The second part is the face or the protruding breasts. Ladies look for muscular men. The stout men are said to be handsome. Whatever may attract the opposite sex to each other, the fact still remains that these body features attract in the beginning. When a person gets older, or is sick, she/he may lose the first attraction. She may either be very thin or flabby. Apart from aging, starvation, depression, and an accident could disfigure a person. A marriage depending on eros or beauty may be negatively affected by the change of body structure and when the beauty is gone. Webster and his colleagues warn: "Anybody who trusts in physical beauty to carry them through life walks on a very thin ice. Beauty fades quickly..."(1975:46). Love built on the beauty a person has limits or boundaries. This could be characteristic of a problem of a marriage held together by eros alone, as may be the case with non-Christians. The Christian would apply brotherly love, family love and agape to keep the marriage going.

Hendrix (1988: 78) outlines three things that happen to a marriage relationship when the erosion of eros takes place as a result of vanishing beauty. Firstly, couples stir their old behaviors, which were repressed by their feelings. Secondly, the pain incurred in childhood is reinjured. Lastly, there is a negative projection of evil traits on "each other".

#### 3.4.5 INFATUATION

The phrase "love at first sight" (Benokraitis 1996: 120) is mostly infatuation. Infatuation is a strange mixture of sex and emotions. A person may be carried away by passion which is not reasonable. It comes from a Latin word that means "silly or foolish" (Van Pelt 1982:89). Norman Wright (1993:65) says "Infatuation ...means infected with folly." Boteach (1999(a):197) calls infatuation "a spirit of madness." Many scholars have negative attitude towards infatuation.

It is important to distinguish infatuation from genuine eros. Van Pelt (1982) undertakes a task to separate the two. "Love and infatuation do have one thing in common - strong feelings of affection for members of the opposite sex, which complicates the matter of

sorting differences because many of the symptoms overlap one another” (Van Pelt 1982: 89,90).

Van Pelt (1982:90) goes further to say that “genuine love may include several symptoms found in infatuation. The differences between love and infatuation, then, are often found in degree rather than in definition”. We have to know that “Love and infatuation share three similar symptoms: passion, nearness, and strange emotions. Passion may be present without love. It is entirely possible to feel passionate or to have strong sexual feelings for a person you have not even met” (Van Pelt 1982: 90).

In the infatuation as well as in the genuine love, opposite sexes have to stay or be near each other. “You may wish to be together all the time, dreading the hour of parting. You may experience a feeling of emptiness after your friend has gone, but this does not necessarily mean you have found real love” (Van Pelt 1982:90).

When someone experiences strange emotions when he/she thinks about the other person, the feelings are not indicative that he has discovered true love (Van Pelt 1982:90). True “Love develops slowly... and growth requires time. Infatuation hits on suddenly. You can not really know a person after a few meetings” (Van Pelt1982:90). Van Pelt (1982:90) describes the behavior of “Many people”. She says, “they wear masks and put their own best behavior at first. They try to be pleasant and agreeable at all times and keep such unpleasant traits as anger under control. For this reason it takes months and even years to know a person well”.

During courtship as well as in the early days of marriage, some people still “Successfully hide their personalities ...” (Van Pelt 1982:90). During the honeymoon or after, they do or start revealing their characters. We can conclude then that “Just as genuine love takes time to develop, so it takes time for such feelings to vanish” (Van Pelt 1982:90).

### 3.4.6 PHILIA OR BROTHERLY LOVE

Philia is an “Affectionate love between two people; brotherly love”, and friendship love (Sequera 1993:20; Mitchell 1990:74). Frank Cox (1990:58) says, “Philos is the love found in deep and enduring friendships. It is also the kind of love described in the Bible as “Love thy neighbor as thyself”. It can be deep friendship for specific people, or it can be love that generalizes to all people. While it is important to have phileo love for our neighbors; we should have deeper love for our spouses.

Men and women should make their spouses their best friends. Among the friends that one has, one’s spouse should be rated number one after God. The number one place should never be exchanged by anything or taken by anyone. Even the baby or a child should never be given this place (Brown 2001: 96).

The word brother is translated from Greek. It means that spouses should be treating each other as if they come from the same biological parents. The lovely relationship that goes on between brothers and sisters should transpire between spouses.

A couple should share their insights and their personal interests (Kretzschmar 2001:64). Lovers who are very close to each other usually join their “heart, mind and soul ...” that “generate considerable intensity and passion” (Kretzschmar 2001:65).

Kretzschmar (2001:65) outlines four reasons that help to weld two people together in Philia or friendship which are: Firstly, a friend desires good things to happen to the partner. Secondly, there is a desire that one should be able to have life for the sake of the other. Thirdly, friends have mutual enjoyment of passing time together. Lastly, friends shares inner joys and sorrows together.

It is important that a couple in phileo love should cultivate principles in their lives (Kretzschmar 2001:65). The Balswicks (1989) believe the ones who have married their friends have better chances of succeeding in their marriage because of the phileo love features described above.



Treating someone in phileo love makes the spouse a blood relative. Some spouses treat their partners not as relatives but someone out of their tribes. A spouse not treated as a relative becomes distant and individuals with that attitude do not care about the other spouse and the relationship. Brotherly love brings some additional strong ties to the marriage relationship because people tend to care more for people of the same blood relation than others.

#### 3.4.7 STORGE OR PARENTAL LOVE

Researchers think for a marriage to be successful it should have and practice the three loves which are eros, phileo, and lastly agape (Self and Self 1998:24-25; Mitchell 1990:74; Balswick and Balswick 1989:59). The three types of love to be used in forming successful marriage are important but inadequate. The four types of love including storge are needed in the formation of a successful Christian marriage.

Both the husband and wife still need fatherly and motherly love. In this case, the wife should sometimes act as the mother to the husband as he acts as a father to his wife. No marriage can survive without what storge love provides. Leaving the home of parents for a new home of marriage requires that one should find what the former family of parents provided for him or her.

My concern about the storge love is that the new family, while they act as erotic and brotherly lovers, should mingle it with some roles of fatherly and motherly care for each other in the new home. Storge is defined as “a family love or love for one’s own kin” (Sequera 1993: 20). Boys and girls receive three types of love from the four in their families which are storge, phileo, and agape. They should transfer these three loves from their families to their new marriages without uprooting any of it. Eros should be their new component to be added to their list of love.

Phileo or brotherly love, storge or family love does not treat someone favourably or unfavourably because of beauty or eros. It is at this juncture that we see can the need for

such types of love in marriage. However, sometimes storge love treats someone favorably than other children in a family because of beauty. Joseph, the son of Jacob is a good example of being treated favorably than other children on storge love (Gen. 37:3-4).

The three types of love are conditional. They have their advantages and disadvantages. It is only agape love that has one side which is dominantly positive.

#### 3.4.8 AGAPE OR DIVINE LOVE

The last love needed in marriage is agape. Agape love “is pure love untainted by any selfish motive whatsoever” (Sequera 1993:20). Sequera (1993:23) goes further to say: “human love is changeable; God’s love is changeless. Our human love is self-centered; God’s love is self-sacrificing”. God is the reservoir of agape love (1 John 4:8). No one is born with agape like the three types of love (eros, phileo and storge), which are inborn tendencies that develop further after birth. Mazat (2001:17) says that every one of us is “created with a deep need for love and companionship.”

Fred Greve (2000:200) says: “damaged marriage ... falls short of the biblical pattern”. The biblical pattern of love is agape love. Including the three types of human love (eros, phileo, and storge); “the biblical agape love is imperative. You shall love your God and your neighbour are commands not suggestions” (Kis 2000:685).

Benokraitis (1996:120) defines agape as “The classical Christian type of love, agape is altruistic, self-sacrificing, and directed to all humankind”. Agape is a common love practiced by God for all mankind (John 3:16). People that are not Christians do not have agape love. Agape is not selective. It goes to all humanity despite their sinful behavior towards God. God gives rain and other blessings to all people (Matt. 5:45).

In treating people agape love says, not “what can you do for me?” But “what can I do for you?” “I love you, not for my sake but yours. I love you because you need love. I love you because Jesus gave you to me to love” (Bresee and Bresee 1992:19). This love does not expect anything good in return.

The cross of Christ is a good demonstration of agape love. Sometimes they “Put us on a cross on false charges, drive nails through our flesh...Put agape love on the cross and Jesus turns His eyes toward heaven and prays, Father, “forgive them” (Bresee and Bresee 1992:191). Despite the pains, insults and torture, Jesus loved His enemies. He was falsely accused but all these did not turn His agape love from the sinful humanity. He did not call for destruction from the father for His tormentors. He still loved those people that tortured Him. That is why He prayed to God to forgive them (Luke 23:34).

There are times that we are tormented by our spouses or falsely accused, but Jesus gave us an example that we still have to demonstrate our agape love to them. As Jesus sacrificed His body to save the sinful humanity, we have to sacrifice our bodies, our desires for our relationship to survive. Agape love put into practice in our relationships “can rekindle the flame of eros, or erotic love, or keep it alive in the relationship that is based on committed love” (Self and Self 1998:25).

Once the beauty is gone either because of old age, accidents, adultery etc, agape love can bring life back. Agape love is “reproduced in the lives of Christians through the Holy Spirit, it is the most powerful witness of the transforming saving power of the gospel” (Sequera 1993: 22). A person without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit cannot have agape love.

Many unhappy married couples have poured their four loves “away to fleeting guests” (Kramer and Dunaway 1991:308). Such type of energy is wasted because it has been channeled to wrong people. If we channel our four types of love through partners, we will yield tremendous results and even damaged marriages will come back to life.

Each couple’s “total personality” should be developed to meet the needs of the other. Love should be practiced as an art, with the knowledge of the ‘how’ and ‘why’. The two stages of becoming an expert in art are “the mastery of theory” and the other is “the mastery of practice” (Froom 1968:11). This thesis has provided knowledge to be learned

and mastered in theory. A great deal of practice can make the lovers efficient, happy to enjoy their marriage.

The four types of love discussed should be applied in all the steps postulated above in the building of a Christian marriage. Once the four types of love have been applied in the Christian marriage, there will be high probability that the marriage will be successful. However, it is necessary to be aware that the combination of the four loves should become usual practice in the entire Christian marriage.

#### 3.4. 9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it has been discussed that a Christian marriage is a covenant formed by God, man and woman together. In the development of this type of marriage, the couple should apply the four loves (eros, phileo, storge, and agape), which form chains of the complete genuine love. The four loves bind the Christian marriage together. The absence of one love from the four forms of false love that cannot keep the two together in the Christian marriage. The couple has the responsibility to each other in heeding the instruction God in Genesis (2:24) to leave their parents, cleave to each other and become one flesh.

It has also been mentioned that a marriage without God is a secular marriage. The couple that do not wed in the church and participate in its marriage vows contract the civil marriage. God has forbidden Christians from marrying non-Christians.

The next chapter looks at the empirical study conducted by the researcher. It discusses the area of study, people interviewed, research tools and data collection.

## CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL STUDY, PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: A SURVEY

This chapter presents the selection of people to be interviewed in the SDA Church in Malawi. Secondly, I will discuss the tools used in the research. The third part will deal with the collection of data, data analysis and the interpretation of data.

### 4.1 METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENT: A SURVEY

I will use the survey. “Survey research is a very old research technique” (Mouton 2003:230). It was used in the time of Moses in the wilderness (Numb. 26:1-2). It was also used by the ancient “Egyptian rulers”, Roman, French, Germany and the United States rulers (Mouton 2003:230, 232).

Survey research was used in Cape Town, South Africa, beginning in “the late seventeenth century ...” (Mouton 2003:230). “Research survey is very popular in South Africa.”(Mouton 2003:230).

Apart from social sciences, “political science, social psychology, economics, and education” (Mouton 2003:230) use survey research in their studies. “Survey research is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly” (Mouton 2003:232). Attitudes in the large populations are measured by survey research. The method is also used in describing, explaining, and exploring (Mouton 2003:232).

There are four design classifications in the surveys (Mouton 2003:152). Firstly, it is empirical. Secondly, it is the primary data. Thirdly, it is numerical data. Lastly, it is medium control.

There are key research questions to be answered in research surveys. The researcher explores, describes and analyzes the data that has been collected (Mouton 2001:152). In the quantitative nature, researchers “aim to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a large population” (Mouton 2001:152).

Researchers use questions to collect data. Sometimes researchers draw up questionnaires, which are given to respondents. Respondents are expected to be competent in answering questions. They should not be forced to answer the questionnaire or questions. The researcher should make sure questions which are asked are relevant to the majority of his respondents (Mouton 2003:232-233).

“Surveys – especially self-administered ones make large samples feasible ...flexible ...Finally, standardized questionnaires have an important strength with regard to measurement generally” (Mouton 2003:263). There are three major steps the survey follows ‘As a research design...’ (Mouton 2003:264) which are: Firstly, the construction of the questionnaire. Secondly, the selection of the sample and thirdly, it is the collection of data “through either interviewing or self-administered questionnaire” (Mouton 2003:264).

It is advisable that “Usually, short items in a questionnaire are better than long ones” (Mouton 2003:265). Short questions are easily understood by the respondents than long questions.

This research is also a social research. There are three main reasons that have prompted me to do a survey in this research. Firstly, I have used the survey in this research because it is a method social research uses. Secondly, such type of research produces adequate results. Thirdly, since survey method is used in South Africa in social research, where I study, I decided not to bring something that is strange to my readers. Some of the readers who are Malawians living in southern Africa would also be acquainted with this method. Using a popular method is convenient to my readers as well as myself.

#### 4.2 THE SELECTION OF PEOPLE TO BE INTERVIEWED

A total of 42 people from the three regional offices that comprise Malawi Union of SDA Church were interviewed. These geographical areas belong to the North, Central, and South Malawi Fields. The church members interviewed comprise pastors, church elders,

church leaders, ordinary church members, primary and high school teachers, lecturers, professors and publishing house officers. The married young people as well as the old were also interviewed. Only literate people participated in the interview. Both male and female were interviewed. The respondents were rich, poor and middle class economically. They were selected randomly from the three regions of Malawi.

TITLES	NUMBER	GENDER
Pastors	3	3 males
Church elders	4	4 males
Church leaders	12	4 males / 8 females
Ordinary church members	7	2 male/ 5 females
Primary teachers	7	3 males/ 4 females
High school teachers	5	2 males/ 3 females
Lecturers /professors	2	2 males
Publishing house officers	2	2 males
TOTAL	42	22 males 20 females

The following were the respondents who answered the questionnaire in each Field.

Field	No of respondents per Field
North Malawi Field	6
Central Malawi Field	10
South Malawi Field	26
TOTAL RECEIVED	42

The South Malawi Field has the largest membership in the Malawi Union whereas the North Malawi Field has the least number of church membership. The aim of the survey of different groups was to come up with balanced information that would reflect the SDA Church in Malawi.

All the respondents were interviewed at different times and different places. Three geographical areas of the three fields were visited, and respondents were met and

interviewed personally. In some cases, the researcher was helped by pastors and church leaders to identify the people to be interviewed. I spoke with the field President in the North Malawi Field, pastors, school principals and some local church leaders about the research I was doing. I requested them to identify respondents from different tribes and they did. I approached some leaders whom I knew personally.

#### 4.3 RESEARCH TOOLS/ INSTRUMENT

A sample questionnaire attached in Appendix 1 of this dissertation was used as a tool for collecting data. The researcher formulated the questionnaire. However, the informants were allowed to include new information that seemed necessary for the research. Twelve questions were asked in the questionnaire. The respondents were expected to fill in the blank spaces provided at the end of each question.

The questionnaire was divided into five main parts. The first part was biographical information. The clients were not compelled to answer this question. It was discovered however that before the collection of data some informants wanted the biographical space to show that they had contributed to the research so that the researcher remembers them. Another group of church members felt uncomfortable to write their names or fill in the biographical data.

The second part dealt with the reasons why people get married. This was followed by a part on divorce. The fourth part looked at marriage failure while the fifth asked for solutions that church members employed to solve marriage failures. The questions were based on the theoretical aspects discussed in chapter 3.

The clients were simply chosen without considering whether they came from failed marriages or had successful marriages themselves. The researcher thought that in one way or the other couples had misunderstandings in their own marriage at one time or another. They may also have seen problems that occurred in the marriages of their parents, and other people. Their answers in the questionnaire reflect what either happened in their own marriages, or with other people in the SDA Church.



The knowledge of developing the questionnaire came from my counseling experience. The questionnaire shows part of the areas that seemed problematic in counseling.

#### 4.4 DATA COLLECTION

Married couples were encouraged to discuss the answers to the questions together. This helped them to have a broad spectrum of the marriage. They could also remind each other of what happened in marriages of the local churches where they had either stayed or visited. They were advised by the researcher to answer questions as they found relevant to their own local church and their families. They were also told by the researcher to avoid answering the questions which addressed issues direct to their lives. Answering questions with reference to their personal lives would have made them afraid to give information because some people would be reluctant to answer questions that invade their privacy. The data that was collected is presented below. The presentation of the data will follow the pattern of questions in the questionnaire.

#### 4.5 # MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SDA CHURCH IN MALAWI: DATA COLLECTION

##### 4.5.1# NAME, GENDER, AND AGE

One hundred and twelve questionnaires were distributed to SDA Church members. There were forty-two respondents who returned the questionnaire after successfully answering all the questions. Males and females were involved in the interview.

Only married people were involved in the research. The respondents did not answer all the questions, they left out others probably because they were not relevant to them or they were not sure about them. The data presented reflects marriages in the SDA Church of Malawi.

#### 4.5.2 # FOUR REASONS WHY PEOPLE GET MARRIED IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

I begin with reasons mentioned by many respondents to the least mentioned.

REASON WHY PEOPLE GET MARRIED	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Need companionship	15
Procreation	12
Security purposes	8
As a custom	8
Satisfying sexual desires	6
Parental influence	5
Impregnating someone	3
Some jobs need a married individual	2
To get happiness	2
Attain certain privileges	2
To get a blessing from God that He had put in marriage	1
11 Reasons	

Each respondent mentioned more than four reasons.

#### 4.5.3 # THREE REASONS THAT MOSTLY CAUSE DIVORCE IN YOUR CHURCH

REASONS THAT MOSTLY CAUSE DIVORCE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Adultery	17

Communication	11
Financial misunderstanding	5
Infertility	1
Mixed Christian beliefs	1
Parents and relative interference	1
Abuse	1
Christian immaturity	1
Dictatorship	1
Unplanned marriages	1
Careless living with the husband	1
Sexual intimacy	1
TOTALS	42

4.5.4 (a) # WHICH AGE GROUP HAS THE HIGHEST DIVORCE RATE IN YOUR CHURCH?

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
18-35	33
36-50	5
Did not write the age group	4
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	42

These statistics show that mostly teenagers up to thirty-five years of age are susceptible to divorce. Above thirty-five years, the divorce rate decreases. What we have to know is

that some people may not be legally divorced but stay attached to children not their spouses. Practically they are divorced but not theoretically. Some women still keep the surname of their husbands while they are physically separated.

#### 4.5.4 (b) WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

CAUSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Adultery	11
Immaturity	9
Financial problem	7
Communication	5
Infertility	3
Different academic achievements	3
Step children	1
Lack of counseling	1
Spiritual immaturity	1
Incompatibility	1
10 Reasons	42

#### 4.5.5 #WHAT PERCENTAGE OF MARRIAGES DO YOU THINK IN YOUR FIELD (REGIONAL OFFICES) ARE SUCCESSFULLY HAPPY?

The average figure worked out is 26% to each Field. This shows majority of the church members have marriage problems. Few men suggested higher numbers while few women suggested very low numbers. The few men suggested 20-25 % while as the few women suggested that 18-27 % marriages are unhappy in their Fields. Many of the men and

women did not answer this question. Pastors suggested about 75-80 % of the marriages are happy.

#### 4.5.6 (a) WHAT CONSTITUTES A HAPPY MARRIAGE IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH?

Many respondents said happy marriages in their churches practice Christian values. Good communication, Family Life Seminar's attendance, and counseling by the church leaders were the other factors that helped members to have successful marriages. Some observers noted that those that wedded in the church had high chances of success in their marriages. The marriage partners treat each other as companions. They share the common interests and forgive each other when someone has wronged the other. They do not expose the secrets of their marriage. Instead they confide in each other their personal secrets. They live to each other's expectations. They obey each other.

#### 4.5.6 (b) # WHAT MAKES SOME OF THE MARRIAGES TO BE UNHAPPY IN YOUR CHURCH?

Majority of the respondents pointed to spiritual immaturity. This leads into poor dialogue between them. Other reasons are that partners practice prostitution, the marriage may experience economic hiccups, marriage partners do not live to the expectations of each other and may exploit each other instead and some members of the church are incompatible. And lastly, some resort to evil behaviors like drinking.

The church board also contributes because they tolerate bad behaviors. The males back up their fellow mates who dominate many church boards. Some of these marriage partners are traditionalists who fail to be modernized. Some couples have inferiority complex. Some are lazy and fail to take care of the family. The men tend to feel superior to their wives.

Insecurity, infertility and selfishness is also found in these marriages. Some of these marriages have religious differences. They live by comparing their marriage with others.

4.5.7 #ARE THERE EXTERNAL SIGNS TO SHOW THAT SOME MARRIAGES IN YOUR CHURCH ARE UNHAPPY? IF THEY ARE WHAT ARE THEY?

All respondents said there external signs which show that marriages are in trouble in their churches. Most of the respondents said that many marriage partners do not sit together in the church as a sign that they have a troubled relationship. You can hardly find them walking together even after from the church services, when they go to their homes. There is also unequal involvement in the activities of the church. The couple has poor church attendance. They are gloomy and harsh towards each other. There are rumors of battering. Some married partners argue in the presence of other people. They have broken communication. Some of the married partners use different qualities of dressing. One partner may have nicer and more expensive dressing than the other. Couples speak to each other in fear.

4.5.8 # WHAT MAKES MANY MARRIAGES UNHAPPY?

The answers that appeared here were similar to those that appeared on 4.5. 4 (b).

4.5.9 #ARE THE UNHAPPY COUPLES AWARE OF WHAT MAKES THEM UNHAPPY?

WHAT WAS ANSWERED	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Most couples know what makes them unhappy.	24
The couples do not know.	8
They are unaware	5
Some of them know but fail to solve the marriage failure	3
They know partially.	2

4. 5. 10 # WHAT HAS YOUR CHURCH DONE TO SOLVE MARRIAGE FAILURE?

THE CHURCH ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Conduct family and marriage seminars. They offer counseling services.	29
Family and marriage seminars were not conducted in their churches. Sermons on marriage are rarely preached in their churches.	12
Praying for the troubled marriages is done without counseling.	1

The researcher observed that marriage preaching and teaching is heavily neglected in the churches. Some of the teaching methods are inadequate. Some pastors in the meetings the researcher attended were ignorant of the values of Christian marriage. What were taught to the church members were cultural traditional values. This shows that much of the church leadership is not well-equipped to address marriage issues.

#### 4.5.11 WHICH CLASS OF PEOPLE HAVE THE HIGHEST MARRIAGE FAILURE?

CLASS OF PEOPLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS MENTIONED
Rich-educated.	23
Rich- uneducated.	8
The poor-uneducated.	5
Not sure of the answer	4
Each group was involved.	2

In the Malawian setting, the rich educated refers to the educated working class.

#### 4.6 # QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE REGIONAL COURTS OFFICES

##### 4.6.1 # NAME OF THE REGIONAL COURT OFFICES

There are many courts in Malawi controlled by the Regional Administrators in the three regions. All courts in each region submit their statistical reports monthly to the Regional office. I interviewed twenty-six officers and collected data from the central and northern regional court offices. The central region administrator had also worked in the southern region as an administrator, which means that she was well-acquainted with what was happening in both regions concerning marriage. The central region administrator gave me

three officers who had worked in the south and central regions. The three officers gave me more information pertaining to marriage in the central and southern regions.

#### 4.6.2 # APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY MARRIAGES GET DIVORCED IN EACH REGION A YEAR?

The administrators indicated that cases related to marriage were the highest compared to all other cases combined in all the regions. Marriage cases were double as much compared to all cases that were heard each month in all the courts. Many of the spouses that sued their partners sought the courts to dissolve their marriages. The court administrators said that many marriages got divorced without seeking the courts' intervention. Marriages that got divorced in different communities were more in number as compared to those brought to the courts.

Probably dowry is the main factor that has ever caused the northern region to have the lowest rate of divorces in the country as compared to the southern and central regions, which do not charge dowry.

All ages are affected by divorce in the courts of Malawi. The court administrators found it problematic to ascertain whether their clients belonged to any religion. It was assumed by respondents that many of the troubled marriages brought to the courts did not belong to any religion. It was said that if they belonged to a religion, their religious standing was nominal.

#### 4.6.3 # AS COMPARED TO THE PAST WAS THERE A REDUCTION IN DIVORCES LAST YEAR?

The divorce rate is growing every year and it is becoming worse than before.

#### 4.6.4 # WHAT WERE THE FOUR MAJOR CAUSES OF DIVORCE?

Adultery is the highest cause of divorce in Malawi. Abandonment, failing to support the spouse and physical abuse were mentioned as some causes of divorces.



#### 4.6.5 # WHAT HAS CAUSED THE RISE OF DIVORCES?

People are becoming more adulterous than before. Starvation is also becoming a serious problem.

#### 4.6.6 #WHAT ARE THE COMMON STRATEGIES SOUGHT BY THE PROSPECTIVE DIVORCEES TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS BEFORE DIVORCE?

Firstly, they seek counseling from 'ankhoswe' (mediator). However, some married couples do not seek counseling from ankhoswe. They try to solve the problem on their own. Marriages without ankhoswe are loose because partners do not make arrangements to involve the church, parents and relatives when they marry.

#### 4.6.7 # IN YOUR OWN OPINION WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE DONE TO STOP MARRIAGES GETTING DISSOLVED?

Firstly, each marriage should have ankhoswe. Furthermore, the Malawi government should offer counseling services to her people.

#### 4.7 # COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SDA CHURCH MARRIAGES AND THE SECULAR MARRIAGES IN MALAWI

I start with similarities. Firstly, adultery was found in both marriages (SDA Church and the secular marriages). Secondly, financial problem is another challenge in some of the SDA Church marriages as well as the secular. Lastly, physical abuse occurs in some SDA Church marriages as well as secular marriages.

The differences include the following: abandonment only appears in the secular marriages. Secondly, counseling, family and marriage life seminars were some of the main solutions to marriage failure and enrichment in the SDA Church. Lastly, there was none of these in the secular marriages except some little counseling done by ankhoswe or traditional counselors.

#### 4.8 CONCLUSION

Results have been interpreted according to the findings. The empirical data that was gathered show that there is a marriage problem in the SDA Church of Malawi. The problem is transparent. The colonial governments in dealing way of dealing with adulterers (in chapter one) have impacted on the SDA Church negatively.

The SDA Church has not been very effective in dealing with the problem. As the church personnel seem not to be well-equipped to solve the problem. The next chapter suggests possible solutions to problems that have surfaced in this chapter, to prevent and cure marriage failure.

## CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO PREVENT OR CURE MARRIAGE FAILURE

This chapter explores some of the possible solutions to the problems mentioned by the respondents in the questionnaire. Solutions given in this chapter are however not exhaustive. I am actually prioritizing possible solutions by noting that many themes emerged in the empirical research. Hence combating adultery is one of the most important issues to be dealt with here. Other issues include broken communication, finance, infertility etc. Adultery will be the first to be discussed. I begin by looking at the negative impact of infidelity on relationships.

### 5.1 INFIDELITY AND ADULTERY

#### 5.1.1 FEELINGS OF THE OFFENDED SPOUSE WHEN HE/SHE DISCOVERS THE OTHER SPOUSE HAS COMMITTED ADULTERY

The offended spouse feels more pain than that which he/she could feel as the loss of a parent. He/she becomes confused, disoriented and shattered. They lose direction of what they are doing and they fail to concentrate on what they are doing (Jackson 1999:14-15).

They feel as if they are going crazy. Their brain changes from normal to abnormal. It becomes difficult to understand what is happening to them (Jackson 1999:15).

They feel torn within themselves and do not know what to do (Jackson 1999:16). The problem first goes to their brains and then go down into their bodies, touching the entire bodies.

Self respect is shattered. They can feel that their respect in the community is gone and they have been humiliated among the people.

They feel angry and may go to an extent of losing the control of their lives (Jackson 1999:15). Their anger may spill to other people who are innocent of what has happened.

The offended spouse wants to die. Death is seen as one of the best solutions to their dilemma (Jackson 1999:15). It is advisable that they should not pay visits and do not have to cross busy streets in town.

If the offended spouse is the wife she develops ambivalent feelings. They may desire to hug the husband, want to beat him or may feel happy that he is gone (Jackson 1999:16).

Ambivalence can make the wounded spouse shut down internally which can block a meaningful way of being healed (Jackson 1999:16).

### 5.1.2 THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF INFIDELITY IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Adultery destroys and violates trust between spouses. The security enjoyed in the relationship is destroyed. The spouses develop shame, embarrassment, low self-esteem, and loss of respect for friends. Infidelity may even negatively affect the relationship of friends (Morris and Morris 1985:94). “The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians that “love builds up” but adultery inevitably tears down, rips up, and splits out its victims”(Richmond and Bode 1995:215).

The adulterer is more hurt in the process than the offended spouse psychologically. “No one can retain their marital passion towards their spouse when they are expending it in such in vast quantities on someone else” (Boteach 1999 (a): 198).

Adulterers think they are capable of keeping their spouse and an affair in their lives. When “you continue seeing your lover” you “develop real passion. You will then arrive at the point where you have to make a choice between your spouse and your lover. And don’t fool yourself into thinking the two can coexist. For they cannot” (Boteach 1999(a): 197). Why is it a problem to keep the marriage and an affair together successfully? There is an exploitation of love resources from the marriage to the affair. Once the resources such as love, time, finance etc have been transferred to an affair, the marriage is left without resources that can make it survive. “No marriage on the planet can survive the

complete redirection of love and sexual focus which is involved in having an adulterous partner” (Boteach 1999(a): 197).

A psychologist by the name of Botwin (in Boteach 1999(a):198) says: “Most men, even when they have some affection for the other women, are able to keep an affair from taking over their emotional lives. This is direct contrast to women, who tend to become consumed. In letter after letter, case history after case history, wives confessed that their heads were totally occupied by their lovers.”

Bonding in marriage can only be achieved through sex. “Marital sex is the superglue... Adultery dissolves the bond and destroys and fractures the marriage relationship” (Richmond and Bode 1995:216).

### 5.1.3 COMBATING ADULTERY IN MARRIAGE

One woman told me that it was impossible for a person to survive without an affair. This is the voice of a person who has failed to live without an affair. There are warning signals of an affair that you should watch. Here are some of the signs of danger. It is important to watch for these signs in any non-sexual intercourse relationship, which could be turned to a sexual relationship. Some of these signs include intentional touching accompanied by words. If the touched individual remains quiet, it is interpreted as consent. More touching follows, combined with sexual feelings. Usually it is men who do the touching. This a clear indication that such type of a person fantasizes about the person who he touches (Rutter 1990:166).

When a person is touched by the opposite sex, he/she has to speak out rather than remain quiet. An intentional touch should be resisted. She/he has to speak to the person who touches about the necessity of respecting boundaries between opposite sexes (Rutter 1990:166).

Another means of resistance to a touch is to walk out of the place or room and never to return. However, the man may become very angry if a woman walks away. The woman

should be ready for the consequences such as being sacked by the boss if he is the one who is touching. She may either not be promoted by the boss as a punishment that she had resisted to be touched (Rutter 1990:175-176). It is better to lose the job because of refusing to be involved in sexual immorality than break the commandment of God, which could lead to losing eternal life (Mark 8:36).

When the marriage partner is tempted sexually, he/she should report this to the other spouse. Sexual temptation should be reported immediately to a Christian brother if your spouse is not present (Exley 1995:34).

Hart (1993:169) says: “In dysfunctional families, boundaries are violated all the time.” To avoid sexual temptation, spouses must avoid making close contact with the opposite sex (Exley 1995:35). Each relationship you form with the opposite sex must have boundaries. “Each person must ...set up mental, physical, and emotional boundaries ...boundaries are important in all areas of our lives...”(Hart 1993:169). High degree of intimacy with people of the opposite sex at the work place, church, school etc, should be avoided as much as possible.

The other “Two boundaries which must be carefully guarded are in the areas of personal conversion and physical contact” (Exley 1995:35). Dobbins (1984:6) warns the dangers of crossing boundaries between sexes. “When personal boundaries are ignored over a long period of time, the frequency and intimacy of contacts allowed between close friends can threaten to lead the best intentioned person to an emotional ‘point of no return’ which can be disastrous.”

Usually the people who are “potential adulterers spend significant amounts of time fantasizing about each other” (Exley 1995:35). They satisfy the “need for closeness, tenderness and togetherness” (Exley 1995: 35-36) a practice, which has to be avoided. Each spouse has to deepen and maintain intimate relationship with God and the spouse (Exley 1995:37). This fills the gap which may be utilized by the third party. Intimate spouses create chances of exposing “more and more of one’s innermost thoughts, feelings

and experiences with the other mate”(Morris and Morris 1985: 91-92). If there is little intimacy or if spouses do not speak to each other, spouses tend to reveal to the other people their desires, and aspirations. If the one who hears problems is from the opposite sex, bonding develops between the two people, which could lead to sexual immorality.

Lack of love can lead to adultery. “If a mate’s basic needs are not met he has a tendency of looking for others to meet those needs” (Morris and Morris 1985:179).

Unresolved anger can lead a couple to commit immorality as revenge (Morris and Morris 1985:94). It is good to be angry but it is necessary that your anger should not be long lasting (Eph. 4:26). Neither of the spouses should refuse the other sex even in anger. Temptations of adultery are common when a spouse is denied sex (1 Cor. 7:5).

Some men and women commit adultery to prove their capability to attract the opposite sex (Morris and Morris 1985:94). Such Christians have a low self-esteem. Such Christians should be taught that they do not belong to the low status of people. The Bible classifies Christians as belonging to the royal priesthood of King Jesus (1 Pet. 2:9).

Other married couples exercise the “messianic view that one is called to serve or help a person who is lonely and need the expressions of love” (Morris and Morris 1985:94). The Bible teaches generosity as a requirement for a practicing Christian (Luke 6:38), but this generosity does not apply to sex. Do not offer sex to anyone even if she/he can complain that it is not available in his or her marriage (Prov. 5:15).

Van Pelt (1982: 136) says: “Studies relating premarital to extramarital coitus show that those who have had premarital experience are twice as likely to have extramarital affairs as those who are virgins at marriage.” She goes on to say: “Premarital sex increases the likelihood of extramarital sex...sexual appetites established before marriage affect us too strongly” (Van Pelt 1982:136-137). Premarital counseling can solve the problem of premarital sex.

Boredom in a relationship could be another cause for having an affair. The failure to solve marriage problems and bring newness to the marriage could lead to boredom. Some people think boredom could be solved in the relationship, by having an affair. Boteach (1999 (b): 199) says: “Since you haven’t learned how to bring newness and novelty into an existing relationship, you will be just as bored with your new wife the moment you start living with her, and the cycle will repeat itself.” Boteach (1999 (a): 199) estimates that “80 percent of all the men who leave their wives for another woman end up leaving the new woman within the first year...” The researcher agrees with Boteach (1999 (b): 199) when he advises such people that: “Rather than destroying your life and your family, go back to your wife and make an all-out effort to reignite the spark of your marriage.”

Each spouse should avoid forming close friendships with opposite sex who are single. It is great ministry to help the single fathers and single mothers, however, it is a dangerous ministry if someone does not guard oneself from potential sexual relationships. The couple together should engage in the ministry to visit the single. “But if the couple is not committed to doing it together, it could be dangerous to their marriage” (Carlson 2005: 69).

Humanly speaking there are some people to whom we are attracted. “Physical attraction is a powerful force between human beings” (Carlson 2005:68). Each spouse should “Avoid a close friendship with anyone to whom you are attracted” (Carlson 2005:68).

Anyone has opposite-sex friends. It is important that each spouse does not hide his/her friends from the other spouse. “Even with no intention of having an affair, people slip from friendship to a sexual relationship because they feel connected and appreciated” (Carlson 2005: 65).

Each spouse should be open to the other and include his/her spouse in the friendships. This will assist you not to transform a friendship into a sexual relationship. Your marriage will also be safeguarded (Carlson 2005:65).



#### 5.1.4 HEALING A MARRIAGE WITH AN ADULTEROUS SPOUSE

Some people wounded by adultery may be searching for answers to the dilemma. Here are some of the solutions:

The first thing to do is that the guilty spouse should leave the home for sometime to another place. There should be a time to think of what steps should be taken after the disaster. The breaking of the contact with the wounded spouse helps them both to start healing and find appropriate methods to respond to the crisis (Cloud and Townsend 1999:20).

The offended spouse should avoid making hasty decisions at this time regarding the relationship. Some time should pass before making any decision regarding the marriage (Jackson 1999:18).

Before further steps are taken, it is necessary to find out whether the guilty spouse is ready to give up the affair. If the unfaithful spouse does not want to give up the affair, divorce is the best method to follow. Signs that he/she does not want to give up the affair is the continuity of telling lies, and unwillingness to disclose any information regarding the affair.

The unfaithful spouse feeds the innocent spouse with lies. This must stop forthwith if the guilty spouse wants to rebuild trust with the offended spouse. "The purpose of truth-telling is to put the issues out on the table where they can be dealt with" (Jackson 1999:25).

The wounded spouse should not be pressured to forgive. The unfaithful spouse should not force the faithful spouse to forgive him/her by using either the pastor or the counselor (Jackson 1999: 21).

The guilty spouse should feel remorse and take the full responsibility for what he/she has done (Gray 1996: 159). He/she should not cast the blame on the other person. He/she should accept that it was his/her fault to fall into the prey.

Going through a counseling session to acquire tools is an important means at this juncture to recover the shattered love and trust when one of the spouses has been caught in adultery. This will help the couple so that what has happened should not happen again.

The couple should understand that choosing to rebuild the marriage relationship after it has been shattered by the illicit affair will not be an easy one for both of them. Commitment to rebuilding the marriage and perseverance is needed to succeed (Jackson 1999:19).

The causes of an affair should be exposed in full and couples should come up with strategies to solve these problems so that the guilty spouse does not stumble on the very problems next time. The spouse and the counselor should both help to solve such problems. “But in order for this wounded marriage to be saved and grow strong to resist future temptation, all the possible causes must be addressed” (Miller et.al. 2007: 264).

The offended spouse should not accept to reconcile with the unfaithful spouse if/she is being accused of deficiencies by the unfaithful spouse. Accusations of deficiencies show that the guilty spouse has not genuinely repented.

Adultery “is possibly one of the most difficult offences to forgive that a person would ever face in this life. The hurt of the broken trust goes deep into the heart, making it very difficult to trust again. But the principle of forgiveness is one of the most powerful teachings in all scripture” (Johns 1996:120).

The innocent spouse should forgive the guilty spouse (Matt. 6:14-15; Eph. 4:32). The adulterer should genuinely repent and confess the sin to God and the partner (LaHaye and LaHaye 1977:239; Seventh Day Adventists Believe 2006:337). “Remember, forgiveness

does not condone what has happened, nor does it create instant trust” (Rosenau 2002:342). Miller (et.al. 2007: 262) advises that “there must be great patience to allow the hurt spouse to work through the shock and move toward forgiveness”. The guilty spouse had enough time in developing the non-sexual relationship to a sexual affair. This usually does not occur just one day. It is necessary then that the offended spouse should not be forced or coaxed to forgive the guilty spouse within the same day, two days or a week after the affair has been discovered.

Forgiveness and continuing in marriage are two different things. When repentance and confession have been made, the couple should then decide whether to stay or not. It is necessary that the culprit should be examined for HIV/AIDS before the innocent takes a decision to continue to stay with the culprit. If she/he has contracted HIV/AIDS and the innocent party is negative, the marriage should be discontinued. It is better to save the life of the innocent person who can better take care of the children if there are any.

If it has been decided that the marriage will continue despite the adultery committed, the adulterer must discontinue the illicit relationship. All means of communication must be curtailed. No further contacts should be planned (Richmond and Bode 1995:228). “The offending spouse has to remember that he or she, by choosing to forsake the affair, has already begun a road to recovery” (Miller et.al. 2007:262).

All gifts, cards, money and all articles which were received by the guilty spouse from the illicit relationship should either be returned or destroyed. Those gifts that will be returned or destroyed should be done in the presence of the offended spouse or with the counselor (Jackson 1999:20).

If the person with whom the adultery was committed is a work mate, the guilty must resign from the job to avoid contact. There must be an avoidance of visiting all places where sexual immorality take place.

The decision to terminate the immoral sexual friendship must be communicated to the innocent spouse. She/he must be sure of all your intentions regarding the immoral relationship. The offended spouse, pastor or counselor, and the person involved in the immorality can be invited to a meeting when the guilty spouse terminates the relationship. It is important to indicate that you are seriously working in your marriage (Richmond and Bode 1995:228).

Adultery destroys trust, which is not easily rebuilt. The adulterer has to contain the anger of the other spouse as the healing process takes place (Richmond and Bode 1995:228-229). If the illicit relationship took long it also takes a long time to heal while as the illicit relationship which took a short time makes couples heal in a short time (Gray 1996:157).

To avoid sexual immorality, it is advisable to become close and accountable to a mature Christian of the same sex. “We strongly believe in the power of friends to heal, sustain and support” (Cloud and Townsend 1999:132). One must attend spiritual programs frequently, be together with or accompany the spouse as much as possible as possible (Richmond and Bode 1995:228).

The innocent party should be aware that he/she is also instrumental in rebuilding the violated vows of marriage. An adulterous affair is addictive. The feelings of an affair do not immediately break down in the adulterer. Feelings slowly go away when contact has been broken (Richmond and Bode 1995:229).

Tell your spouse as many times as you can that you have forgiven him/her even though inside your heart you have feelings that are still hurting (Richmond and Bode 1995:1995:229).

Make a habit of complimenting your spouse who was guilty of the adultery in any good thing she/he does.

Seeking professional counseling for both of you is a very important step. Professional counseling explores some available avenues, which could help you grow in the relationship (Richmond and Bode 1995:229).

Reconciliation brings remarkable healing to the growth of a relationship where consequences of adultery have been experienced. This needs commitment of both partners to plan for the betterment of their marriage.

The offended spouse should from time to time write down their feelings and share them with the unfaithful spouse. This can bring a tremendous healing to the wounded spouse (Gray 1996:160).

There is a need for practical restoration in which the marriage couples should rekindle the former love which was between them. They have to date each other again. They have to discuss the good times they had at the beginning of their relationship. They have to remind each other what drew them together to be in the love relationship. They should discuss things that they like in each other. Photos before the wedding and those at the wedding could be pulled and looked at (Miller et. al. 2007:265).

#### 5.1.5 DEVELOPING YOUR MARRIAGE TO OFFER WHAT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN ADULTERY

The following are some of the desires satisfied in illicit relationships. Make them available in your marriage. Firstly, make a habit of flattering each other (Prov. 7:5, 21). Praise and admire each other sexually. You may either say she/he is beautiful or handsome. Praise any achievement that your spouse has accomplished (Prov. 7:10).

Secondly, the wife should not be ashamed to kiss the husband. She has to play a part in initiating love to the husband (Prov. 7:13). Thirdly, dress in a way that could entice your husband. Make a habit of dressing in clean clothes (Eccl. 9:8). The husband should allow his wife, if possible, to have clothes, which are only suitable for the house not in public places.

Fourthly, have an outing together outside the usual surroundings of your house (Boteach 1999(b): 90). Take a trip alone without a spouse. When you come back your relationship will have been built up (Boteach 1999(b): 93). Seeing each other every day can be boring. Going away will break the usual togetherness.

You should also, take a holiday from a sexual intercourse every month. When you are on holiday refrain from a sexual gratification outside marriage (Boteach 1999 (b): 96). Besides, explore and practice a variety of methods of having sex (Bresee and Bresee 1992: 67).

A woman should refrain from wearing oversized dresses when she is with her husband in their house because they do not show the shape of the body. Men are pleased to see a half naked lady.

It is necessary to have several beddings to change from time to time (Prov. 7:16). Tenthly, spray perfumes in your bedroom from time to time (Pov. 7:17). Eleventh, a woman should keep long beautiful hair sprayed with perfumes (1 Cor. 11:5-6; Eccl. 9:8).

She has to use skin lotion to keep her skin shining (Ps. 104:15). Finally, she has to spray from time to time after bathing (1 Song of Sol. 1:3).

## 5.2 COMMUNICATION

### 5. 2.1 DEFINING COMMUNICATION

This topic addresses communication which is one of the causes of marriage failure in Malawi. Communication is defined as an “act, by one or more persons of sending messages that are distorted by noise, occur within a context, have some effect, and provide some opportunity for feedback” (Spies 2000:112). Communication means making issues and ideas known. The second aspect in communication is to share (Bresee and Bresee 1992: 27). Communication can be verbal and nonverbal. The couple has to

speak to each other. Signs, which are the second means of communication, should be reinforced to provide the clarity of the message.

Van Pelt (1997:66) calls nonverbal language body language. “Your nonverbal **behavior** actually carries **more weight than the words** you say... **Powerful messages** can be delivered without ever **opening your mouth...**”. We always communicate intentionally to the other people by use of the mouth and body language. Body postures have much to say to the others in communication. It is necessary to be aware of what messages are being sent by our bodies to the other.

Verbal communication can be done either in written form or spoken. Nonverbal communication is expressed in the tone of the spoken voice, the appearance expressed on the face, in gesture form, position of the body, the distance between each other, signals, the symbols used and the rhythm of the music (Shaw 1995:122).

### 5.2.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

In human beings “all behavior is communicative” (Spies 2000:112). Our needs, feelings and aspirations are communicated to the other party. Without communication, intimacy between couples can not occur. “The word ‘intimacy’ is derived form Latin, *intimus* meaning ‘innermost’ or deepest” (Mitchell 1990:137). The two can be blended through intimacy. Intimacy “is a foundation of love” (Stenberg 1988:41).

A sign of effective communication is intimacy. Intimacy means: “belonging to, or sharing one’s secret nature” (Mitchell 1990:17). The sharing of personal secrets and challenges leads to intimacy.

The success and failure of marriage depend on communication. It is important for each couple to learn “in a caring and concerned manner” (Balswick and Balswick 1989: 87). Good marriage communicators “want what is best for their partner”. They respect “the other’s needs and desires” (Balswick and Balswick 1989:87). To have the best communication there is a need to have the better choice of the media in communication.

Good communication provides “a common ground of joy and satisfaction”(Balswick and Balswick 1989:88).

### 5.2.3 DISADVANTAGES OF COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Communication breakdown results in the failure to agree on issues. In marriage, if there are communication breakdowns, the couples are alienated from each other. They attack each other verbally, nonverbally or sometimes physically. Love evaporates, and the marriage partners may see no reason why they should continue with each other. In most cases if help has not been sought to restore communication, divorce is inevitable.

#### 5.2.3.1 BUILDING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

Effective communication can be built by two married partners in their sharing of aspirations, their lives and goals in life. “This is a way to develop ...friendship, a missing ingredient in many marriages” (Mitchell 1990:83). Mazat (2001:17) says: “In a relationship with an intimate other, our dreams, values, goals, joys and disappointments will be mutually disclosed in a protected atmosphere”. Partners should be aware of each other’s plans and goals. They should support the dreams of each other. Meaningful support can only be given if a partner is aware of the goals of the other. In supporting the other, each partner should contribute the necessary resources in fulfilling his/her dream. When a partner is supported, he/she feels loved. Love feelings draw each other closer. No one in the relationship should think of destroying the goals and plans of the other. The duty of each spouse is to cultivate the realization of the dreams of the other.

The couples should involve each other in decision-making. “Participation in analysis and planning helps bypass resistances ...” (Gangel 1979:318). The desires of a partner should be communicated to the other partner as suggestions. The two should then sit down and discuss issues. An agreement should be reached on how to go about with the fulfillment or handling the issues.

Intentional touching and smiling at each other should become an everyday norm. Touching should be tender, or caressing as Isaac did to his wife Rebecca (Gen. 26:8).



Touching all parts of the body brings joyful satisfaction to each other. The bride in the Song of Solomon (2:6) yearned to the bridegroom that: “O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me!”(RSV). This verse indicates that there are some body parts, which make ladies very comfortable when touched. The bride in Solomon’s song (2:6) wanted to be touched on the cheeks and neck. Another part for the husband to touch are the breasts. King Solomon (Prov. 5:19) said: “... let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love” (KJV). When the breasts of a woman are caressed they prepare them for sexual intercourse.

Embracing and hugging each other is highly recommended. Van Pelt (1997:136) says: “Caressing and holding hands should become a regular part the couple’s daily routine”. Women need more touching than men. Husbands should touch their wives oftentimes to satisfy the desire of their wives. Men need to sleep more on the bosom of their wives. A bosom works more wonders for men as it did with John the apostle (John 13:23). The short-tempered disciple (Mark 3:17) was transformed by the bosom of Jesus and became the apostle of love. The wife’s bosom could transform short-tempered husbands into loving husbands.

Kissing is another tool very important not to be missed in marriage, be it shallow or deep kiss. The bride in the Song of Solomon (1:2) said: “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth” (KJV).

The couple should know that: a “marriage relationship is different from all other relationships in that men and women are made for each other. God planned it this way. There is a kind of magnetic attraction that draws man and woman together” (Self and Self 1998:14). God designed the body of a woman in such a way that it provides male satisfaction in gazing, admiring, touching and physical enjoyment that a man needs. The same applies to a man’s body; he has everything that a woman needs.

A person who was deeply hurt in the past relationship will have problems to open up themselves to the other spouse in the relationship. The people who were hurt in past

relationships sometimes give little information about themselves. They are afraid to trust anyone, even their spouse. Each has to relate to his/her spouse in truth, empathy and non-possessive warmth. This will heal, build confidence, communicate trust and encourage self-disclosure to each spouse (Rozell 1995: 187-189).

It is important for each spouse to know the history the other. This helps you to understand a spouse and know how you can respond to him/her. You should be capable enough to minister to his/her needs. Do not deny his/her needs.

Give empathetic forgiveness to your spouse when he/she does not recognize the mistake that has been made. Empathetic forgiveness removes the hurt and barriers to communicate to each other.

Do not hold a grudge against your spouse whether it is for a short or long time when you have been hurt.

Value the personal worth of your spouse; and his/her contributions made to the relationship. Resources given by your spouse to the marriage relationship should be appreciated.

Knowledge of communications levels is vital for marriage relationships. There are five levels of communication (Mitchell 1990:101-103). The couple can benefit much by applying the five principles into their marriage relationship. The five levels of communication principles by Mitchell (1990) have been well illustrated below:

Five levels of communication	What is accomplished
1. Cliché level	Greetings to each other. “No real self-disclosure is invited or offered” (Mitchell 1990:102).
2. Reporting of facts	Sharing of facts about people, and environment that surrounds an individual. “Most communication in

	marriage remains at this level” (Mitchell 1990:102).
3. Self-disclosure regarding “feelings and opinions” (Mitchell 1990:102).	General beliefs and opinions are communicated.
4. Disclosing of feelings	There is a self-disclosure of personal feelings.
5. Peak level	Full self-disclosure of personal feelings is done without fear. There is no hiding of feelings. A person can either laugh, cry with tears etc.

The couple is urged to practice their marriage communication in all the five levels. It is important to note that the couple should begin on the first level and follow the order until level five.

#### 5.2.4 SELF DISCLOSURE

Some “Cultural critics such as Sennett (1978) contend that the emphasis on self-disclosure and expressivity is actually harmful to the satisfaction and stability of relationships” (Fitzpatrick 1988:177). This argument may be true to the ancient uncivilized societies. In today’s societies, which are becoming individualistic, spouses want to live with people they know rather than strangers.

Self-disclosure is one of the main avenues of entering into the: “emotional world of the other person ...share your hopes, dreams and struggles” (Holford 2004:12). Fitzpatrick (1988:201) says: the “pattern of self-disclosure leads to a very satisfying and adjusted relationship between partners.” Women do not find it harder to disclose themselves than male counterparts (Wright 1993:17).

##### 5.2.4.1 BARRIERS TO SELF-DISCLOSURE TO BUILD EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

There are many barriers to self-disclosure. Below are some examples: Firstly, fear that the secrets will be exposed to other people. Many people do not want to be put to shame in public (Sternberg 1988:41).

Secondly, one may be afraid of the consequences in revealing secrets such as losing trust, being rejected and abandoned by one's spouse etc. Thirdly, self-disclosure arouses passions. As a Christian, you will arouse the passion of an opposite sex, which could lead to sexual immorality (Sternberg 1988:42). The last, is being suppressed by the listener.

#### 5.2.4.2 DISADVANTAGES OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Firstly, a partner who discloses all information about oneself could lose trust from the other partner. The innocent partner could think what happened in the past would be repeated. Secondly, self-disclosure could lead to divorce, or the end of a relationship.

It is important then to engage oneself in selective disclosure to avoid consequences of revealing all information about yourself at one time. All other information could be revealed in the future when it is safe to do so.

#### 5.2.4.3 ADVANTAGES OF SELF-DISCLOSURE IN FOSTERING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Firstly, it brings intimacy to a relationship that could result in the strengthening of the relationship. Failure to achieve intimacy could prevent growth in the relationship.

Secondly, it provides healing to the inner wounds created in childhood and one's entire life. Burdens that are found in the heart are released when one discloses life's challenges to the other who is expected to listen and give comfort.

Thirdly, it gives insight of needs that have to be satisfied in the other person by the friend or the spouse. During the time of listening, when someone is disclosing oneself, it is important for the listener that he/she must not suppress feelings and the self-disclosure of the colleague (Alpaslan 1997:26).

Lastly, it reveals the source of defence mechanism developed by the one who discloses himself/herself to cope with challenges in life. Some of the coping mechanisms may have

developed into habits in the life of a person. Habits become the behavior of a person. It is then important to know influences in the life of a person that have given birth to the current behavior.

A few advantages of self-disclosure have been listed above as examples among many. Couples or lovers have a duty to encourage each other in their relationship in self-disclosure. We have to create an atmosphere where fears to disclose oneself are eliminated. “To be intimate with someone, you need to break down the walls that separate one person from another” (Sternberg 1988:40). It is true “that self-disclosure begets self-displeasure” (Sternberg 1988:40). The one who refuses to disclose should not expect the other in the relationship to disclose himself or herself.

#### 5.2.5 THE USE OF TEMPERAMENTS IN MARRIAGE

Communications need to take temperaments into consideration. Van Pelt (1997:19) says: “knowledge about our partner’s temperament, as well as our own, can help us understand the way others behave. Our inherent temperaments play a big part in determining our communication styles”. There are four known temperaments which were firstly defined by Hippocrates in Greece. They are sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholy. Each person is a combination or mixture of several temperaments. Van Pelt (2000:81) says: “Temperament is a combination of inherited traits that affect your behavior. These traits are passed on through the genes and are largely responsible for actions, reactions and emotional responses as well as how you communicate”.

It is necessary to understand that the “temperament is determined by inherited genes, it cannot be changed, but positively managed so that our weaknesses can be transformed” (Van Pelt 1997:20). Education and work of the Holy Spirit can transform temperaments. Transformation should reduce weaknesses of the temperaments and develop strengths. The Holy Spirit also has power of maintaining temperaments.

Van Pelt (1997:20) tells us that: “One needs to remember...sanguine does not communicate in a manner **superior** to choleric, melancholy, or phlegmatic. Each

communicates in a **different** and **distinct** manner”(bold emphasis her’s). It is advisable that each spouse knows his/her temperament well. They have to know the strengths and weaknesses of their temperaments. “The happiness of a couple can be measured, to a large degree by the effectiveness of their communication. How a couple communicates is one of the most powerful factors affecting the success or failure of their relationship”(Van Pelt 1997:18). It is important to learn about temperaments so that couples can effectively communicate with each other.

#### 5.2.5.1 SANGUINE

Sanguine “can easily dominate conversations... The sanguine often speaks before thinking. His decisions are based on feelings of the moment than analytic thought. He tends to be a loud person or even screamer ... He explodes easily, but rarely carries a grudge. Sanguines are cheerfully noisy” (Van Pelt 1997:18). They are emotional and joky speakers. They are weak willed and undisciplined. Sanguines do not hold grudges. That is why they do not get ulcers (LaHaye 2001:76).

There are weaknesses that the sanguine has in the relationships. He/she has a great appeal the to opposite sex. Such people are vulnerable to sexual temptations because of their appeal. They end up being deceitful, dishonest and undependable. They easily give way to sexual temptations (LaHaye 2001:79-80). They exaggerate stories because of their tendency to tell long stories (Van Pelt 1997:18).

Sanguines are restless and notoriously disorganized in their lives. They seldom plan ahead but usually take things as they come. They need to discipline themselves to have success in their projects (LaHaye 2001:77).

They feel insecure in their lives. They are afraid of personal failure, rejection and disapproval. The women always respond better to approval and acceptances than criticisms.

Sanguines have flexible consciences. Enjoyment of fun in their relationship is one of their greatest needs. Since they love people, they do not have problems in expressing their love to their partners (Littauer and Littauer 1992:59).

The sanguines like exaggerations or bending the truth. They are easily tempted, become liars and they steal. People who are adulterous usually cheat and become thieves (LaHaye 1977:64).

The Sanguines behave in childish ways. They are never serious when they speak. They drag issues. They are joky preachers.

#### 5.2.5.2 PHLEGMATICS

Of all temperament personalities, phlegmatics are the easiest people to go with. This temperament does not get upset easily. They have a disposition, which is likable. In their views, they are conservative, and dependable. Phlegmatics are efficient people, and diplomatic in peace making. They are the most peaceful people out of all temperaments (LaHaye and Philips 1982:81; Littauer and Littauer 1992:47-48).

However, phlegmatics have their bad side of behavior. He/she is prone to stubbornness, indecisiveness, and many of them are more selfish than other temperaments. They are shy and do not like participating in discussions or issues because of the fear to be criticized. That is the reason he/she remains quiet. Phlegmatics are non-aggressive and avoid confrontation (LaHaye and Philips 1982:81).

In most cases, the phlegmatic falls asleep the moment he sits down. He is good at giving excuses to get out of trouble in his/her life. He is self-protective. There is a tendency of being a spectator rather than being a participator and initiator. "Phlegmatics do not have the habit of changing jobs. He is able to stay with one organization in his lifetime.

Phlegmatic drivers are the slowest of the four temperaments. They are slow drivers. They can speed and slow down without any reason of doing so. Hippocrates called phlegmatic

phlegm, which means slow and sluggish. He/she lacks drive and ambition. He is “unmotivated slow and lazy” (LaHaye 2001:113). Phlegmatic people may have problems in expressing love to their partners because of being shy.

#### 5.2.5.3 CHOLERIC

Choleric is the tough, and brave temperament. He is “hot, quick, active, practical, and has a strong-willed temperament which is self-sufficient and very independent. He tends to be decisive and opinionated, finding it easy to make decisions both for himself and other people” (LaHaye 2001:81). Choleric is cruel and does show less compassion for others. His mind is well organized. He focuses on goals without recognizing pitfalls. He has a bossy attitude and the spirit of dominating others. He has no hesitation of using people to accomplish his goals (LaHaye 2001:84).

Cholerics do not want to be corrected by anyone. Any attempt to correct Cholerics ignites fire for the one who wants to correct Cholerics. Cholerics want to improve themselves.

When angry, Cholerics explode. They spill poisonous lava on anyone they speak with. He could pound the table when he speaking. Anyone who resists the Cholerics progress or fails to perform so that the goal is not realized soon feels the eruption of the Cholerics wrath (LaHaye 2001:86).

The choleric bears grudge for long periods of time. When he reaches at the age of 40, he suffers from stomach ulcers. Cholerics oppose programs vehemently, which did not involve them in the planning. “Rocky Cholerics will rarely hesitate to tell a person or chop him to bits. Consequently, he leaves a path of damaged psyches and fractured egos wherever he goes” (LaHaye 2001:89). What comes from the mouth of the choleric is psychologically wounding. He/she does not care what will be the outcome of the utterance that he/she has made. “Ready speech and an angry spirit often combine to make a choleric very profane. His language is not only improper for female company, but often unfit for man and beast” (LaHaye 2001:89).



Despite shortcomings, “choleric are very effective people ... when they are filled by the spirit, their tendencies toward willfulness and harshness are replaced by gentleness ... From the days of Apostle Paul until the present, both the church of Jesus Christ and society have benefited much from these active, productive people. Many of our great church institutions were founded by venturous Choleric” (LaHaye 2001:94). Choleric are hard working people. They are not easily discouraged. Once they have made up their minds, it is not easy to change them. They find it difficult to apologize. They do not accept other people’s ideas. They trust their own strength, wisdom, and knowledge more than anything else. There may be no dependence on the divine power. Many of the Choleric had difficult upbringing. They were brought up in families, which had no love. Choleric have difficulties in loving their spouses. They like their work more than their spouses. They may not have enough time for their spouses. They are poor listeners. They tend to reach conclusions without enough listening (LaHaye 2001:92-93). Rarely does he/she admit mistakes.

Choleric are good leaders, “debaters but they are argumentative and can be sarcastics. They tend to ask many “why” questions” (Van Pelt 1977:18). Choleric have interests in understanding causes. Choleric are hard to please. Choleric people have problems in communicating to a partner in the relationship because of their commanding spirit. They like making decisions without consulting.

#### 5.2.5.4 MELANCHOLY

Melancholics are geniuses. They are analytical, thinkers, and natural perfectionists. They appreciate art. They are the world’s great artists, composers, philosophers, scientists, educators, theologians, and inventors. They are faithful friends, dependable, rigid, and inflexible. They are self-sacrificing. Melancholics are suspicious and do not want to be disappointed, they are introverts. Their joy comes from art, composing and achievements (Van Pelt 1997:19; Bolton and Bolton 1996:31; LaHaye and Phillips 1982:97).

Melancholics have “variety of moods and vacillates between highs and lows. Sometimes the melancholy is withdrawn, depressed and irritable, and other times he is outgoing, friendly, and extroverted ... of all the temperaments, he will probably have the most

difficulty expressing his true feelings” (Van Pelt 1997:19). The perfectionist standards are lowered by melancholy if she/he is angry with himself/herself. They disparage themselves and are good critics. Critics live miserable lives, and are not happy people. They sometimes reject themselves (LaHaye and Philips 1982: 76-77).

Melancholics find it difficult to get married because they discover that their partners have weaknesses, which may not be easy for them to tolerate. Because of their sensitivity melancholics accuse their partners of love affairs with those with whom she/he is close. Because of high standards of melancholics’ are impossible to please. Ninety five to one hundred percent of melancholics are revengeful. They are self-centered and thin-skinned people. Ninety percent of the critics to Pastors are melancholics whom it is impossible to please (LaHaye 2001:103).

Melancholics are rigid and uncompromising in their undertakings. They are not used to cheating in their lives. They feel lonely and commit suicide easily. “A melancholy finds it most difficult to forgive an insult or injury. He may appear calm over the matter and will occasionally say “I forgive you” but in his heart he will carry a grudge” (LaHaye 1977:82, 83, 84). Melancholics have the highest suicide rate. LaHaye (2001:106) says: “Depression is the emotional epidemic of our times. 50,000 to 70,000 depressed individuals commit suicide annually”.

Melancholics hate exaggerations. They correct themselves whenever they make a mistake in their speeches. They do not dodge work. These characteristics can make melancholics very successful.

Those who enter marriage should know their own temperaments and those of their partners. And their **“Varied Temperaments Must Blend.** It is in the order of God that persons of varied temperament should associate together. When this is the case, each member of the household should ...regard the feelings and respect the rights of the others. By this, mutual consideration and forbearance will be cultivated, prejudices will be softened, and rough points of character smoothed” (White 1980:427). All the temperaments should learn to forgive the other partner. They have to be flexible and trust their partners.

## 5.2. 6 ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION

Methods in the solving of conflicts can bring roadblocks to communication. These include going away from the partner, refusing to talk, and a winning spirit when the other spouse is interested in imposing his/her views on the other spouse (Miller et.al. 2007:104). Spouses with winning spirit attack each other and grab power in fighting. A partner may bring up past issues which were already resolved. This is to remind the spouse of everything which was done to him/her. "Bringing up things that are in the past is never a fair way to approach conflict resolution...Instead of resolving conflict, you're only going to add a bunch of other issues to be resolved, and you never get anywhere!" (Heim and Heim 2000:57). The Bible says love does not keep wrongs of another person (1 Cor. 13:5).

Anger creates a roadblock and prejudice (Mitchell 1990:99). "Prejudice means to judge before hand ... Another kind of prejudice regards people as different and therefore inferior or superior. This view creates barriers of understanding and acceptance" (Mitchell 1991:111). Some mates may think they are superior and more knowledgeable than their spouses. Superiority thinking will lead them to think that they are the only ones capable of decision-making. Degrading a partner in a marriage relationship would break communication between them.

Mitchell (1990:112) discusses route-march as a stumbling block in communication. The route march is a self-talk that happens to each person. When one is speaking, the other may be talking or thinking to himself/herself about something different.

Van Pelt (1997:72) says men use about 12,000 words per day. Women speak about 25,000 words. In the evening, most men do not talk because they will have exceeded the number of the words to be spoken each day. The failure of men to speak or respond to their wives mostly in the evening frustrates women. They may think that they are not cared for or loved by their husbands.

### 5.3 FINANCIAL MISUNDERSTANDING

Many of the financial problems that married people face originate at the beginning of a marriage. A mature person must be financially able “to take care of himself, earn enough money to support himself...know to feed himself” (De Angelis 1992:266). Anyone who is not able to take care of himself/herself will not be able to take care of a partner. The church should discourage the idea of marrying people who are not able to take care of themselves.

Parents must “empower their children by offering...support and encouragement that will lead to independence” (Balswick and Balswick 1989:69). Parents should teach their children some job as financial empowerment. They should help them to find and manage their own money.

Married people should learn to budget their finances together. In Malawi however, some men do not reveal their salaries to their wives, a behavior that should not be entertained. The pastor or the church has responsibility to see that all married couples have certain work for survival. The SDA Church should verify the capability of the prospective marriage couples that they are able to support themselves financially. It is better to refrain from officiating the marriage of individuals who do not have any source of the current and prospective income. They should discourage laziness or the spirit of refraining from work. The Bible advises that anyone who does not work should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10-12).

### 5.4 INFERTILITY

Infertility is “the inability despite, normal sexual intercourse” to be able to have “pregnancy that leads to the birth of the child” (Spies 2000:185-186). Causes of infertility may be innate or acquired (Spies 2000:186). Firstly, the delay of attempts to have children could cause infertility. Secondly, one or both couples may be infected with venereal diseases. Thirdly, the prolonged contraceptive pill can have negative impact on

the woman. Lastly, the increased use of drugs in the modern world by can affect the couple (Wilson 1995:74).

The husband should refrain from having sex with his wife for a period of three to four days before the time when his wife will be in the fertile period. This should be done with the intention that the husband should be able to heat and accumulate a “maximum number of sperms”(Wheat and Wheat 2004:201). The husband should perform deep penetrations when he begins ejaculation. He should stop thrusting and wait until all ejaculation is finished. He should draw out his penis as soon when he has finished ejaculation (Wheat and Wheat 2004:201).

Medical sciences can help the infertile couple but this could happen after a lot of intrusion into one’s private life (Wilson 1995: 74).

Adoption of children, artificial and “vitro insemination” could relieve infertility. Medical examination should be conducted before resorting to adoption. Adoption should be the last solution after consulting marriage counselors and medical experts who should approve that the couple has an infertility problem.

Couples go through distressing times when they have the infertility problem. There have been new ventures in research to alleviate this problem. Researchers are involved in the test tube conceptions and In Vitro Fertilization. “The process involves the removal of a ripe egg from a woman, its fertilization in a glass vessel by sperm, and the replacement of the developing embryo into a woman” (Wilson 1995: 112). This research has hope for infertile couples.

## 5.5 INTERFAITH OR MIXED MARRIAGES

People of different beliefs or churches contract interfaith marriages. Many of the people that surrounded Israel had their own religions and beliefs, which were different from Israel’s. Forming marriages on dangerous grounds in chapter 3 deals with this topic.

## 5.6 PARENTS' AND RELATIVES' INTERFERENCE

The interference of parents and relatives shows that there is lack of knowledge pertaining to Christian marriages. The married couple, their parents and their relatives, are ignorant of Christian marriage. Parents and relatives should refrain from making frequent visits, continuous begging and decision-making for the new couple. They have no right to control their children in their marriage. Chapter 3 solves this problem by outlining the expectations of Christian marriage.

## 5.7 UNPLANNED MARRIAGES AND IMMATURITY

Marriages that are consummated without preparation are destined to fail (Van Pelt 1982:20). Preparation in marriage has to do with the presence of genuine love between the two prospective couples. The contrasting of pseudo-love and true love in chapter 3 can help to check if there is genuine love in the prospective couples. In the Malawian context, some people marry, or are forced to marry, when the girl has been impregnated by the boy. Some people engage themselves in sex to release sexual pressure and not because they love each other. The church should refrain from forcing unprepared people to marry because the girl has been impregnated.

Physical immaturity such as teen-age marriages should be discouraged. Teen-agers have fluid personalities. They are not able to make long-term decisions. Research has proved that teen-agers have the highest divorce rate in the world (Compton 1983:161).

Harnik (1975:32) has pointed out "Strong dependence of married people upon their parents delays or hinders their marital maturing." The church should teach their members to individuate from their parents to gain marital independence.

## 5.8 ABUSE

### 5.8.1 CAUSES OF ABUSES

There are many causes of abuses. When a person has been offended, he/she can resort to abuse. Each spouse should know how to manage anger. They should know what to do when they are angry.

Answering in a rude way can make the spouse angry and resort to abuse. Some spouses answer in a harsh and rude way privately or in public.

Thirdly, refusing to fulfill the needs of the other can arouse anger which may trigger the abuser to batter the spouse. Some spouses simply dismiss the needs of the other spouse that they are not important.

Furthermore, a spouse may refuse to discuss issues with the other spouse. The refusal may be either by keeping silent or going away from the presence of the spouse who is questioning.

Besides, being disrespectful, not willing to receive advice and not willing to change from the behavior which the other spouse does not accept may lead to abuse.

Another source, criticizing the other spouse in a harsh way either in private or in public place. The criticized spouse may feel that he has been belittled in front of the people. To gain his respect, the may abuse the victim.

Lastly, there are times when a partner may be involved in activities that the spouse does not agree with (Dollar and Dollar 2002:351). She/he may have talked with the spouse to change but if the latter insists on continuing it could lead the unhappy spouse to think of blocking the goals of the other spouse. The spouse whose goals are being hindered could resort to abuse.

#### 5.8.2 THE THREE CYCLES OF ABUSES

There are three types of the abuses. The first abuse is tension-building. At this phase there are indicators which trigger the beginning of abuse. It begins by communication breakdown between the two parties. The wife may either avoid her husband with the intention of keeping the relationship to run smoothly (Jackson and Olson 1995: 5). Feelings begin to rise high between the couple. The abuser becomes angry and changes the facially appearance. Some abusive words or insults come from the abuser. Arguments often break out between the two parties (Dollar and Dollar 2002:346).

The argument leads to the second stage in which acute battering takes place. Weapons may be used in the abuse. The victim may be raped and abuser threatens future abuses to take place (Dollar and Dollar 2002: 346).

The honeymoon is the third stage of abuse. This stage is also called the calm and the penance stage. The abuser becomes apologetic to the victim. The abuser is stricken with grief as he thinks over his insensitive actions. He does kind acts to his wife and may promise not to abuse the victim again. He may go to an extent of giving gifts to the victim (Jackson and Olson 1995: 5). Some of the abusers place the blame on the victim or on something else. The abused wife may enjoy some special attention for some time. If the wife had taken a legal action she may even withdraw the charge and stop thinking of divorcing the husband (Dollar and Dollar 2002:346).

The wife may be expecting that the husband will apologize but unfortunately this is not the case. If the abuse is not corrected at this time, it has a tendency to start again all over again. What makes the cycle start all over again is because problems have not been exposed so that they are worked on by both parties (Jackson and Olson 1995: 7).

### 5. 8.3 PHYSICAL ABUSES AND AUTOCRACY

Physical abuse is accompanied by verbal abuse. Physical abuse aims at injuring someone with any weapon. “Verbal abuse destroys respect, trust, admiration, and intimacy-all the ingredients of a healthy marriage”(Chapman 1998:129). Self-esteem is broken into pieces by these abuses. The victim feels useless when she/he reflects on the abuses hurled at him/her. The abused victim lives in fear within herself. She is most of the time terrified. She is afraid of losing her marriage, financial support, her children etc (Jackson and Olson 1995: 16).

The woman’s ‘dignity and self-worth are destroyed and the vital element of support is lost. There is no longer any basis for the marriage because the covenant conditions have been broken and dishonored’ (Retief 2005:147-148). This abuse impairs her personal judgment. “When she shuts down internally, she forfeits the opportunity to be the kind of a wife her husband needs” (Jackson and Olson 1995:19).



Calling the police is another method of stopping abuse. The SDA Church as a community must take part in stopping abuses. The church members have been trained to correct abuses in marriages. The police could help in stopping abuses; however, the church should know that the police are not marriage counselors. The police solutions in stopping abuses are temporary (Retief 2005:149).

The police send abusers to court after their arrests. The SDA Church could depend upon the courts to stop the abuses but not fully. The courts are not religious bodies, but secular. Secular courts have their own values some of which contradict the church teaching.

Retief (2005:147-148) advocates leaving the marriage or seeking divorce as the main solution to physical abuse. Research does not agree with him fully because some women may not be economically independent from the husband. It should be emphasized that the SDA Church should teach the women to be economically independent. When the husband abuses his wife, she could easily leave and stay somewhere else without economic problems.

Husbands who practice physical abuse do not treat their partners on equal terms. Their wives are treated as their property. Such marriages apply traditional values in their marriage relationships. The male spouse in the marriage of the abuser does most of the decision-making. The husband in the abused marriage has an autocratic style of leadership (Richmond and Bode 1995:249; Balswick and Balswick 1989:80).

Physical abuse and autocracy have many negative influences on the marriage relationship. “Verbal abuse eats away at the foundation and supports of love in...marriage in the same way ants eat away at the foundation and supports of home. Without sufficient support your relationship will come crashing down”(Richmond and Bode 1995:234). It is important to stop the abuse so that marriages would succeed.

#### 5.8.4 STOPPING PHYSICAL ABUSES AND DICTATORSHIP

Wife abuse is prohibited in the Bible (Mal. 2:16). In Israel, wife abuse was not a common practice (Retief 2005:146). However, in contemporary Malawi wife abuse is common even in Christian homes.

Physical and verbal abuse could be more common in homes where one of the spouses is an unbeliever. Some of the abuses that women experience from their husbands come because some women become rude, disobedient, disrespectful etc to their unbelieving husband. A God-fearing woman is expected to do the following to her husband even if he is not a believer (Berry 1981:46-49).

Firstly, she has to do good things to her husband all days of her life (Prov. 31:12). Secondly, she has to submit by surrendering her will to her husband in obedience. Thirdly, she has to refrain from harming the husband.

Fourthly, she “must never let down on her standards or live in opposition to stated scriptural principles” (Berry 1981:46). Fifthly, she has to speak well of her husband to her friends (Berry 1981:46).

She also has to be totally committed to marriage welfare and to refrain from looking down on the unbelieving spouse when he is alone or in the presence of people.

Moreover, she has to dwell much on the positive side of the spouse than the negatives and refrain from speaking in a harsh way to the husband. Lastly, she has to give happiness and pleasure to the husband at all times.

The abused person must know that she/he cannot stop the abuse alone without seeking outside help. The church, counselors, legal experts, police, family members community authorities etc should be approached (Richmond and Bode 1995; Mazat 1995:5-7; Henson 1999:121).

The church should be sought first by the abused victim to offer help. If the church has failed to help, the abused she/he can contact counselors. Experts that do not belong to the church should be the last to be sought when the church has failed to solve the abuse problem. Seeking church intervention helps to maintain respect for the church in the general public.

Breaking out of silence is no alternative to stopping physical abuse. The abused should not keep the abuse secret. It is necessary to be bold enough to come out in the open and

tell the whole truth of the abuse situation that one encounters (Richmond and Bode 1995:250).

Former abused victims are a reservoir of information for the church to know that abuses are carried out in Christian homes. Some former victims of abuse could become the best tools in combating abuses in Christian marriages. The church and the abused victims must not ignore their advice on how to combat abuses. The former abused victims have encouraging experiences of how they had broken the abuse in their lives. Such wonderful experiences are useful in encouraging the abused people and they give them hope (Richmond and Bode 1995: 250).

The Malawians with an African mind emphasize the masculinity of their father. The father-husband is expected to be tough. However, these traits are not advocated in Christian standards. Christian men are expected to be “less warlike, peace-loving, stable...” (Henson 1999:120). In counseling and educating the church, the pastors should emphasize the idea postulated by Henson (1999:120) so that they are able to destroy the old belief in the African mind of being tough.

The abusers or men in the church “must be taught that God requires them to take full responsibility for their actions” (Jackson 1999:67). The SDA Church Christian should never allow himself “to show a tyrannical spirit at home. The man who does this is working in partnership with satanic agencies” (White 1980:213).

In the thinking of a cultural Malawian, physical abuse is one of the best ways in solving a marriage conflict. They “view spouse as property and an object” (Richmond and Bode 1995:249). The Bible warns: “If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other”( Gal. 5:15NIV). Fighting destroys love and the relationship.

Divorce can be used (Jackson 1999:69), as I have discussed elsewhere in the dissertation; however, it is not one of the best solutions. Educating and counseling the abusers and the abused is the best of all the above solutions (Henson 1999:121).

The officiating minister of newly married couples in pre-marital counseling should confront and exorcise past abuses suffered by newlyweds in their childhood. This would help to provide a firm foundation in building a marriage free from abuse (Forward and Torres 1987:193).

#### 5.8.5 DEALING WITH DISADVANTAGES OF TOLERATING PHYSICAL ABUSES AND AUTOCRACY

There are some terrible disadvantages that could result if the correction of abuses has been neglected such as the following:

Firstly, if the physical abuse cannot be corrected, it will continue in the marriage relationship. The victim continues suffering throughout his/her life. The abused victim lives in fear and bondage to the abuser. “People become more entrenched in their behaviors as they get older, they are less willing to change”(Forward and Torres 1987:174). The church should be on the lookout for newly married couples to break the habit of physical abuse in its early stages if it is there.

Secondly, the physical abuse will be transferred to future generations if the abuses are corrected. Physical abuse might become a culture transferred to the next generation through their children. In some abusive marriages, boys are taught to abuse girls. Girls are taught to submit themselves to abuse. Such teaching becomes perpetuated in future generations (Forward and Torres 1987:174). It is important for Christian parents to teach their children that boys and girls have equal status in the family. Parents should demonstrate their teaching of equality in the way they treat their children who are boys and girls. This would help to create a new generation where physical abuse would disappear. I emphasize that stopping physical abuse should be taken seriously by the SDA Church.

#### 5.9 SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

“Religion is an asset to marriage. The committed religious person has a greater chance of marital happiness” (Van Pelt 1986:169). Much of religious teaching reinforces good values that could make marriages successful through the practice of those values.

These are some of the steps that can help to build spiritual maturity. Firstly, reading God's word every day (Matt. 22:28). Secondly, obeying and applying God's word every day to personal life (Ps. 119:11). "Obeying is a precondition for experiencing God's work in our own life. Disobedience hinders our fellowship with, and fruitfulness for the Lord" (Wood 2002:26).

Others are praying to God to change your life, and witnessing or proclaiming the gospel. "The one who waters will be watered himself" (Prov. 11:25 RSV). Lastly, submit herself/himself to the working of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). God's power and your personal will should be combined together to produce personal spiritual maturity. The personal will should rest on divine power to allow it to grow (Johns 1996:98).

#### 5.10 THE SDA CHURCH DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MALAWI GOVERNMENT ABOUT MARRIAGE

It is important that the Malawi government introduce a curriculum on marriage education in their educational institutions. The government can form organizations or a department to deal with marriage care and counseling. The SDA Church should take the initiative to influence the Malawi government about this necessity. If the government accepts and starts the organizations or a department, the results of such a development may also influence the SDA Church members in the success of their marriages. The Malawi Government could conduct research projects on how they could introduce marriage education in its educational institutions.

#### 5.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it has been discussed that adultery tears apart the marriage relationship. The maintaining of distance between opposite sexes can prevent adultery. Intimacy can bind the couple so that no third person could seduce them to commit adultery. Non-communication between the adulterers could be one of the methods to heal adultery.

Good communication enhances success in marriage. Methods have been discussed which should be put into practice through verbal and non-verbal language. Opinions of each

couple should be discussed between them. There should be self-disclosure to each other to enhance intimacy.

The goal in successful communication is to blend temperaments of spouses together so that they develop intimacy.

Being able to take care of oneself is a sign that a person is mature physically and financially. The married partners should develop maturity financially and physically.

Adoption can alleviate the need for a baby for infertile spouses. However, medical examination and help of professional marriage counselors must be sought first before resorting to adoption.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer can also bring change of heart and spiritual maturity in the believer. Educating the couples and pre-marital counseling for the prospective spouses can solve abuses. Out of all strategies presented in this chapter, educating the spouses, counseling and premarital counseling are the best methods to solve the above mentioned problems.

It has been discussed that the Malawi government should also play a role in the ensuring of successful marriage in Malawi. The SDA Church should persuade the government to start a Marriage Department, which could be responsible for marriage counseling and enrichment.

## CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 GUIDELINES FOR PASTORS

Solving the overall problem of marriage failure cannot take place in a single day. It is a process, which man take many days and even years. This chapter deals with how pastors could become effective tools in the making and maintaining of successful marriages in the SDA Church. As already said in the confessional approach of this research study, the training of pastors is the most important method that could be used by the church to fulfill its duties (Van Wyk 1995:88).

Marriage training should begin with the pastors who in turn will facilitate the process from church leadership level to the local church members. The SDA Church at national level should look for trained competent personnel to train her pastors. The training should be done on continuous basis. None among the pastors should be neglected in the training program. The researcher is obligated to bring to the attention of the SDA Church authorities issues raised in this dissertation.

The training offered to the pastors should be in-service programs. In-service programs help pastors to practice what they learn on their people. Immediately putting into practice what has been learnt helps in the inculcation of knowledge. This knowledge should include all ages of the people in the church. There should be training in courtship, premarital counseling, marriage enrichment, parenting etc.

Once the above content has been given, the trainer should focus his/her attention on pastoral counseling. The major focus of this counseling should be skills in marriage counseling. The approach should be biblical and psychological. Training pastors should broaden their mind to appropriate both religious and psychological methods in marriage. There are many inputs from psychology even though it is a secular science to be combined with Christian counseling. Aspects found in psychology that contradict Christian values must be discarded.

The last areas to be included in the training of pastors are skills in transmitting the knowledge they have learnt to their congregations. Various strategies should be taught to the pastors to make the program a reality and effective. Pastors should be taught to share the ministry with the local church leadership as their first step. Supervision should be assigned to each pastor to see how he/she applies the knowledge that has been learnt. Certificates should be issued after the trainee pastors have successfully completed their course.

After divulging the importance of the marriage ministry, he/she should create leadership teams to be equipped with the knowledge he/she has learnt from the training. A quarterly evaluation should be done from time to time to monitor the progress of the teams.

Mahoney (1993: A1 2-9) outlines five principles given to Moses by God as an answer to his complaint. Moses' complaint was that he was not able to bear the work alone (Num. 11: 14-15). God taught Moses to **“Train Others To Help... Teach Them The Bible... Show Them The Work To Do... Transfer The Anointing...Transfer The Burden.”** (bold emphasis his). Pastors who have to engage themselves in the marriage ministry must emulate these principles. The five principles have to become part of the syllabus for the pastors to follow in their training program.

Pastors must conduct marriage seminars and counseling sessions in their churches giving examples to their trainees. It is important that pamphlets should be written and given to the attendees. The attendees should actively participate in the Seminars and discussions for their future services in the marriage ministry.

The pastor of the local church should conduct premarital counseling sessions for all those who anticipate marriage. This should not be done in a hurry. The counseling session should start with single people who intend to marry. There should be continuity after marriage throughout their lifetime as a preventive measure for them in order not to fall into problems.



The SDA Church should formulate a marriage policy in its policies that “all persons seeking to be married must have premarital counseling.” (Morris and Morris 1985:121). No one should be allowed by the SDA Church to get married without premarital counseling.

The local church or pastor should invite other pastors who are competent and fluent to address marriage issues. The church should have a variety of pastors and skills from the visiting guests. Having one person from time to time to conduct marriage seminars may be boring to some members. Only pastors trained in marriage issues should be invited.

There should be fellowships for marriage relationships. They should be able to share their marriage experiences together. There can be even an outing to break the monotony. A marriage symposium at regional and national levels could be organized.

The Bible recognizes the parents as the first greatest teachers of any child. “And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates”(Deut. 6:6-9 RSV). No one can become a good teacher unless taught. The church should know that they have the responsibility to teach parenting methods to its members. Once the parents have acquired parenting skills, they will perform better tasks in the parenting field.

The Home is a School (White 1952:20-22). The students of the Home School are the children. Parents are teachers of the home school. In the above passage the Bible advises the use of charts in the teaching of children. Parents should be aware that their children would emulate any behavior they display to their kids. “A large majority of abusive men were abused as children or directly witnessed their mothers being abused in the homes”(Jackson 1999:64). There is a need for Christians to have successful marriages.

The parents should put into practice what they teach their children so that their children copy Christian behaviors.

Educational institutions of the SDA Church can play very important roles in the formation of successful marriages. They should introduce marriage courses to finishing mature students. The majority of Malawians drop out of school after completing standard 8 (Primary School Leaving Certificate), Junior Certificate (JC), or ordinary level examinations.

The local church should divide its married members into small groups. Each group should have its leadership, which will be responsible for monitoring the marriage affairs of those couples (Morris and Morris 1985:121). The leadership of each group should organize meetings, and activities of the group.

The Family Life Administrators at Field and Union level should produce booklets or handouts, which can be used for teaching and giving to church members in the marriage seminars. If they are expensive to produce, they can be sold to the members so that they find money to defray the printing cost. Booklets should have exercises that the group members should discuss together and answer in groups.

The church should help its members to be economically independent. Members could be trained in farming methods, trades, etc. The Bible (2 Thess. 3:10-12; Exod. 20:8-11) encourages church members to work hard. Trained experts should be invited to teach the church members modern methods of farming, trade etc.

According to the answers given in the questionnaire, the church has done little or neglected some local churches that need to educate its members in successful Christian marriage. It is high time that this changes for the better.

The local churches should organize marriage recommitment and renewal ceremonies at least twice a year. Vows taken at the first time when they got married should be repeated

at this time. Several couples could be involved in the renewal of marriage vows. It should be organized in such a way that the occasion becomes interesting. Veils can be worn by wives if they need to do so. They can have a dressing of their choice (Lowery 2002: 235-238). Certificates of marriage renewal should be given to the couples. Some dignitaries, parents, relatives and friends could be invited to witness the occasions. A meal could be prepared at which all married couples who have renewed their vows could eat together. The people that have attended the ceremony could also be invited to eat together on this occasion.

The SDA Church does not have rules and regulations regarding marriage in Malawi. It is now time for the church leadership and its pastors to look at the possibility of formulating rules and strategies of combating marriage failure.

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF DISCOVERIES

This research has discovered very important issues that wreck marriages in the SDA Church in Malawi. These issues can become the background of future researches. Some of the discoveries found in the research are below:

Firstly, it was found that prostitution was very high among the church members. Many marriages crumble because of this problem. There are reasons why married couples engage in this prostitution. The major reason for marriage failure is adultery.

Secondly, communication breakdown was discovered to be the second cause of marriage failure. There are several factors that lead to the problem in most marriages. Infertility, abuse, unplanned marriages, dictatorship are some of the examples that were mentioned by the respondents.

Thirdly, it was discovered that many people get married with an intention of having a companion. However, others marry for the wrong reasons such as sexual satisfaction, procreation, parental influence, security purposes etc. The issue of companionship is not treated as a priority in their marriages. Hence, when they marry, they treat their partners

not as their companions first but as sex partners for reproduction etc. The reasons for getting married do not form the solid grounds that make successful marriages.

Many couples have troubled marriages because of financial problems, originating from laziness, physical immaturity, inadequacy or mismanagement. Misunderstandings in this area spill to other areas of their marriage relationship resulting in marriage failure.

The fifth discovery was the age group, which has the highest divorces. This is 18-35 years of age. Teenagers have the highest divorces among all groups of people. Above teenage, marriage failure starts to decrease. From 35 years, most marriages start to get settled and there are few divorces reported in this area.

The research discovered that about seventy percent of the marriages in the Field office level have troubled marriages. The women who were interviewed indicated that men take for granted the need to satisfy their wives. Most of these women decide not to bother men with their demands or needs.

Another finding was that marriage failure is very serious. There are external signs which can easily be observed in couples who are experiencing problems. They do not sit together in the church. You can hardly find them walking together.

Most troubled marriage couples live in ignorance. They do not know the cause of their troubles.

It was also found that the SDA Church pastors in some places conduct marriage seminars and counseling sessions. Yet in many churches nothing is being done. The church members have no place where they could go and report their problems for help.

The last finding was that all classes of people in the church have marriage problems. The SDA Church has much work to be done to reach all classes of the people in the church.

### 6.3 RECOMMENDED FUTURE AREAS FOR RESEARCH

There are four areas that arise from this research. Firstly, my methods in the training of pastors, formation of counseling teams, and parenting have not been developed. However, the researcher fully believes that once developed, they could bring tremendous positive results to the SDA Church as a whole.

Secondly, the area of adultery has not been fully addressed in this dissertation. It is important that future researchers find the causes of extramarital affairs in the SDA Church of Malawi.

Thirdly, researchers should think of undertaking the issue of financial resources. This research as a whole has not fully addressed the issue. A person who does not know how to use financial resources in a marriage relationship cannot have a successful marriage.

Fourthly, marriage seminars conducted by the pastors have been suggested in the research. It is important that future research examines methodologies, content, and their effectiveness to the church. It will be important to know challenges that pastors face in the way they conduct marriage seminars. This research has not looked at how these seminars are being run.

Lastly, I would urge the education department of the SDA Church to conduct research on how the restructuring of the curriculum could build a strong background of marriage in their students who will be future married couples. The education department is in a better position to do that because the organization has more educated personnel than the local church members who are mostly illiterate. Their own education and the institutions where they belong could become better tools in this ministry.

### 6.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, several recommendations have been made to the pastors and SDA Church leadership. These include the training of pastors to form counseling teams at their local

churches, seminars, publishing booklets on marriage and the introduction of courses in the SDA Church educational institutions.

There is a need of integration, which has for involve all the aforesaid suggestions in the process. The Family Life Directors at the Field level and the Union offices should facilitate the integration of all these activities. Detaching them cannot produce effective results. Chapter six gives a summary of findings and the recommendation for future areas of research.

It is a common saying that prevention is better than cure. It is important that the SDA Church knows how to build strong foundations of marriage. Christians are more advantaged than non-believers in making successful marriages. The Bible says “To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (John 1:12 RSV). By this power, the Christian will be helped to succeed in the laying a strong foundation for a successful marriage.

Ignorance of married couples about how to run a marriage causes lack of communication which creates a problem in the marriage. It is something that the church should not neglect but take as one of the issues that are of supreme importance in the church.

Pastors should play a central role in the organization of the church so as to be able to facilitate programs which will enrich marriages. Even though some members could see marriage failure they have no power to introduce enrichment programs. Therefore it is the pastors who should initiate marriage seminars for the church. Pastors should play an active role in the process of building and strengthening marriages.

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APPENDIX 1

MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SEVENTH –DAY ADVENTIST  
CHURCH IN MALAWI

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Four reasons why people get married in your Local church

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(Write the reasons beginning with the most important one, its second till the fourth)

3. Three reasons that mostly cause divorce in your church

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4. (a) Which age group has the highest divorce rate in your church?

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(b) What are the causes?



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5. What percentage of marriages do you think in your Field (Regional offices) are successfully happy?

(a) What constitutes a happy marriage in your local church?

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(b) What makes some of the marriages to be unhappy in your local church?

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6. Are there external signs to show that some marriages in your church are unhappy? If yes, what are they?

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7. What makes many marriages unhappy?

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8. Are the unhappy couples aware of what makes them to have unhappy marriages?

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9. What has your church done to solve marriage failure?

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10. Which class of people in your church has the highest marriage failure? For example rich educated, rich uneducated, poor uneducated etc.

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Thank you very much for your time and understanding to answer this questionnaire

Send it to: Lysant Molly Tembo  
C / o Mrs. F. C. Tembo  
World Vision Malawi  
P.O. Box 494  
Salima  
MALAWI

Tel: 265-01- 262 989 (H), 265-9-233 730 (Mobile), 265-8- 201 339 (Mobile).

APPENDIX 2:

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE: MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE  
REGIONAL COURT OFFICES IN MALAWI

1. (a) Name of the Regional court office \_\_\_\_\_ Name of the official interviewed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Appropriately how many marriages get divorced in your region a year? \_\_\_\_\_  
Ages with the highest \_\_\_\_\_ Christian \_\_\_\_\_ non-religious
  
3. As compared to the past was there a reduction of divorces last year?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What were the four major causes of divorce?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What has caused the rise of divorces?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What are the common strategies sought by the prospective divorces to solve their problems before divorce?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. In your own opinion what do you think should be done to reduce marriages getting divorce?

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Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire. May the merciful and loving God bless your work and marriage.

Use extra papers if this questionnaire does not fit all you need to write.

Post this questionnaire to:

Lysant M.L. Tembo,  
C/O Mrs F. Tembo,  
P.O. Box 494,  
Salima,

MALAWI

Tel. 265-01-262 989 (H), 265-09-233 730 (Mobile), 265-08-201 339 (Mobile)