

**DIVORCE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE**

**BY:**

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## DECLARATION

I (Collen Hlakudi Magampa) hereby declare that this dissertation which I submit for the degree *Magister Artium* (Practical Theology) at the University of Pretoria is a product of my own original work, and has not being submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university. All sources I used have been indicated and duly acknowledges by means of complete references.

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## SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the rate of divorce since the onset of democracy (1994). The author intends to examine the causes of divorce as well as the impact of divorce on the parties involved. The author believes that gender equality and women rights are possible contributing factors to the problem of the high rate of divorce South Africa is witnessing today (this will serve as our research gap). Qualitative method will be employed in this study. Interviews will be conducted with the divorcees. The participants (the divorcees) will be our source of knowledge. Interviews will be recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Now that divorce is rampant, it is the duty of the clergy to pastorally care for the divorcee. The author will propose a pastoral care model to help the divorcee cope with their situation. The author will as well analyse some biblical passages that are sometimes misinterpreted by theologically untrained pastors to reject the divorcee. Since our study is in the area of practical theology, the author will focus on the practical application of the biblical passages addressing the issue of divorce that are often misunderstood, and therefore, misapplied. Stigma associated with divorce, especially in African culture and context will be discussed.

The findings from this study will be evaluated and analysed. Thematic analysis will be employed. And from the analysis of the findings, the author will then be able to give recommendations. Recommendations will be made with regard to caring for the divorcee within the church (the body of Christ).

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my dear father, the late Nkagele Joseph Magampa N.D., D.H.,. Born in 1940, and departed in 1992. His love for knowledge and enlightenment will always be a legacy for his offspring. He will always be remembered for his love of education. May his soul rest in peace.

## **KEY WORDS**

Divorce

Marriage

Democracy

Human rights

Hermeneutics

Pastoral care

Participants

Postmodernity

Statistics

Qualitative

## ABBREVIATIONS

- KJV - King James Version
- NIV - New International Version
- Stats S.A - Statistics South Africa
- NT - New Testament
- OT - Old Testament
- A.D - Anno Domini

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## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Some people confuse singleness with being abnormal. In the African culture there is an expectation that any young person will get married at some point, especially if he or she is a leader in the church. Members of the church would sarcastically say that they cannot be led by an unmarried person. How will he or she solve problems faced by married people? On the other hand family, in particular parents would want one to get married so that they may have grandchildren. In other words, being single is viewed as an anomaly. According to Reynolds, “Many people think that every normal person needs to get married” (Reynolds 2008:123). ‘

Isaac (not a real name) is 36 years old and still single and considering to be celibate; a way of life relatively unknown in his culture. He is an African Sepedi (Northern Sotho) speaking young man. According to his culture and norms he is expected at some point to get married. Culturally, his family is expecting a *Makoti* (daughter-in-law). Isaac is a leader in the church (congregation). Further, the expectations of his church are such that, among others, as a leader, the church is also expecting him to marry. The intimations within the church are that a *Mmamoruti* (pastor’s wife) is needed. Taking into consideration the current statistics of divorce in South Africa, Isaac is perplexed and asking himself the following questions: Should I marry only to divorce later? Should I remain single like Paul in the Bible? What if I do not have a gift of singleness like Paul? Other than Isaac, the author is of the opinion that there might be unmarried people in South Africa today who perceived the problem of divorce and are confused. Some of the divorcees do not cope well with the hurt caused by divorce. Since divorce is rampant in South Africa, the study intends to suggest a pastoral care model for the divorced. Statistics South Africa shows that the divorce rate is going higher (see Lehohla 2015:6-7).

## 1.2 BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

The Bible notes that in the beginning God created Adam and Eve and joined them together in marriage in permanent relationship (see Genesis 2:22-24). However, as time went on, the people experienced divorce (see Leviticus 21:7; Numbers 30:9; and Deuteronomy 22:19). Divorce has become part of life, and the clergy find themselves having to increasingly provide care for the divorcees through ministering to them. There is a popular saying in our townships that *Marriage is like flies on the window, those that are outside want to come in and those that are inside want to go out*. The statistics show that since 1994, the rate of divorce is going higher in South Africa (Lehohla 2012 no page). The rate of divorce is proving to be a growing pastoral challenge in a democratic South Africa.

Although South African law allows same sex marriage, the focus of this study will be on divorce within heterosexual marriages. Just as the Bible teaches us to enter into relationships carefully and reverently, divorce is to be avoided at all costs. Honouring and upholding the marriage vows brings honour to God. Marriage was meant to be a lifelong union. In the beginning God created Adam and He made for him a suitable lifelong companion, a helper, and a sexual partner in marriage (O'Donovan 1995:227). Even today, marriage is still meant to be an all-time bond.

## 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Divorce suggests that something is not right with marriage. It is important to note that the African community does not tolerate divorce. The divorcees are rejected and isolated in the communities as well as in the churches. Divorce is a problem because it is hurting humanity and affects our nation negatively. It is devastating the lives of many South Africans. Arendell shares the same perspective by saying that:

“Divorce is equally hard on men and women. Certainly, ending a marriage through divorce is a major life transition for both spouses” (Arendell 1986:3).

“Divorce is an emotional crisis triggered by a sudden and unexpected loss” (Baloyi 2011:45). After a divorce, life takes another direction with wounds to be healed from both parties. Divorce does not affect only the two parties concerned. In cases where the divorcing parties have children, those children are also distressed by the divorce (see Clapp 2000:69-85). “Divorce is never easy. Even when a couple agrees to terminate their marriage, it hurts to separate” (Beeselaar 2011:121). Toomim states that the child of divorcing parents is losing a basic psychological support system (Toomim 1974:89). Thus every child needs both parents for they are both important for the development of a child and caring for the family.

Though people are divorcing in large numbers, marriage is still appreciated because more than half of the divorced people remarry. The sad part is that they end up divorcing again (see Bunyoung 2005:23).

The above ideas raise lots of questions which will help to formulate the problem statement.

- ❖ Why are people divorcing easily since 1994?
- ❖ Has human rights facilitated an easy way of divorce?
- ❖ How can clergy (pastor) care for those who are divorcing and are rejected by society and the church?

#### **1.4 PROBLEM QUESTION**

Because the rise of divorce in South Africa is a pastoral challenge, the questions which one needs to consider are:

- ❖ How should the clergy care for the divorced pastorally?
- ❖ What is it that causes South Africans to divorce in such a way that South Africa is one of the leading divorcing countries in the world?

- ❖ What is it that South Africans are doing wrong, which escalated the rate of divorce?
- ❖ What model may be employed in caring for the divorcees?

## **1.5 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The aims of this study are divided into two:

1. The general aims
2. The specific aims

### **1.5.1 The general aims of the study**

The general aims of this study are as follows:

- ❖ To research the present divorce rate in South Africa
- ❖ To compare the statistics of divorce during and after the apartheid era
- ❖ To investigate the reaction of our communities and churches towards the divorcees

### **1.5.2 The specific aims of the study**

The specific aims of this study are:

- ❖ To derive an understanding on how the church views a divorce
- ❖ To derive an understanding on how African culture views divorce
- ❖ To suggest a pastoral care model for divorcees

## **1.6 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study may be summarised as follows:

- ❖ To investigate the rate of divorce in South Africa since the onset of democracy (1994)
- ❖ To empower the divorcees, in order for them to relate properly
- ❖ To suggest a pastoral care model for the pastoral caregivers

## 1.7 THE RESEARCH GAP

The research gap identified is: “Gender equality and human rights as the possible contributing factors towards the problem of the upswing of divorce in South Africa since the onset of democracy (1994).” Men from a patriarchal background find it difficult to accept equality with women. Boko explains, “Some men do not accept gender equality and will not assist with work in the home” (Boko 2011:47). As a consequence, they divorce. Several topics related to the subject of divorce have been researched in the area of sociology (see Nkuna 1996), psychology (see Magane 2000), law (see Preller 2012), and theology (see Kitching 2008; Matooane 2008; Baloyi 2011; and Mditshane 2012). But none of the writers seem to allude to gender equality and human rights as possible contributing concerns in respect to the problem of the increase in the divorce rate. The study intends to approach this topic from the pastoral care point of view. One of a minister’s responsibilities as a pastoral caregiver is to “weep with those who weep” (Mditshane 2012:83). The weeping in this case are the divorcees and they need to be cared for pastorally. Preller (2012:1) outlined ten top causes of divorce in South Africa as follows:

1. Lack of communication,
2. Physical, psychological, financial, or emotional abuse,
3. Marriage infidelity,
4. Social networks—Facebook, Twitter and Mixit,
5. Addictions,
6. Sexual incompatibility,
7. Finances,
8. Parental responsibilities,
9. Religious differences, and
10. Differences in priorities.

On the same note, Lippman and Lewis (2008:1-17) also outlined the reasons for divorce as follows:

1. Abusive relationships,

2. Infidelity,
3. Physical illness,
4. Mental illness,
5. Growing apart, and
6. Cultural and religious differences.

The above will help the study to explore this topic pastorally. Kunhiyop made mention of childlessness as the greatest single factor that causes quick divorce (Kunhiyop 2008:249. c.f Khathide 2007:148). The study will focus on gender equality, and human rights as possible contributing factors to the crisis of the escalation of divorce South Africans are facing today.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study will employ qualitative research methodology and not quantitative methodology. Willig distinguishes between qualitative and quantitative in this way:

“Quantitative research relies upon representative samples. To be able to generalize their findings to the general population, quantitative researchers need to ensure that participants in their study are representative of this population. Qualitative research tends to work with relatively small numbers of participants. This is due to the time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of qualitative data collection and analysis ...” (Willig 2008:17).

This study will not work with representative samples, but will work with rather small numbers of participants (the co-researchers). During interviews, open questions will be employed so that the participants can feel invited to share their stories or to say more (see Dreyer 2014:1). Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The study/researcher will consult books, commentaries, journals and electronic resources, directly or indirectly related to the breaking up of nuptials. Some interviews will be conducted including the following people:

- ❖ Divorced men and women (at least fourteen of them).
- ❖ Pastors dealing with the divorced (at least four of them).



The divorced men and women will tell their stories and share their experiences. The pastors who dealt with this challenge in the past will share their know-how. The researcher will use a narrative research method. The narrative approach will be used “to obtain involvement in order to enrich one another in the search for hope within feelings of hopelessness” (Kitching 2008:9). Africans are good narrators of stories. Narration according to Czarniawska “Is a common mode of communication. People tell stories to entertain, to teach and to learn, to ask for interpretation and to give one” (Czarniawska 2004:10). The study is not conducted by an omniscient professional, but the co-researchers as narrators of their life stories are possessors of the power of knowledge. What the study is going to offer to the co-researcher is not the author’s views but the author’s respectful and interested attention. The inputs of the participants will endeavour to help in improving the lives of the suffering.

The study will employ the pastoral care model propounded by Gerkin. According to Gerkin in his book *An Introduction to Pastoral Care 1997*, a pastor is a shepherd of the flock who functions as a priest, a prophet, and a wise guide (Gerkin 1997:79). The flock in this case involves the divorcees who are hurting. The study will suggest a pastoral care model that can/could be beneficial in counselling the divorcees.

Alongside the caring or shepherding model by Gerkin, the study will also tap into Wimberly’s work of *Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity 2003*, which will help in reclaiming the dignity lost by the hurting divorcees. The divorcees are no longer afforded the respect they used to enjoy when they were married. They are treated as people who lost status in the society. Wimberly believes that privileging (maybe should be allowing or facilitating) God conversation is capable of helping the sufferer to cope with difficulties. He explains,

“Negative stories always impoverish the person; positive stories enhance and enrich. Negative stories lead us away from God and ultimately to sin and death; positive stories lead us toward a relationship with God” (Wimberly 2003:27).

It is incumbent upon ministers to communicate positive stories that will enhance and enrich the affected. Wimberly presents Job as a perfect example of a person who,

through positive conversation with God, was enabled to survive suffering (Wimberly 2003:28-31). These models will be discussed in chapter two.

When executing professional research, there are ethical issues to be afforded necessary consideration. All ethical issues will be taken into consideration when executing this study.

## **1.9 ETHICS ISSUES**

The study intends to take into consideration all the necessary ethical issues in the execution of this inquiry. This will be done in order to protect and not to harm the participants.

### **1.9.1 Harm to experimental subjects and/or respondents**

The interviews will be conducted in such a way that the participants will not be harmed in any way. Strydom explain possible harm during interviews in the following manner,

“Subjects can be harmed in a physical and/or emotional manner. One may accept that harm to respondents in the social sciences will mainly be of an emotional nature, although physical injury cannot be ruled out completely” (Strydom 2012:115).

The interviews will be conducted in a very professional and responsible manner. The drafting of questions will be done in such a way that they will not offend the participants. The participants will be told prior to interviewing them that their participation is voluntary; and that it is within their rights to withdraw at any time. “Respondents should be thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation. Such information offers the respondents the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation if they so wish” (Strydom 2012:115). The interviewer will make sure he eliminate the possibilities of participants being harmed by the interviews.

### **1.9.2 Informed consent**

The purpose of this study will be explained honestly to the participants prior to the actual interviews. Strydom cited Williams et al, when they explained that,

“Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation; the expected duration of the participant’s involvement; the procedures that will be followed during the investigation; the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed; as well as the credibility of the researcher, be rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives” (Strydom 2012:117).

The participants will be informed that it was within their rights to request information gathered from them at any time. They will also be informed that their participation is voluntary. Strydom explains,

“Subjects may decide to participate for various reasons. Some of the most important reasons may be for fear of victimisation (if they do not participate) or the prospect of payment for participation. Persons with a lower status and less power than the researcher, such as children, prisoners and psychiatric patients, may feel compelled to participate, or consider participation as a way of handling boredom or of receiving certain privileges” (Strydom 2012:118).

In this study, the participants will voluntarily participate without any fear of victimisation and there will be no promises of financial gain for them.

### **1.9.3 Benefits to participants**

The findings and recommendations of this study will be made available to the participants. The author will listen respectfully to the participants as they tell their stories during interviews. Though the aim of doing interviews is not to offer therapy, the respectful listening might be therapeutic. On the other hand, the telling of the story itself by the participants might be therapeutic as well. If needs be, the author, assisted by the supervisor, will facilitate a session with some churches and members of the clergy to guide them on how to journey with the divorcees. The participants will be informed that they will receive no payment or compensation for participating in this research.

The participants will not be deceived by the author by either giving them wrong information, or withholding information from them.

#### **1.9.4 Deception**

Participants will not be deceived regarding the purpose of this study. The motivation behind doing this study will be explained truthfully and honestly to the participants. Strydom cites Corey, et al, when they say that, “deception involves withholding information or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects when they would otherwise possibly have refused it” (Strydom 2012:119). The study will not be deceptive in any way. The study will not lie but be truthful about the purpose of this inquiry. “Lying about research purposes is common, especially in the case of small qualitative projects” (Strydom 2012:119). Lying about research purpose might be common, but this study will be conducted in a very professional and honest manner.

The study will not infringe upon the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

#### **1.9.5 Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality**

“Privacy implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner” (Strydom 2012:119). For the purpose of this study, violation of privacy, the right to self-determination and confidentiality may be regarded as being synonymous. The information to be gathered from the participants will be regarded as private and confidential. The study will not use real names when referring to participants in order for the participants to remain anonymous. In this study, participants will be assured anonymity in covering letters and through verbal communication by the author. The study will be faithful to this promise of anonymity to protect the participants. The information gathered from the participants will be destroyed immediately in case they decide to withdraw their participation from the study. Pseudonyms will be used when reporting the outcome of what the participants will share. The study will be conducted with a high level of proficiency.

#### **1.9.6 Actions and competence of researcher**

The topic of divorce is a sensitive subject. It is sensitive because there are wounds involved. The author is proficient and amply skilled to undertake this investigation because he was trained in class before undertaking this endeavour. Strydom explains,

“Researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation. When sensitive investigations are involved, this requirement is even more important” (Strydom 2012:123).

The author is capable enough to handle this sensitive investigation. He was trained thoroughly on how to handle interviews. Strydom warns that,

“Professionals in the caring professions are trained not to impress their own personal value systems on clients or patients. They must refrain from making value judgements about the points of view and actions of the subjects, even if they conflict directly with those of the researcher” (Strydom 2012:124).

The author will not impose his own personal value system on participants. He will listen to their points of view without making value judgements about their points of view, and their actions.

### **1.9.7 Release or publication of findings**

The findings of this study will be introduced to the reading public in a written form. A completed dissertation will be made available in the library shelves of the University of Pretoria. Strydom explains,

“The findings of the study must be introduced to the reading public in written form, otherwise even a highly scientific investigation will mean very little and will not be viewed as research” (Strydom 2012:126).

The ideas and contributions from the participants will be expressed plainly and unambiguously. “The information must be formulated and conveyed clearly and unambiguously to avoid or minimise misappropriation by subjects, the general public and even the colleagues” (Strydom 2012:126). Findings of this study will be documented and presented clearly. The outcomes of this study will be made available to participants.

## **1.10 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

It is indicated in this chapter that the escalation of divorce in South Africa since 1994 is a challenge pastorally. Divorce has a negative impact on the parties concerned, and it affects the society at large. Pastorally it is a challenge to members of the clergy. A Pastoral care model will be suggested for members of the clergy. The Qualitative method of research will be employed in executing this investigation. Interviews will be conducted. From the research problem to the research gap, the need for this study has become more evident. The next chapter will, therefore, concentrate on the methodology to be employed in this study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is devoted to the methodology that is to be used in this study. It embraces such components as the nature of the research as well as the model of pastoral care adopted for this study.

#### **2.2 THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH**

The general approach to this study is empirical, qualitative, narrative, and hermeneutical. The above mentioned terminologies will be discussed briefly.

##### **2.2.1 Empirical research**

According to the Oxford dictionary, the word “empirical” means “based on observation or experiment, not on theory” (Oxford dictionary 1981:199). “In the empirical approach, scientific decisions are made based on the data derived from direct observation and experimentation” (Kaufman & Kaufman 2005:6). Empirical means “based on experience” (Mcburny 1994:1). This study is empirical as interviews will be conducted with the people who personally went through divorce. Interviews with and data gathered from people with personal experience in matters pertaining to divorce will be evaluated and analysed. “It is empirical because it is based on concrete evidence; it is based on facts as they have been unfolding over the years” (Matshiga 2001:32). Tangible evidence will be gathered in the form of personal interviews. “Personal interview is probably the most reliable method of research, provided it is properly conducted” (Kinimi 1997:22). The study will conduct interviews properly so that the reader may have an understanding of the issue of divorce from the perspective of the research participants (the interviewees).

Alongside interviews, the study will as well dialogue with several authors of books, articles, dissertations and theses related to the subject of divorce. Because of the on-going nature of the problem of divorce, the study will also collect relevant data and

stories from the newspapers and the internet. The study will employ the qualitative research method.

### **2.2.2 The Qualitative research method**

The study will employ the qualitative method of research and not quantitative method because the curiosity is on understanding the issue of divorce from the perspective of the interviewees as mentioned on the previous page. Different writers describe and define qualitative research in diverse ways. Denzin and Lincoln describe qualitative research this way:

“Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:3).

In this study the divorcees will be interviewed and their life stories will be listened to and interacted with. The interviewees will be used as living books; they will be handled as literature. The nature of this study is underscored by the use of interviews, published and unpublished books and theses, journals, and electronic sources.

Strauss & Corbin define qualitative research as,

“Any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations” (Strauss & Corbin 1998:10-11).



Findings to be produced in this study will not be arrived at by any means of quantification. As a consequence, the study is not quantitative. Berg & Lune cites Dabbs who distinguishes between qualitative and quantitative research. He distinguishes as follows:

“The notion of *quality* is essential to the nature of things. On the other hand, *quantity* is elementally an amount of something. Quality refers to the what, how, when, where, and why of a thing—its essence and ambience. Qualitative research, thus, refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to the counts and measures of things, the extents and distributions of our subject matter” (Berg & Lune 2012:3).

The study is qualitative and not quantitative as the focus will not be on the counts and measures of things, but on the how, when, where, and why of divorce in South Africa. In this study, observations will be interpreted in a narrative report and the study is not necessarily interested in measuring variables to obtain scores.

Patton explains,

“Qualitative methods permit the evaluator to study the selected issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry” (Patton 1990:13).

This study is going to be an in depth, detailed enquiry. The study comes from a not knowing position trusting that the participants know better. It is searching for knowledge believing that knowledge is uncertain and not objective. In searching for knowledge and truth, the study will follow a multidisciplinary approach. The approach is multidisciplinary because the topic at hand is researched in psychology, sociology, philosophy, law, and theology. As a consequence, the enquiry will dialogue with writers from diverse disciplines. The use of this approach does not mean that the reader should expect *all* the above mentioned disciplines to be incorporated in this study. The use of this

approach only shows that the investigation will not only focus on theological material as a source of knowledge.

One may ask: what kind of knowledge does the qualitative method aim to produce?

Willig elucidates,

“Qualitative research can produce descriptions or explanations. It can aim to ‘give voice’ to those whose accounts tend to be marginalized or discounted. It can aim to interpret what people have said in order to explain why they may have said it” (Willig 2008:12).

The study aims to *give voice* to the voiceless divorcee. The study will interpret the divorcees’ experiences and their stories. The study will engage with the divorcees and interpret what they say in order to understand why they may feel they have to say it.

### **2.2.3 Hermeneutical approach**

This study is hermeneutical as the investigation will be interpreting both the stories of the divorcees as well as the biblical passages often used, misunderstood, and misinterpreted by some preachers (especially theologically untrained preachers). Some members of the clergy seem to condemn the divorcees based on the thinking that they did something wrong. The reason behind this unfair condemning is wrong interpretation of Scriptures like Malachi 2:16-17 for example. This hermeneutical error leads to the divorcees not getting the proper pastoral care they deserve as members of the body of Christ. Hermeneutics, according to Moreau, is “Science, art, and spiritual act of interpreting the Scriptures. Presupposed is the view that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God” (Moreau 2000:430). The aim is to arrive at the correct meaning of the biblical text. In describing hermeneutics, Bloomberg & Volpe cites Polkinghorne when he explains,

“Developed by Dilthey (1833-1911), the German philosopher, this highly specialized form of research has been described as the interpretation of texts or transcribed meanings” (Bloomberg & Volpe 2012:34).

Few passages of Scriptures related to divorce will be interpreted exegetically in an attempt to arrive, as far as possible, at the correct meaning of the texts. Bloomberg & Volpe went on to expound:

“Pioneered by biblical scholars who made use of textual analysis, this research method has been applied to secular texts to derive a richer understanding of the context that gives it meaning. The method involves an openly dialogical process of returning again and again to the object of inquiry (the text), each time with an increased understanding” (Bloomberg & Volpe 2012:34).

The aim in following a hermeneutical approach is to arrive at a deeper and increased understanding of the biblical texts that address the issue of divorce. Some members of the clergy use passages of Scripture such as Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:14-16; and Matthew 5:31-32 to suggest that God hates the divorcee. The author believes that this is due to lack of knowledge and understanding of Scriptures. Using Scripture out of context has proved to be disastrous. For this reason, the study intends to discover through brief exegesis (as far as possible) the original intended meaning of the above mentioned passages of Scripture. The study will investigate how they should be applied practically in shepherding and caring for the divorcees in the body of Christ (the church). It is the author’s opinion that the above mentioned passages of Scripture when interpreted correctly and applied graciously are capable of being used to comfort and encourage the suffering divorcees in the Lord.

The study intends also to engage the story telling method.

#### **2.2.4 Narrative method**

Life is about stories. The people are who they are because of the stories they hear. Christians are Christians because of the stories of Jesus Christ they heard. “Each person is a collection of stories” (Dinkins 2005:11). Murray enlightens,

“According to narrative theory (e.g. Murray, 1999; Sarbin, 1986), we are born into a storied world, and we live our lives through the creation and exchange of narratives. A narrative can be defined as an organized interpretation of sequence

of events. This involves attributing agency to the characters in the narrative and inferring causal links between the events. In the classic formulation, a narrative is an account with three components: a beginning, a middle and an end” (Murray 2003:113-114).

As the study will be interviewing the participants (the divorcees), they will be telling their lived stories. Narrative will be used as the mode of knowing. “The narrative mode of knowing consists of organizing experience with the help of a scheme assuming the intentionality of human action” (Czarniawska 2004:7). The divorcees will narrate their life stories, and that will assist the investigation in gaining knowledge that will be useful in answering our research question. Bloomberg & Volpe explain narrative research in this manner,

“As a method, narrative research begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals or cultures. In this form of research, the researcher studies the lives of one or more individuals through the telling of stories. The information gleaned from the story or stories is then retold or “restored” by the researcher into a “narrative chronology” in order to provide the meaning of experiences” (Bloomberg & Volpe 2012:34).

The study opted for the narrative method because it comes from a *not-knowing* mind set (cf. Dinkins 2005:35). The experiences as expressed in the lived stories of the divorcees will be the source of knowledge. Fee & Stuart share the same sentiment as Bloomberg & Volpe when they say, “Narratives are stories—purposeful stories retelling the *historical events* of the past that are intended to give meaning and direction for a given people *in the present*” (Fee & Stuart 2003:90). The divorcees, as they will be narrating their stories, will tell about their past experiences which will help us (the clergy) in giving us direction on how to help and minister to other people in similar situations. “The narrative method of story-analysis and the interpretation of stories have many advantages for counselling” (Beeselaar 2011:105). The stories of the divorcees concerning their divorces will be analysed and interpreted as the study is searching for knowledge.

Some believers within the church (the body of Christ) seem to believe that a divorcee is a problem. Through negative conversations, some of the divorcees heard that they are a problem and they began to believe and perceive themselves as such. Narrative therapy will be useful in helping the divorcees to externalize the problem. Narrative therapy according to Steyn, “seeks to separate the person’s identity from the problem the person is experiencing; hence, the person is not the problem” (Steyn 2010:59). Narrative therapy and externalization are inseparable. “Externalization is the decision to face the pain caused by privileging negative stories and conversations” (Wimberly 2003:28). Some of the divorcees are privileging negative conversations. As a consequence, they are suffering. Some do not even consider remarriage because they think that they are a problem. Wimberly defines externalization this way:

“Externalization refers to the process of reflection that helps persons look at ways their recruitment takes place and the impact that recruitment has on growth and development. A point of externalization is to lessen the impact of negative conversations and promote the more positive conversations through exploring one’s recruitment” (Wimberly 2003:28).

Negative conversations have a negative impact on people. It is the duty of pastoral caregivers to help people in externalizing negative stories. Wimberly went on to explain:

“Negative conversations produce negative evaluations of ourselves. The experience of continually being in positive conversations with others will facilitate and build positive self-esteem within us. Positive conversations help us to evaluate ourselves in positive ways. Our social involvement and discourse with others provide us with opportunities to take into ourselves either bad or good sources of self-evaluation, particularly in the early phases of our lives” (Wimberly 2003:17).

As the interviewees will be telling their painful stories of divorce, the study will offer them a respectful listening in the process of helping them externalize the problem. Steyn cited Schön, Gower and Kotze when they explained:

“In the counselling process we listen with many ears. We listen to the words spoken. We listen to the way in which the words are spoken – softly, loudly, or hesitantly. We listen to the obvious meaning of words and sentences, and we listen to their possible meaning” (Steyn 2010:66).

The study will listen with many ears to the interviewees believing that listening is important for their healing. Beeselaar cites Paul Tillich when he says, “The first duty of love is to listen” (Beeselaar 2011:37). Pastoral caregivers should be active listeners (see James 1:19). Dinkins explains the importance of listening in this manner:

“The function of the leader is to receive the word through listening in conversation. When the sacred word, Scripture, is spoken to listening ears, it heals and provides direction for the community. The sacred word is much too large for the mouth. It belongs to the narrative life of the whole community. It is part of the *palaver* (spoken word) of the community that is liberated through the ministry “with large ears” that cares for the word by caring for the stories of the people and the stories of the people of God in Scripture. In suggesting that we listen with large ears, I mean that we help people as we facilitate the telling of their stories. When they tell their stories they both receive and give help in a communal context. Both the telling of stories and listening to stories form a reciprocal dynamic of community building. If there are no stories, there is no community” (Dinkins 2005:25).

Members of the clergy should listen to the Word of God to show that they love Him, and they should as well listen to the stories of the people around them to show that they care for and about them. By sharing stories and listening to the stories of others a community is being built. The study will be conducted by an aspirant counsellor, who is interested in narrative pastoral counselling. Dinkins comments:

“Although narrative conversation is the oldest and the most fundamental way that pastors help people, few pastors counsel from a narrative perspective. Because our formal education has been so saturated with modernity’s emphasis upon

linear thinking, formal logic, philosophy, and science, little attention has been paid to narrative or to conversational skills” (Dinkins 2005:16).

The study has moved from modernity to postmodernity. The reason is that it is conducted by a postmodern thinker, living in a postmodern culture, and addressing postmodern problems that cause divorce. Dinkins went on to state that:

“The period from the Renaissance to the 1970’s has been called the “Age of Modernity.” Attention was focused on giving meaning to events through explaining, interpreting, and arguing for rational understandings. In our Postmodern Age, narrative pastoral conversations are more suitable because they focus on the stories rather than on an analysis of the information contained in them. No one tells the complete story because no story can capture the richness of an experience. The portions left out, especially the exceptions of the theme of the story, may be as important as the parts included in the story. They create reality from what has been experienced and, in turn, create new experiences for the telling” (Dinkins 2005:36).

The focus of this study will be on the live stories of the divorcees. The study will ask relevant questions in order to facilitate the telling of the stories. Narrative pastoral conversations are more suitable because the study is postmodern. One may ask: what is *postmodern*?

#### 2.2.4.1 What is meant by *postmodern*?

Postmodern is the age and the culture we live in. Postmodern can only be explained and understood by comparing it to modern. The age of modernity was the age of enlightenment. It was an age of reason. Johnson described modernity in this way:

“To describe this age of *twilight*, let us look back on the dominant features of the modern age. For the last two hundred years, being called “modern” was a compliment. It was a term that carried the hope of a progressive humanity, the triumph of reason over superstition, the cutting edge of scientific revolution, and new rational methods of enquiry. Stephen Toulmin notes that modernity was

birthed in the Renaissance, as human reason in both science and philosophy reigned supreme, and was crowned in Enlightenment culture. Modern Western culture was sustained by great confidence in the human mind's ability to question ideologies and explain all of life. Human progress was seen as the inevitable outcome of asking the right questions and finding the right answers. The patron saint of modernity, Rene Descartes, inspired a new progressive credo for modern humanity: *Cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"). Descartes' theory signalled a major change in western epistemology in that it located the source of meaning in human subjectivity (the act of the "I think") rather than in the objective world of reality or transcendent being. Thus, he argued for an analysis of knowledge that carried one back to the primitive elements in experience that were, in principle, available to reflective thinkers in any culture and at all times. This modern move had a reassuring, overarching sense of rational coherence. It offered a vision of an ideal rationality that could access universal moral maxims that would frame and solve society's ills and was open to all reflective, self-critical thinkers. Webber describes this modern vision with the following words: reason, systematic and analytical, verbal, and individualistic" (Johnson 2014:4-5).

As the culture is progressing from modernity to postmodernity, postmodernity seems to be revealing the limitations and the flaws of modernity. Johnson went on to explain:

Instead of modernity's one "big story," which was perceived to be true for everyone, postmodernity is marked by the claim that anything can be true for anyone—truth is what you make it to be out of your own experience or perspective. It is also marked by suspicion toward authoritative answers and absolute truths. This postmodern approach to life is hungry for experience and prioritizes intuition and pragmatism. It is a mind-set or a worldview that glories in personal choice, discovery (including spiritual searching), and a new sense of belonging to a global village. The influence of postmodernity's pluralism and relativism can be seen almost everywhere in Western society. (Johnson 2014:6-7).



Modernity seems to depict human as the omniscience instead of God. It portrays mortal man or woman as the source of knowledge. But a postmodern approach to life is hungry for knowledge. It recognizes that there is knowledge out there and we should go out in search for that knowledge. The findings we will come up with may not be absolute truths. As a matter of fact, the findings in this study may be proved otherwise by the passing of time. The study is open for new possibilities and new ideas. Johnson explains:

“Green notes that modernist thinkers, like Ludwig Feuerbach sought to show that the human person rather than God is the center and source of truth and knowledge. As Feuerbach writes, “there is no distinction between the predicates of the divine and human nature, and, consequently, no distinction between the divine and human subject.” If we define the modern in this positivistic way, Green argues, the postmodern departs from these kinds of foundationalist assertions” (Johnson 2014:7).

The postmodern is moving from equating humanity with divinity. The investigation is motivated by a belief that human knowledge is limited and that God is all knowing. God is the centre and the source of knowledge and the human person is not. The study does not suggest that postmodernity is perfect, but it acknowledges that we are living in the postmodern age and culture and that our thinking and reasoning is influenced by that culture. As the study will be engaging with the divorcees in the form of interviews, the divorcees will share their stories and their limited knowledge and experience.

Jesus is believed by Gerkin to be a good shepherd. The study will briefly suggest the model of caring to be used in caring for the divorcees.

### **2.3 THE MODEL ADOPTED FOR THIS STUDY**

From narrative, the study will employ the shepherding model as espoused by Gerkin. Gerkin speaks of Jesus as a perfect example of shepherding. Gerkin portrays Jesus as worthy of mimicking by advocating the using of the model of shepherding by pastoral caregivers. Though his model is one of the best, it has its own weaknesses. Gerkin’s model of pastoral care speaks a lot about shepherding, but he does not say anything

about restoring the broken image of God. This is where Wimberley's model of Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity will come in handy. The study intends to restore the broken image of God within the divorcee and Wimberley's model will be useful. Both the models are from a Western background. Wimberly's focus of attention is mainly on the struggles of African American people. But the principles drawn from these models are purely universal.

The above mentioned models will now be discussed further. Let us briefly discuss the shepherding model by Gerkin.

### **2.3.1 Gerkin's shepherding model**

Gerkin in his book *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* depicts Jesus as a perfect example of being a good shepherd. He writes,

“New Testament depicts Jesus as a good shepherd who knows his sheep and is known by his sheep (John 10:14) has painted a meaningful, normative portrait of the pastor of God's people. Reflection on the actions and words of Jesus as he related to the people of all levels of social life gives us the model sine qua non for pastoral relationships with those immediately within our care and those strangers we meet along the way” (Gerkin 1997:80).

The Old Testament depicts God as a shepherd, gently caring for and guiding His flock (Isaiah 40:11). He is called a good shepherd (Psalm 23). The New Testament portrays Jesus as the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14); the great shepherd (Hebrews 13:20); and the chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). The reader should realize that a shepherd is someone who is caring for the members of his or her society. In this study those members are the divorcees within the church (the body of Christ). As members of the clergy, it is our responsibility to care pastorally for the divorcees in our midst. Sheep are completely dependent on the shepherd for protection and guidance. As pastoral caregivers, we should point people to Christ who is their shepherd.

According to Gerkin, a pastor is a priest, prophet, and wise guide (see Gerkin 1997:79). A pastor is expected to perform the priestly function, the prophetic function, as well as that of a wise counsellor. Gerkin explains:

“With the coming of Jesus, who, according to John’s Gospel, identified himself as “the good shepherd,” the shepherding image takes its place as a primary grounding image for ministry. Applied to Jesus’ ministry, the shepherding image incorporate not only the wisdom expressed in certain of the parables and the Sermon on the Mount, not only his priestly leadership in relation to his followers, but also elements of prophecy such as are found in the story of Jesus’ cleaning of the Temple and his confrontations with the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Gerkin 1997:27).

As shepherds of God’s people, the pastoral caregivers should be capable of striking a balance in functioning as the priests, the prophets, and the wise guides. Jesus as a good shepherd of the sheep (believers) was able to strike a balance in functioning as a priest, a prophet, and a wise guide. The study does not suggest that the reader should possess all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Scriptures. What the study suggests is that the caregivers should endeavour to strike a balance.

#### 2.3.1.1 Pastor as a priest

There are many ways to care for the divorcee within the church. Gerkin illuminates,

“Some care can only be given the power of deep connection with communal meanings by way of corporate participation in the symbolic acts of receiving bread and wine, the laying on of hands, and the administration of the water of baptism. Singing together can express care and acknowledge our mutual need for care. Praying together can search for and celebrate the receiving of the care that only God can provide” (Gerkin 1997:82).

Praying together, singing together, and sharing of Holy Communion are the better ways of showing that believers are caring for one another. In the Old Testament, a priest was a mediator between God and His people. A priest was an intercessor, interceding with

God for the forgiveness of their sins. As pastors, we should facilitate a good relationship between God and His people. Pastors should care for God's people by pointing them to Christ. A pastor should intercede for the divorcee and perform all the priestly functions for their benefit. A priest as per Dockey, Godwin & Godwin,

“Is someone who speaks to God or relates to God in behalf of others or for oneself. In the OT and early NT priests presented sacrifices to God for the people, taught them the Law, entered the holiest places of the tabernacle or temple, and met with God (Lev. 4:26; Ezek. 42:13-14; Luke 1:8-11)” (Dockey, Godwin & Godwin 2000:192).

As mediators, pastors should reconcile and bring people back into a right relationship with God. In the Old Testament times, people did not approach God directly. A priest acted as an intermediary between God and sinful human beings. With Christ's victory on the cross, the pattern changed. Now we can come directly into God's presence without fear (Hebrews 4:16), and we (Christians) are given the responsibility of bringing others to Him also (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Others in our case would be the divorcee. As pastors, we join in Christ's priestly work of reconciling God and human beings.

A pastor as a priest should nurture the congregation through hope bearing preaching. His or her sermon should be capable of giving courage and hope in difficult times. Wimberly explains the priestly function as follows:

“The black preacher carries out a priestly function in the preached word. The central focus of this function is building faith and hope within worshipers through intentional attention to the worshipers' identity formation, views of life, and coping strategies amidst life's trauma. The priestly function centers on what Harris calls “uplift education.” The priestly function also has an emancipatory focus and is rightly called a homiletic of emancipatory uplift that is centered on faith in God's activity on behalf of persons' release from the things that bind them to a future of promise. The nurturing task of the black preacher is that of priest who evokes in the hearer an understanding “that his or her life situation does not have to remain as it is”” (Wimberly 2004:139).

Wimberly is coming from an African American background, but in reality all preachers (African preachers included) carry out a priestly function in the preached word. Bringing hope to the hopeless is a task of a priest. A pastor should not only function as a priest, but the pastor should also function as a prophet.

### 2.3.1.2 The Pastor as a prophet

A prophet is “One who speaks for God (Mic. 1:1; Judg. 4:4; Acts 21:9). A true prophet said exactly what God said” (Dockey, Godwin & Godwin 2000:194). A prophet or prophetess is God’s spokesperson. In the Old Testament the prophets were giving advice to the kings (see Daniel 4:27-23). Prophecy is for instruction and encouragement. Everyone who prophesy speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort (see 1 Corinthians 14:31). A pastor should act as a prophet to the suffering. Gerkin explains,

“Important as the theme of the care and cure of souls has been throughout the history of pastoral care, it has consistently been paralleled with other themes: the image of the pastor as caretaker of the moral life of the people. This was the primary self-image of the prophets of Israel” (Gerkin 1997:84).

The suffering people, in our case, are the divorcees. A pastor as a prophet should speak for God, to the people for the care and cure of their souls. As a prophet, a pastor should comfort the divorcee and raise their spirits. A pastor as a prophet should rebuke the people of God in case they are not leading a morally good life. Rebuking in this manner is another way of caring and shepherding. God’s moral laws were given to help people love God with all their hearts and minds (see Exodus 20:1-17). A pastor as a prophet should preach the good news to give direction, comfort, rebuke, and edification or exhortation to the congregation. A pastor should be capable of giving a prophetic counselling to those in need.

A pastor ought to care for the congregation through prophetic preaching. Wimberly explains,

“The black worshipping congregation expects the black preacher to carry out a prophetic function in the preached word. This function centres on the preacher’s engaging black worshipers in seeing hope in the midst of chaos by disclosing in sermons a perspective based on faith in the divine imperative “*God wants you free!*” This function in black preaching includes a view of nurture that involves “unsettling” worshipers in a way that pushes them beyond a position of complacency toward the necessary and intentional struggle for justice in everyday life” Wimberly 2004:132).

Jesus Christ who is depicted by Gerkin as a good model for shepherding was also said to be a prophet (see Luke 7:16). In functioning from His prophetic office, He was capable of bringing hope to the suffering. A preacher should make it possible for the congregation to see the light at the end of a tunnel. In case of the divorcee, the author expects the pastor to bring about hope to the suffering. The pastor should be capable of delivering a prophetic sermon to the divorcee.

“Minister and congregation have both prophetic and pastoral functions to perform in the world” (Brister 1992:180). A pastor does not only function as a priest and a prophet. But a pastor should also play the role of a wise guide in the life of a congregation.

### 2.3.1.3 Pastor as a wise guide

The pastor should function as a wise guide in caring for the divorcee. Gerkin explained,

“Pastoral care needs to have as its primary focus the care of all God’s people through the ups and downs of everyday life, the engendering of a caring environment within which all people can grow and develop to their fullest potential. Not all of God’s people will need *counsel*; all people, however, need the nurture and support of a *caring* environment” (Gerkin 1997:88).

The ups and downs of life amongst others include the problem of divorce. The study concurs partly with Gerkin. The study agrees with the first part of Gerkin’s statement,

but disagrees with the second part that says *not all of God's people will need counsel*. The word "counsel" means "advice or guidance." All of God's people at some point will need *advice* or *guidance*. We all need counsellors. Examples of counsellors in the Bible include the prophets, members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and God Himself (see Samuel 17:11; Mark 15:43; and Revelation 3:18). Those who are suffering due to divorce need pastors who will assume their role as wise guides. The church as the Body of Christ need pastors who will be the caring shepherds of God's people. Counselling is part of shepherding.

Psalms 23 in the Bible depicts God as a caring shepherd and a dependable guide. It says,

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (NIV).

Our shepherd knows the *green pastures* and *quiet waters* that will restore the divorcee. The divorcee will reach these places only by following Him obediently. Ours as pastoral caregivers is to lead the hurting to God. As pastors we should care for the divorcee within our care. Jesus is the owner of the sheep. He is committed to them and He loves them. In the same way we should love one another and care for one another (see Matthew 22:39). To show that as members of the clergy we love God, we will care for His people including the divorcee (see John 21:16).

### **2.3.2 Wimberly's model of claiming God reclaiming dignity**

Gerkin's method of shepherding will be helpful in this study. On the other hand, the reader should keep in mind that the study endeavours to reclaim the dignity of the divorcee. This is where Wimberly's model of claiming God reclaiming dignity comes in

handy. Wimberly uses the biblical figure named ‘Job’ as a model for privileging God conversation. He explicates,

“From the book of Job, we can glean a model by which persons can come to a fuller understanding of their worth and value. This model is a process of discovery through conversation first with others and finally with God. As pastoral counsellors we often take the role of one of the friends (although, we hope counsellors are more insightful), helping the person externalize various cultural conversations clearing the way for a fresh encounter with God” (Wimberly 2003:30-31).

Job suffered afflictions, but in his suffering he did not turn against God. In his suffering he privileged God conversations. Suffering is harmful when we become hardened and reject God; when we withdraw from the help others can give; and when we reject the fact that God can bring good out of calamity. Job 19:25-26 says,

“I know my redeemer lives, and that at the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God...” (NIV).

At the heart of the book of Job comes this ringing declaration of self-assurance: “*I know that my redeemer lives.*” In the ancient Israel a *redeemer* was a family member who bought a slave’s way to freedom or who took care of a widow. Faced with death and decay, Job still expected to see God—and he expected to do so in his body. Job was confident that at the end God would be on his side. In this enquiry, the study will use the experience of Job to encourage the divorcee and the reader to privilege God conversation in difficult times. To those rejected by life partners or spouses, it is advisable not to despair, but to realise that you are rejected by your spouse but not by your God. Wimberly uses Job as a model to show us that we are capable of surviving the worse if we privilege God conversation. The advice is this: do not despair because you lost your life partner to divorce. Instead, cast your cares unto Jesus for He cares about you (see 1 Peter 5:7).

It is the clergy’s pastoral task to heal the wounded. The wounded in this case are the divorcees. Wimberly explains,



“The major task, then, of therapy is to free human beings from the negative stories into which they have been recruited early in their lives so that they can find the authentic ways to story their experiences that can give their lives more meaning and vitality” (Wimberly 2003:96).

It is the responsibility of pastoral caregivers to recruit the suffering into positive conversations so that they can be that which God wants them to be. God created people in His image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26). But now, the image of God in the people is distorted. For people to regain that image of God, conversation with God is a prerequisite. Wimberly writes,

“For us to be fully human, conversation with God is necessary. And for us to have a truest sense of our worth and value, we need look at the living God as revealed in Scripture” (Wimberly 2003:18).

The study believes that it is a duty of the clergy to point the divorcee to the living God as revealed in Scripture. By pointing them to God the clergy will be facilitating their freedom from negative conversations that brings about poor self-esteem. Pastoral caregivers should partner with God in bringing about sacred identity formation. Wimberly explains,

“Sacred identity formation from its inception is what God does partnering with us. It is the way we are led by God to sort a variety of cultural conversations and internal conversations about our human worth and value until we can prioritize God conversation the way Job did. Our faith community assists in this process of sacred identity formation by offering fellowship and cues to what privileging God conversation is like. Thus, sacred identity formation is a process of internalizing God conversation, and our faith communities play vital roles in this process” (Wimberly 2003:10).

In partnering with God, pastoral caregivers should help the suffering to internalize God conversations. Faith communities play vital roles in helping people to internalize God conversations. They do so by encouraging one another with Scriptures. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and

not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (NIV). This is one of the Scriptures the caregivers will need to understand to allow those who are hurting to experience God’s grace (see Beeselaar 2011:115-116).

## **2.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we were investigating the methodology to be used in this study, as well as pastoral care models suggested in caring for the divorcees. The study endeavours to employ qualitative methodology. It will also use the narrative method. Because the study will have to interpret the stories of the interviewees and some biblical passages of Scriptures, hermeneutics is unavoidable in this enquiry. The study will follow a postmodern method of reasoning. The Shepherding model proposed by Gerkin will be utilized as a caring model. Since Gerkin ‘s model of shepherding does not say anything about regaining the image of God, the study will also employ Wimberly’s model of *reclaiming God reclaiming dignity*.

The following chapter will seek to investigate the rise of divorce in South Africa since the dawn of democracy (1994)

## CHAPTER 3

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE DIVORCE RATE IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the rate of divorce in South Africa since the dawn of the new democracy (1994), as well as the possible causes pertaining to divorce. This section will concentrate on the statistics of divorce to prove that it has escalated since the onset of the new democracy. Gender equality and human rights will be investigated as the study assumes that they could be the possible contributing factors to the problem of the high rate of divorce in South Africa, especially since 1994. Since divorce is so rampant in South Africa, every member of the clergy is faced with the responsibility of taking care of the divorcee. The study will suggest a method of caring pastorally for the divorcees to facilitate their healing, restoration, and redemption. It is believed in this study that love and care for the divorcee is a necessity as opposed to rejecting and relegating them to second class citizens.

The study will first explore the meaning of the word *divorce*.

#### 3.2 DIVORCE AND RELATED TERMS

Since the study will be discussing divorce, it will be appropriate here to first define the meaning of the word 'divorce.' Different writers define divorce in different ways. According to the Oxford dictionary, divorce is "the legal ending of marriage". "Divorce can be defined as the legal or customary decree that a marriage is dissolved. The term is derived from the Latin *divortium*, from *vertere*, *divortere*, "to separate"" (Davis 1993:81-82). Wikipedia picks up an interesting concept of divorce,

"Divorce (or the dissolution of marriage) in South African law refers to the termination of a marital union, the cancelling of the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and the dissolving of the bonds of matrimony between a married couple. Divorce is unlike annulment, which declares the marriage null and void. Divorce requires the sanction of a court in a legal process. The legal process of divorce may also involve issues of alimony

(spousal support), child custody, child support, distribution of property and division of debt” (Wikipedia 2015:1).

The disbanding of bonds of matrimony brings about pain. Divorce is not just a process, but it is capable of being a painful, stressful, and traumatic process to those involved (see Clapp 2000:3-7). Sanctuary & Whitehead explain,

“DIVORCE: THE WORD we use to mean the legal ending of a marriage. In fact it means a lot more than that. It represents the ending of hopes for two people, the certificate that their relationship did not endure. Divorce is not just a matter of law. It concerns people under stress, and our society has not yet learned to understand them. We are not here to discuss the rights and wrongs, nor to point morals. We believe that the majority of divorced and separated people find themselves in a thoroughly unpleasant situation with little idea of how to cope with it. The best that can be said is that there is an increasing body of experience of what it is like to become divorced and the kind of life that has to be led by people living alone after the end of their marriage or bringing up children on their own” (Sanctuary & Whitehead 1970:7).

Divorce can prove to be a very disturbing process. Yet South Africans are divorcing in large numbers. The statistics of divorce will be discussed on page 44 and 45. The majority of people find themselves in this unfriendly situation of divorce with little or no idea on how to cope with it.

Divorce is a separation of two people brought together in marriage. For Meyer,

“Divorce is a legal action between married people to terminate their marriage relationship. It can be referred to as dissolution of marriage and is basically, the legal action that ends the marriage before death of either spouse” (Meyer 2012:1).

Marriage was intended to be a permanent relationship that should only come to an end through death, not through divorce. Fairchild defines marriage as, “A holy covenant that symbolizes the relationship between Christ and His bride, or the body of Christ”

(Fairchild 2010:1). Divorce is a termination of marriage that was purposed to be a permanent relationship between two people. Dissolution of marriage through divorce is against the original plan of God.

Divorce is widespread these days and South Africa is becoming one of the highest divorcing countries (see Lehohla 2015:6). Whitehead expounds,

“At such high and sustained levels, divorce is not simply a legal mechanism for dissolving marriages but a social and cultural force that opportunistically reproduces itself everywhere. A high divorce society marked by growing division and separation in its social arrangements, a society of single mothers and vanished fathers, of divided households and split parenting, of fractured parent-child bonds and fragmented families, of broken links between marriage and parenthood. The shift from a family governed by the institution of marriage to the one ruled by divorce has brought a steady weakening of primary human relationships and bonds. Men’s and women’s relationships are becoming more fleeting and unreliable. Children are losing their ties to their fathers. Even a mother’s love is not forever, as the growing number of throwaway kids suggests. Divorce is not the only force that has contributed to weaker family ties and more fragile families, but it has been the most important in shaping the new cultural disposition about the meaning of family breakup. Divorce has been damaging not only because it has contributed to the widespread trend toward family fragmentation and the paternal abandonment of children but also because it has won influential adherents in the society who defend family breakup as necessary for individual psychological growth and freedom” (Whitehead 1996:182).

The study does not deny the fact that divorce could be necessary for individual psychological growth and freedom in some cases, especially where there is violence and abuse, but it is more concerned about the suffering and pain that accompanies divorce. Divorce is to blame for single mothers having to raise their children without their fathers; it is to blame for painful experiences of fatherlessness by the children. Stewart *et al* explains:

“Many images of divorce are readily available in popular consciousness. A colleague sent us a fundraising request from a nature organization; it had a pitiful-looking bird on the envelope, and the words, “You don’t have to be human to know the pain of a broken home.” The most common cultural images, like this one, depict lonely, neglected children, and immature, selfish parents who are indifferent to their children’s suffering and willing to “break up” a happy home. Although these images no doubt apply to some families, we found few indeed in our sample. Nevertheless, in thinking about divorce, psychologists have relied on these images, translated into professional terms. In our attempts to understand divorcing families, we too have drawn particularly on the five concepts that are rough equivalents to these popular conceptions: trauma, loss, stigma, risk, and life stress. We found that these five concepts do capture some features of some family members’ experience. But we also found that they keep us from seeing many other aspects of the families’ experience. Specifically, they keep us from noticing how parental separation can initiate positive growth for some people, how much family members are engaged in a process of family transformation (rather than individual change), and how important gender roles are in shaping individuals’ experience of both families and separation and divorce” (Stewart *et al* 1997:4-5).

While the point of Stewart *et al*, when they say that parental separation can initiate positive growth for some people is accepted as fact, for most of the people, it is believed that separation and divorce result in devastating effects. The loss of a partner through divorce is said to be more devastating than to loss due to death. Divorce can be more stressful than death of a family member (see Beeselaar 2011:74). Divorce brings about bitterness and humiliation. Parkinson cites writers portraying the pain of divorce,

“The loss of a partner through divorce has often been compared to loss through death (Parkes, 1972). The bereavement which accompanies divorce may result in prolonged depression and ‘anomie’ in which life seems pointless and everyday tasks become drained of meaning (Hart, 1976). Kitson and colleagues (1980) found many similarities in the feelings of divorcees and widows, though the

knowledge that their partners left of his own free will leaves some divorcees bitterer and humiliated than widows generally do. Divorcees tend to be considerably younger than widows and they are therefore more likely to remarry, but adjustment in both groups is complicated where there are strong feelings of anger, rejection or guilt. On the positive side, death and divorce can bring release from unhappy or restrictive relationships, freeing individuals to build a new life either on their own or with a new partner. The need to mourn is however better understood and provided for in relation to death than in divorce. The anger which is an expected response in divorce may be maintained as a defence against grief, blocking a necessary process of mourning. The partner who chose to leave may also feel prevented from grieving, in case an expression of regret is misinterpreted as a desire for reconciliation. Incomplete mourning delays personal adjustment and may cause major difficulties in subsequent relationships” (Parkinson 1987:22).

Since the pain of losing a marriage partner through divorce can be comparable to that of losing a partner to death, it is obvious that the divorcees deserve the same empathy and care afforded to the widows because they lost something important—marriage. In their feelings of anger, rejection or guilt, the divorcees need people who will pastorally care for them. On the same note, Rosenstock *et al* comments,

“Divorce may be compared to object loss and to death itself because, in a marital relationship there is not only the husband and wife but there is also the marriage. It is a tripartite arrangement. The marriage is lost. There is the death of a marriage. To some extent there are losses to each individual—plans, hopes, and dreams that will never be realized—but the main loss is of the third entity. As in dealing with death, there are certain stages through which survivor must pass. By identifying with the stages and the feelings contained within each, one may find solace, definition, and meaning; reassurance, hope, and direction imbue what may otherwise seem a labyrinth through fear and failure” (Rosenstock *et al* 1988:14).

The ending of marriage by divorce means shattered dreams, plans, and hopes. On the death of marriage, the divorced members are left with the feelings of rejection, worthlessness, and failure (see Clapp 2000:40). That is the reason why we need pastoral caregivers who will journey with the divorcees in their suffering due to a loss of their treasured marriages.

Divorce is a process that affects the parties socially and psychologically. McDaniel & Coleman write,

“Divorce is not just an event that occurs at a particular point in time; it is an ongoing process that begins prior to marital separation and extends well after the legal decree is finalized (Coleman & Ganong, 1995). Because of the complexities and diversity of experiences in their study of midlife divorce, Hagestad and Smyer (1982) contend that it is necessary to view divorce as a “multifaceted process of multiple social and psychological ceasings” (p. 187). They argue that the longer the marital relationship, the greater the number of bonds that need to be severed in the process of divorce. Hagestad and Smyer developed a model of divorce that classifies the divorce process of individuals as either orderly or disorderly, depending on whether they have dissolved the social and psychological bonds of marriage before the legal separation takes place. The social and psychological bonds included in their model are (1) emotional cathexis, (2) attachment to the spousal role, and (3) shared routines. An emotional cathexis denotes an investment of emotional energy in the marital relationship, while attachment to the spousal role refers to an investment in the role as wife of husband. The bond of shared routines refers to the tasks of daily living that include a significant other. In keeping with Hagestad and Smyer’s (1982) process-oriented view of marital dissolution, numerous researchers have argued that we should focus on divorce as a complex, multidimensional process (e.g., Bohannan, 1970; Coleman & Ganong, 1995; Weiss, 1975)” (McDaniel & Coleman 2003:103-104).

When two people are becoming one in marriage, they become psychologically and emotionally attached to each other. They connect in this journey of love. They face



problems, share happiness and sadness together as they grow in life. When they divorce, the separation becomes a painful journey because of the previous nature of the attachment. Painful as it is, divorce is legal and people are divorcing. South African law allows divorce under reasonable grounds. According to Herbst & du Plessis,

“The grounds for divorce in terms of customary law relates to the idea of irretrievable breakdown of the marriage ... Section 8 of the Recognition Act therefore refers to irretrievable breakdown of the marriage as the main ground for divorce. Parties also may rely on other grounds set out in the Marriages Act 25 of 1961, for example insanity and presumption of death. The marriage can only be dissolved by court order” (Herbst & du Plessis 2008:11).

These are the lawful grounds for divorce according to South African law. The above law views marriage as a contract, and not as a covenant. This will be discussed further in chapter four.

Because divorce is a process, there are stages involved.

### **3.3 BOHANNAN’S STAGES OF DIVORCE**

“One of the most widely recognized stage models of divorce was developed by Paul Bohannon and is known as the six stations of divorce model” (Baloyi 2011:48; c.f. McDaniel & Coleman 2003:105-107). Paul Bohannon’s stages of divorce include the following:

- ❖ Emotional divorce
- ❖ Legal divorce
- ❖ Economic divorce
- ❖ Co-parental divorce
- ❖ Community divorce
- ❖ Psychic divorce

The above points will be discussed briefly.

### **3.3.1 Emotional divorce**

Emotional divorce is “the deterioration of emotional attachment between spouses or the “growing apart” that occurs between the divorcing husbands and wives” (McDaniel & Coleman 2003:105). In the process of divorce, the divorcing parties “who are filled with bitterness, resentment, and anger may suddenly feel stunned by surges of love and yearning for their former partners” (Clapp 2000:5). A profound loss of marriage is capable of leading the divorcing parties to anger and depression. Clapp suggested deep relaxation, autogenic breathing, physical exercise, limiting the amount of changes in one’s life, and taking good physical care of oneself as tools to cope with the stress and emotional roller coaster that is caused by divorce (see Clapp 2000:29-31). Divorce brings about fear of the unknown. It leaves the parties with questions like: How am I going to cope without my partner? How am I going to cope with caring for the child as a single parent?

### **3.3.2 Legal divorce**

Legal divorce “deals with the court order termination of marriage” (Baloyi 2011:48). “One of the most stressful aspects of legal divorce is dividing up the “spoils” created by the marital union” (McDaniel & Coleman 2003:105). Divorce is not only a matter of getting a legal divorce document; there are properties to be shared. That sharing of belongings by divorcing parties is not a pleasing experience. During and after the legal divorce, wounds are created. As a consequence, pastoral care is a necessity for healing those wounds.

### **3.3.3 Economic divorce**

Divorce is not only about signing divorce paper and living separately. There are economic issues involved. Baloyi explains,

“Although a family is an economic unit, economic separation is never as simple as the dissolution of a company. During this period, a woman or man who is not working has to make many efforts to change her or his life. The dividing of property is often mingled with other matters” (Baloyi 2011:52).

In most cases women are financially disadvantaged during divorce; especially those who depend on their partners for survival (see McDaniel & Coleman 2003:106; and Clapp 2000:94). They may be burdened with the load of caring for themselves and their children—something that was formerly the responsibility of a husband.

### **3.3.4 Co-parental divorce**

A child needs support from both parents even when they are divorced. “Co-parental divorce involves decisions about child custody, child support, visitation rights and the various ongoing responsibilities of the parents” (Baloyi 2011:48). Co-parenting can be challenging especially when the divorced parties are angry with each other. It means that they have to make decisions together concerning child education, medical care, and anything that has to do with a child (see Clapp 2000:236). The process of divorce affects children who are neglected during this time.

### **3.3.5 Community divorce**

McDaniel & Coleman cited Bohannan by saying that community divorce involves “the changes in friends and community that occur as a result of the marital dissolution” (McDaniel & Coleman 2003:107). Married couples associate with other married couples. When divorce takes place the divorced parties lose the friends they used to associate with when they were still married. In African culture, when two people are united in marriage, their two families become one. In cases of divorce, a divorcee would lose not only a spouse, but a former partner’s family (the in-laws) as well. Separation with a partner means separating with the in-laws and friends. “During this period, the individual may feel lonely, and may complain about the disloyalty of friends. Some re-locate from their communities to other communities in order to regain their self-esteem” (Baloyi 2011:53). The divorcees are losing their self-esteem during this period of divorce.

### **3.3.6 Psychic divorce**

“Psychic divorce follows a period of mourning and refers to one’s emotional separation from the former partner” (Baloyi 2011:48). Separating with someone you have been married to for many years can prove to be a difficult process. Psychic divorce “involves

establishing an autonomous identity that is independent of the ex-spouse or the spousal role” (McDaniel & Coleman 2003:107). Establishing a separate identity independent of someone you were married to for many years may prove to be a demanding exercise. For Baloyi,

“Psychic divorce refers to the separation of ego from the former spouse. This is the most difficult divorce period, yet it is also the most suitable restoration period. Psychic divorce involves learning how to become whole again. During this stage individuals regain a sense of their personality and identity” (Baloyi 2011:53).

In marriage people may lose their individuality and identity as they attempt to please their partners. People may compromise their dreams for the sake of their marriage partners. When marriage dissolves, they would regain a sense of their personality and identity by following their dreams without having to try to please their spouses.

The Catholics have their own view on the subject of divorce.

### **3.4 THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF DIVORCE**

The Catholic Church believes in a *once married always married approach*. Divorce is not an option no matter the circumstances according to Catholic belief. Matoane explains,

“The Catholic Church teaches that there are seven sacraments which all help one to become holy. These sacraments are: Baptism, Eucharist, penance, marriage, priesthood and anointing of the sick. They are instituted by God and transformed into sacraments by Jesus Christ” (Matoane 2008:75).

Matoane tells us that there are seven sacraments according to the Catholic Church, but then he mentioned only six. One of those is marriage. Marriage is a sacrament according to Catholic belief. According to Haring,

“A sacrament is a visible and effect sign of God’s graciousness, his call and gift, and of man’s response. At the heart of all the sacramental reality is God’s covenant, made visible in creation and salvation. All genuine fidelity among

people participates in the sacramental dignity of this covenant, whose embodiment is Christ” (Haring 1979:71-72).

For the reason that marriage is believed to be a sacrament, divorce is prohibited according to Catholic belief. The study does not follow the Catholic view on divorce. The reason is that sometimes divorce may be a wise alternative. Pohlmann comments,

“Divorce will always have negative consequences on those involved, including an ever widening circle of people. Yet, in the case of violence in a marriage, deceit, adultery and the likes, it may be the wise option” (Pohlmann 2012:50).

For Catholics, divorce is something that is explicitly forbidden (see Buckley 1997:3). But the study believes that circumstances may necessitate divorce. Especially where there is no love and respect between the married couple; the situation is hopeless; and one or both parties perceive that divorce is the only way, or where the marriage has escalated to violence and emotional abuse.

The study is concerned about the reports from statisticians showing an upsurge in divorce rate. With the above in mind, the study will now analyse statistics of divorce since 1994.

### **3.5 THE ESCALATION OF DIVORCE SINCE 1994**

In this section the study will observe the numbers of divorce in South Africa from ten years prior to democracy to twenty years into democracy. That will be from 1984 to 2014. The study opts to consider the statistics from ten years prior to democracy to allow a comparison to be made between divorce rate prior to 1994 and after 1994 as promised in chapter one. The study intends to prove that the numbers of those who are breaking nuptials are mounting after 1994 as opposed to prior to 1994.

According to Statistics South Africa Report No. 03-07-01 of 2004, “From 1970 to 1993, stats S.A. did not publish in its report any information on marriages and divorces for Africans, due to the small number recorded by the civil registration system. This information was first published in the 1994 report” (Statistics South Africa 2004:21-22). The reader should keep in mind that the following numbers of divorces from 1984 to 1993 were not inclusive of the black Africans.

### 3.5.1 Number of divorces from 1984 to 2014

Year	Number of registered divorces
1984	21 593
1985	21 486
1986	23 134
1987	23 785
1988	24 590
1989	24 648
1990	26 669
1991	23 865
1992	28 264
1993	26 619
1994	29 878
1995	31 582
1996	32 775
1997	34 231
1998	35 792
1999	27 513
2000	27 945
2001	28 122
2002	31 370
2003	31 566
2004	31 768
2005	32 484
2006	31 270
2007	29 639
2008	28 924
2009	30 763
2010	22 936
2011	20 980

2012	21 998
2013	
2014	

Table 3.1 (see Lehohla 2000; 2012; and 2014)

From the above source, the numbers of divorce are available from those of 1984 to 2012, but as for the years 2013 and 2014 Reno comments, “In the year 2014, South Africa is representing Africa with its high rate of divorce. Currently, the divorce rate stands at 61, 2 % from 34, 5% reported in 2013” (Reno 2015:1). When Reno speaks of *currently* she or he is referring to the year 2014 since divorce statistics for 2015 are not yet published (see Lehohla 2015).

According to Orkin, “recorded divorces in 1996 were 32 775” (Orkin 1998:1). He went on to say that “the crude divorce rate for the RSA was 81 per 100, 000 of the population” (Orkin 1998:2). The number 32 775 divorces in 1996 as Orkin states, agrees with that provided by Statistics South Africa on the previous page.

As per Statistics SA Report No. 03-07-01, South Africa registered “31 768 divorces in 2004. An increase of less than 1% (0.6%) from the 2003 figure of 31 556” (Statistics SA 2004: viii). The numbers are fluctuating but growing. The Divorce rate proved to be increasing. Preller reported that:

“The number of divorce cases has been fluctuating between 37, 098 and 28, 924 per annum in the past decade (1999-2008). There were more divorces among the black African population group as compared to other groups” (Preller 2012:1).

This report is not pleasing to hear. Preller went on to state that,

“In 2010, 170 826 civil marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents were registered ... In 2010, data on divorce from civil marriages were processed, indicating a drop-off 7 827 or 25, 4% from 30 763 cases processed in 2009. The distribution of couples divorcing by population group shows that the highest proportion of divorces between 2001 and 2007 came from a white population group followed by black African population group. In 2001, 43, 2% of divorces were from

the white population group whereas 23, 1% came from African black group” (Preller 2012:1).

The White population group were frequenting divorce courts more than the black Africans between 2001 and 2007. But the tables have turned somewhere between 2008 and 2010. Preller explains:

“However, from 2008 to 2010, the pattern changed. The black African population exhibited the highest proportion of divorce followed by the white population group. Thus 35, 6% of the 2010 divorces came from the African black population group and 30, 5% from the white group” (Preller 2012:1).

To put what Preller reported in Monama’s words, “Blacks started upstaging whites in divorce courts with 35, 6% of the 2010 divorces coming from them and only 30, 5% from the whites” (Monama 2012:1). The report from Statistics South Africa by Lehohla shows the divorce percentage for black Africans to be 35, 0% for 2008, 34, 2% for 2009, and 35, 6% for 2010. As opposed to 32, 8% in 2008 for white population, 32, 4% in 2009, and 30, 5% in 2010 (see Lehohla 2012:33). This proves that the African blacks are upstaging the whites in divorce courts. The Coloured and the Indians are divorcing in a lower rate compared to the blacks and the whites. Coloured were at 10, 6% in 2008; 13, 1% in 2009; and 13, 9% in 2010. For Indians it were at 6, 2% in 2008; 5, 2% in 2009; and 5, 6% in 2010 (see Lehohla 2012:33).

The causes to this upswing in divorces differ from case to case. There are various reasons that are said (by different authors such as Preller 2012; Lippman & Lewis 2008; and Nkuna 1996) to be causative factors contributing to the predicament of divorce South Africa is faced with. Some people in South Africa are divorcing for reasons that are justifiable according to the Christian believe, and some are divorcing for almost anything. Divorce rates suggest there is something the society is not doing right. Biddle comments,

“Divorce rates suggest a number of problems: that couples are ill-equipped and ill-motivated to resolve interpersonal conflict; that young people too readily accept the culture’s romantic definition of marriage, marrying based on an



attraction that cannot bear the weight of life's pressure; that family and society train young people in the art of courting but not in the skills necessary for successful marriage" (Biddle 2003:348).

The problems that are causing people to divorce are not always impossible to resolve. But the challenge is that young people are not given necessary skills for successful marriage as Biddle mentioned. They enter into marriage wrongfully believing that marriage is a bed of roses. The following section will observe the possible causes to the problem of divorce in South Africa.

### **3.6 THE POSSIBLE CAUSES OF DIVORCE**

The possible causes of divorce amongst others as outlined in chapter 1 includes (1) Lack of communication, (2) Physical, psychological, financial, or emotional abuse, (3) Marriage infidelity, (4) Social networks—Facebook, Twitter and Mxit, (5) Addictions, (6) Sexual incompatibility, (7) Finances, (8) Parental responsibilities, (9) Religious differences, (10) Differences in priorities, (11) Abusive relationships, (12) Physical illness, (13) Mental illness, (14) Growing apart, and (15) Cultural and religious differences (see Preller 2012; cf. Lippman & Lewis 2008; and Nkuna 1996).

The above suggested causes of divorce will now be deliberated on briefly.

#### **3.6.1 Lack of communication**

Without proper communication, no relationship can be effective. The lack of communication in all areas of marriage causes major harm to the marriage. According to Preller, "the lack of communication is the single biggest cause of divorce in South Africa and accounts for 70% of all breakdowns in a marriage relationship" (Preller 2010:1). Through careful communication, lovers (couples) can be reconciled, commitment can be renewed, and romance refreshed. The absence of communication brings about walls between spouses. Communication breakdown brings about the breaking down of marriage. Nkuna explains:

“When there is communication breakdown, spouses fail to talk and listen to each other to the extent that even emotional support dies. In such marriages the spouses may decide to divorce” (Nkuna 1996:54).

Good communication between spouses helps them to care for and to support each other emotionally. Communication in marriage is not limited to discussing problems. The couples should appreciate each other.

### **3.6.2 Physical, financial, psychological or emotional abuse**

For Preller, “Abuse is one of the top reasons for divorce” (Preller 2012:1). The abuses can take various forms. But none of these abuses are beneficial in building marriages. Abuse that leads to violence is causing women in particular to divorce and become independent. Baloyi believes that patriarchal structures promote women abuse and oppression (Baloyi 2007:2). But abuse is not limited to women abused by men. There are also men that are being abused by women. The study will briefly investigate some forms of abuse that are capable of causing divorce.

#### **3.6.2.1 Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is discouraged in African culture. The Xhosa say *Intonga ayiwakhi umzi*, meaning “a rod does not build a home.” By implication it means beating one another as husbands and wives does not build a family. Physical abuse or any kind of abuse does not build a home. In some cases it breaks the marriage if it is unattended. “Wife-beating is commonly practised in many parts of Africa” (O’Donovan 2000:87). On the other hand, some men as well are beaten by their wives. Preller asserts that the abusers can be either a husband or a wife and it is a big area of concern for many couples (Preller 2012:1). While women and children are the most victimized, men are also being abused, especially verbally and emotionally, although sometimes physically too. As a consequence, couples are divorcing.

Today women in South Africa are financially independent and in cases of abuse they will leave the relationship because they do not depend on men.

### 3.6.2.2 Financial abuse

In some of the rural areas, where men are sole bread winners, women can be abused in the form of withholding money from them. Proverbs 3:27 says, “Do not withhold good for those who deserve it ...” (NIV). Spouses deserve good from each other. Withholding money from one another destroys trust and creates a great inconvenience. Husbands and wives should support each other financially. Another problem is that some of these men are leaving their wives in the villages when they come to the cities for employment. They get some girlfriends in the cities and support them financially and when they go back home, they do not have enough money for their families. A wife who is not supported by her husband financially can be tempted to look for greener pastures elsewhere. In other words, they are not able to support those in the villages, hence divorce.

Partners may disagree on how money has to be spent. Nkuna explains:

“Friction over financial matters may be due to financial disagreements between spouses on how food, clothing, housing or other needs are to be met. It can also arise normally over accounts to be paid or how the available money is to be spent” (Nkuna 1996:60).

In the face of tough times, some marriages spiral downwards. Money or anything related to it is a cause of disagreement between spouses. The other issue is that some couples do not want to reveal how much they earn to each other. Married couples, whether happy or not, may have disagreement over little financial issues. During the apartheid era, husbands as heads of the families used to make all the decisions on how money was to be spent, but now because of gender equality and women’s rights, couples are expected to discuss financial issues and make joint decisions. Women have the right to be involved in making financial decisions within their families. Preller reasons that money in conglomeration with other problems is capable of causing divorce. He comments,

“Money is not always the sole or primary cause of divorce in married couples, but is usually combined with other top reasons for divorce causing distress” (Preller 2012:1)

Couples should be able to share everything in marriage. They should love and care for each other and not withhold finances from each other (see Ephesians 5:28-29). Holding finances from one another is capable of causing one to divorce the other.

### 3.6.2.3 Psychological or emotional abuse

Preller asserts that emotional abuse is capable of causing divorce (Preller 2012:1). For Lippman & Lewis, “emotional abuse involves the denigration and demeaning of the partner” (Lippman & Lewis 2008:3). Jackson (pseudonym) used to tell his wife that she was useless and good for nothing. As a consequence, his wife developed a lower self-esteem. She believed that nothing good could come out of her since she was inadequate. Instead of one partner belittling the other, partners should consider appreciating each other. “Every human being is special and important” (Soungalo 2006:11). Every person should be treated with respect. If the marriage is not emotionally enriching to one or both partners, then divorce may follow. These kinds of abuses are not new. During the apartheid era, women were abused emotionally, but had no one to protect them. They had to suppress their emotions and stick to abusive marriages. Because they did not have the rights they have today, they used to put up with the abuse even at times when it affected their marriage negatively. Now they are no longer in the mercy of men. They know their rights and use them.

### 3.6.3 Marriage infidelity

The other issue that affect divorce in African culture is an endorsement of marital unfaithfulness. There is a Pedi (Northern Sotho) proverb that says “*Monna ke selepe o lala a adimilwe*” which means “A man is an axe, you can lend him out for a night.” By implication it means that a married man is allowed to sleep around. It means there is nothing wrong with a man having extramarital affairs. Ironically, for a woman to be involved in adulterous affair is regarded as something discreditable. A man can have a serious case against his wife if she is involved in adultery. But if it is a man who is

involved in an adulterous affair, then there is no problem according to Pedi culture. For Preller, “Infidelity, adultery or more commonly known as ‘cheating’ is on top of the list of reasons for divorce in South Africa” (Preller 2012:1). Although African culture allows men to be unfaithful to their partners, women of today know their rights and they employ them. And they are no longer depending on their husbands for food, shelter, or finance but are independent. As a consequence, it is easy for them to walk away from marriage if there is cheating involved.

### **3.6.4 Social networks—Facebook, twitter and mxit**

Today everybody wants to be on Facebook, twitter, or mxit. The people can even make one feel left behind if one is not on Facebook, twitter, or mxit. Preller asserts that Facebook flirting contributes to an increasing number of divorces. The nature of Facebook, twitter, mxit, and Google and other social media outlets encourages free-spirited commenting, posting and sharing of information. What is posted on social network is not as private as one may think (Preller 2012:1). While others are using these social networks to spread the Gospel of Christ, some are using it to put their marriages in danger of divorce. Facebook has made it really easy for people to see if the grass is greener on the other side, especially when there are so many profiles that are just a click away.

### **3.6.5 Addictions**

People can be addicted to substances like alcohol, drugs, and/or pornography. These addictions contribute to the breaking up of nuptials. There are various forms of addictions, but the researcher chose to focus on the above mentioned three. When a partner is addicted he or she will neglect his or her family, and abuse finances that are need to care for the family.

#### **3.6.5.1 Alcohol**

Alcohol addiction is a problem for many South Africans today. The abuse of alcohol according to Nkuna, has become a problem that leads to divorce (Nkuna 1996:57). People are spending their time and money at the taverns; as a result, they neglect their

families. Alcohol abuse causes many accidents on the road. What hurts the most is that alcohol abuse does not end by causing car accidents on the road. It is also causing accidents within marriages. Marriages are broken in South Africa because of excessive drinking of alcohol by either one or both of the married couples. At times people when under the influence of liquor become very aggressive and violent. Husbands beat their wives when they are drunk and later they blame liquor for their actions. Men do not care for their wives sexually because of drunkenness. As a consequence, their wives are looking outside their marriage for sexual relations. Some women as well abuse alcohol and do not give their families the necessary attention. Alcohol is poisonous to marriage and is capable of causing divorce. The above is better articulated by Lippman & Lewis:

“Alcohol poisons the liver, and it also can poison marriage. It can lead to spousal and child abuse, loss of income, loss of job, loss of respect, lack of trust, loss of sexual relations, and damaging behaviour in general” (Lippman & Lewis 2008:4).

These are the results of alcohol abuse, for example. In the case where a husband loses a job due to alcohol abuse, the wife may find it difficult to continue a relationship with an unemployed husband and consider divorce. Some people run to alcohol in times of stress with the aim of forgetting their problems. But the soothing comfort of alcohol is temporary (see Proverbs 23:31-32). Real relief comes from dealing with the cause of the distress and turning to God for peace. One should not lose oneself to alcohol; but one should find oneself in God and in good a relationship with his or her family. Alcohol addiction is capable of causing a divorce.

#### 3.6.5.2 Drugs

The use of drugs impairs thinking ability. It dulls the senses. It limits clear judgement. It lowers the capacity for control. It destroys a person’s efficiency, especially sexual performance. No one wants to stay with a partner who is destroying himself or herself with drugs. Marriages are broken due to one or both partners using drugs.

### 3.6.5.3 Pornography

According to Preller, marriage, family and addiction certainly do not mix well at all (see Preller 2012:1). In South Africa today, more and more people spend countless hours viewing pornography online, buying into a fantasy which ultimately affects them and their relationships. Addiction not only has a degrading effect on the person and his/her spouse, but can also leave disastrous emotional scars on children, close relatives and friends. Spouses who spend countless hours in social networks to the exclusion of valuable family interaction, create a permanent disconnect that cannot be repaired, and divorce may follow.

### 3.6.6 Sexual incompatibility

According to Munroe, men and women are different. Their sexual appetite is not the same. Men's sexual appetite is higher than that of a woman (Munroe 2001:172). As a consequence, a man is prone to have sexual desire that a woman may find difficult to satisfy. Men and women are different emotionally, mentally, and sexually. Things can change as the marriage progresses, i.e. children, health challenges, career changes etc. In most cases, sexual dissatisfaction in a partner usually results in divorce. The issue of sexual incompatibility varies significantly from case to case. If the spouse is not being emotionally and physically fulfilled, he or she will look elsewhere for fulfilment. Spouses should understand each other's needs. Munroe explains:

“What men and women need to understand is that affection creates the environment for sexual union in marriage, while sex is the event. Most men don't realise this, and so they immediately go after the event. They don't know what it means to create an environment of affection. They focus only on their need. Men need sex, but woman need affection, and they need this affection to precede sexual intimacy” (Munroe 2001:172).

If the women do not get the affection they need, then they can be tempted to look outside their marriage for affection. Men as well if they do not get sex as often as they want within their marriages, they can be tempted to look for sex from without their marriages. As a consequence, partners may divorce.

### 3.6.7 Parental responsibilities

It often happens that spouses are not able to constructively co-parent their children during their marriage. Children are reflections of their parents, and sometimes parents are not able to let go of their own egos and put their children in the backburner. Differences in the ideas on how to raise children properly are capable of causing rifts in marriages. These rifts can cause divorce. For example, Sara (not a real name) got married to Patrick (not a real name). Patrick views the rod of correction (beating) as a means of discipline while Sara views it as abuse. Whenever Patrick uses a rod to discipline the child Sara would feel sad because according to her it is child abuse. This dissimilarity brought about disagreement in their marriage. Nkuna explains:

“Friction over children occurs when spouses do not agree on the mode of disciplining the children and/or disagree over ways of meeting certain needs of their children, for example physical needs like food or educational needs, such as buying of school uniforms and books” (Nkuna 1996:55).

To other people discipline is necessary for the development of a child’s character (see Proverbs 13:24). To some it is an abuse. To some it is not. Disagreements on how to discipline children, if it goes unnoticed, are capable of causing marriage breakdown.

### 3.6.8 Religious differences

According to Preller,

“Couples from different religions, cultures or ethnicity sometimes disregard the expectations of their partners’ religion, and this often causes resentment against them. This resentment if allowed to go unchecked is capable of causing divorce. These differences are mainly due to the taboos posed by a specific culture. Besides this, most parents prefer that the child’s religion should be the same as themselves” (Preller 2012:1).

In Malachi 2:11, Judah is accused of marrying a daughter of a foreign god. After the temple had been rebuilt and the walls completed, the people were excited to see the past prophecies coming true. But as the time passed, the prophecies about the



destruction of God's enemies and the coming Messiah were not immediately fulfilled. The people became discouraged, and they grew complacent about obeying all of God's laws. This complacency gradually led to blatant sin, such as marriage to those who worshiped idols. Ezra and Nehemiah also had confronted this problem years earlier (see Ezra 9, and 10; and Nehemiah 13:23-31). Marriage among people of different religious backgrounds can prove to be disastrous. It is believed in this study that a Christian should marry a Christian and a Muslim should marry a Muslim. Differences in religious beliefs are capable of causing conflicts and arguments that can lead to divorce.

### **3.6.9 Differences in priorities**

When two people who are married to each other differ in priorities divorce may follow. Preller explains,

“The differences in priorities amongst married couples, which a lot of men and women do not discuss and anticipate prior to the marriage do become major issues for many marriages at a later stage. If one spouse wants to start a family and the other does not, that could create immense conflict between the spouses. It happens often that one spouse starts spending less time with his/her family and focuses on the other priorities. This often creates a struggle for any marriage to survive. No matter how much spouses try to harmonize their priorities, they still remain completely unique, distinct and complete different individuals” (Preller 2012:1).

It is advisable for couples to discuss before marriage their priorities in life. Discussing these major issues will make it possible for dating couples to discover if they will be able to harmonize their priorities in their marriage or not. Differences of this sort are capable of causing divorce (see Lippman & Lewis 2008).

### **3.6.10 Physical illness**

Physical illness can be a threat to marriage. Some of the illnesses may be detected after the marriage. Nkuna explains:

“Physical factors such as obesity and arthritis or physical disability, such as paraplegia or physical disfigurement, for example, facial burns, contribute to divorce. This is so especially where such sickness, disability and/or disfigurement crop up unexpectedly after the onset of a marriage. They are seen as crisis situations which could eventually lead to divorce” (Nkuna 1996:61).

In addition to illnesses Nkuna mentioned, the study would like to add Epilepsy to the list as it is also a problem these days. Shadrack (pseudonym) is not a Christian. He impregnated a girl 22 years ago outside wedlock. His intention was to marry her. She gave birth to a baby girl. Soon after that the pair got married. Unfortunately, epilepsy attacked Shadrack. His wife Mapule (pseudonym) tried to keep the relationship going for the sake of the child. When the girl child was about 5 years old, the epilepsy was very strong and attacking Shadrack. He was becoming an embarrassment to Mapule. As a consequence, Mapule decided to abandon him. People do divorce because of unexpected sicknesses. This could be one of the issues that affected their relationship.

### **3.6.11 Mental illness**

Lippman & Lewis describes mental illness as,

“A spectrum that runs the gamut from anxiety to severe depression to psychosis. It includes obsessive-compulsive disorders, demanding, exploitative, self-absorbed behaviors, and other personality disorder. Such illness can be exhausting and emotionally draining for anyone who encounters the behaviour. Any of these conditions can cause havoc in or destroy a marriage” (Lippman & Lewis 2008:12).

The study concurs with Lippman & Lewis in the light of the case of Mandla (pseudonym) and Mogau (pseudonym). Mandla and Mogau were married for three years but now they are divorced. Mandla and Mogau are from one of the rural villages of Limpopo which is known for witchcraft. Mandla was a handsome and hardworking young man. But after getting married he lost his job due to mental illness. He is believed to be bewitched. As a consequence, his wife divorced him. From the above scenario, one

may believe without a doubt that mental illness is capable of causing havoc and destroy marriage just as Lippman and Lewis observed.

The other factor that is capable of causing a divorce is when couples grow apart.

### **3.6.12 Growing apart**

According to Lippman & Lewis, many people marry younger and later grow in different directions where interests are no longer shared, and new attitudes and awareness develop (Lippman & Lewis 2008:16). One may be attracted by money when choosing a spouse, but later realize that money is not everything. Some people enter into relationships coming from the same religious background, but on their way as they grow one converts to a different religion. They are growing apart. Growing apart is capable of breaking nuptial.

### **3.6.13 Cultural differences**

Cultural differences are often overlooked when choosing a spouse but they come with difficulties. Lippman & Lewis explains:

“Cultural differences at first can be attractive and exciting but can become problematic with time. For example, a man might be attracted to a woman’s large loving family. However, when he is expected to share his home with them, it may be problematic and difficult if he was reared in a culture that values boundaries and privacy. Different philosophies, values, and living styles may become a source in the breakdown of a relationship” (Lippman & Lewis 2008:16).

During the apartheid era, the government grouped people according to their language following the Group Areas’ Act. As a consequence people were separated from each other according to their languages. “Apartheid means separateness” (Culpin 2005:44). That is why in places like Daveyton in East Rand for example, there are places called AmaXhoseni meaning “a place for Xhosas”, and AmaShanganeni meaning “a place for Tsonga people.” Because of practices like these, people were marrying their own. People in those days used to marry within their cultures and religions. Now because of democracy, the people are enjoying freedom of movement. People are free to interact

with people from different cultures. It is easy in this democratic era to marry someone from a different culture. The difficulties that arise in marriage due to cultural differences are capable of breaking nuptials. Cultural differences can prove to be problematic as Lippman & Lewis have mentioned.

Besides the above mentioned causes of divorce, the study believes that there is a connection between gender equality, human rights, and divorce. The above problems raise the issue of gender. During apartheid women were regarded as minors, now they enjoy equality with men.

### **3.7 GENDER EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND DIVORCE**

The study suggests that gender equality and human rights are some of the newly emerging possible contributing factors to the problem of the rise of divorce in South Africa, since the dawn of the new democracy (1994). This assertion is based on the outcomes of the interviews in chapter five. Before 1994, women (especially black women) could not own property of their own. Men and women were not treated equally. Men and women doing the same job were not earning the same salary. But today we experience gender equality, equal rights and opportunities for all. Some women today are even earning more money than their husbands. Women are now independent and capable of buying their own houses and cars. As a consequence, the author is of the opinion that it is now easy for women to walk away from their marriages if and when they feel like it, because they are capable of taking care of themselves economically. The issue of dependency is taken care of by work. Because of the financial freedom they enjoy, they have freedom to walk away from unhealthy marriages if they want to. And it is within their human rights to divorce.

“Gender equality, also known as sex equality gender egalitarianism, sexual equality, or equality of the genders, is the view that men and women should receive equal treatment, and should not be discriminated against based on gender” (Wikipedia 30 July 2015). Men and women are not the same and will never be the same and gender equality does not suggest that men and women are the same. “Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same but that they have equal value and should

be accorded equal treatment” (Cambridge dictionaries online). Gender equality prior to 1994 national elections was but a dream and not a reality. At some point “teaching and nursing were the only fields open to women” (Gouws & Kadalie 1994:214). Now the number of women soldiers and police is on the rise. South Africa has women pilots; women bus drivers; and women train drivers.

These are some of the jobs that were previously occupied by men, in particular white males during oppressive days. Since women are enjoying equal opportunities with men, they are no longer relying on men. As a consequence, it is the study’s assumption that women can easily walk away from their marriages. Prior to 1991 women were not allowed participation in parliament because the system was saying that their fathers, husbands, and brothers were representing them in parliament (see Gouws & Kadalie 1994:214-217). Black women were regarded as inferior to men (see Beinard 2001:147).

Women of today are empowered, that is why they feel they can survive on their own and they divorce their husbands at any time. The study does not deny the fact that some women are divorcing for due cause. Since 2009, almost half of South Africa’s seats in parliament have been occupied by women and South Africa is ranked seventeenth out of 136 countries in terms of gender equality, according to data from the World Economic Forum (see Wessels: 2015:1). According to the freedom charter, South Africa belongs to those who live in it, and no one is to be discriminated against based on gender or sex (see Sieborger, Weldon, & Hinton 1996:16). This change shares insights that freedom is alive and well in the country. While we are praising our country and its leaders for fighting against apartheid and bringing about gender equality, we on the other hand witness the escalation of divorce in South Africa. It is the author’s belief that women empowerment is a contributing factor to the problem of divorce in South Africa. There is a fundamental difference between exercising rights and acting in a disingenuous manner. Some women might be divorcing for right reasons, but some are divorcing for dishonest reasons. Popenoe & Whitehead continue with this idea by saying that,

“It is often claimed, with substantial empirical support, that the movement of women into the labor force in recent decades has been a potent generator of

divorce. Women don't need to accept marriage on men's terms, as they once did, and can leave marriages more easily without serious economic consequences" (Popenoe & Whitehead 2002:44).

On the same note, Nkuna writes, "Labour force participation by women: working mothers may believe that they can handle the family alone, so instead of solving marital problems, they prefer divorce" (Nkuna 1996:25). The study is aware that men as well are divorcing, but the enquiry focuses more on women because they seem to be the initiators of divorces as opposed to husbands since 1994. According to City Press dated 17-12-2014, "more wives (11 033, or 50, 2%) than husbands (7335 or 33, 3%) initiated divorce during 2012" (City Press 17 December 2014). In the same vein, Laura Grant reports: "In 2013, wives initiated just over half of the divorces. Husbands initiated 34%. And for 16% of the divorces the partner who initiated the split was unspecified" (Grant 2015:1). Women are divorcing men in large numbers. It is assumed in this study that gender equality and women's rights are to blame for the escalation of divorce South Africa is witnessing since the onset of democracy (1994). Women should submit to their husbands (see Ephesians 5:22). Couples should submit one to another (see Ephesians 5:21). In fighting for human rights, people are losing their marriages due to divorce.

Democracy brought about some challenges in South Africa that affect marriages negatively. Neft & Levine explains,

"South Africa's transition to democracy brought with it major changes in the laws governing marriage and divorce. Marriage between people of different races are no longer prohibited, as they were under apartheid, and husbands are no longer considered to have complete authority over their wives and children" (Neft & Levine 1997:407).

Owing to gender equality and human rights, husbands lost the authority they used to enjoy during the apartheid era. Husbands are not afforded respect they deserve. Husbands and wives should respect and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Pohlmann 2007:58-59). It is difficult for husbands to cope with the changes of democracy in their marriages. As a consequence, some marriages end with divorce.

Divorce has a deleterious effect on society, thus our community has drastically changed.

### **3.8 THE IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON THE PARTIES INVOLVED**

Divorce has a negative impact on all parties involved—the wife, the husband, and the children, as well as the extended family.

#### **3.8.1 The impact of divorce on women**

Divorce is proved to have a negative impact on women. Waite asserts that women suffer substantial decline in income following the divorce because in many cases men earn more money (Waite 2002:24). Divorce affects women financially, socially, and emotionally. In African culture, to be somebody's wife is a prestige. A sudden breaking of nuptials means a sudden loss of status. Clapp explains the hurdles a newly divorcing wife encounters this way:

“Divorcing women must suddenly assume the household tasks that may have been formerly in their husbands' domain. Home and car maintenance and repairs, tax returns, and financial planning often top their list of practical problems. Women with primary physical custody of children have a particularly difficult time. Their problems multiply exponentially with the responsibility for dealing with hurt, baffled children who may develop any number of transient problems in response to their family's rupture” (Clapp 2000:6).

In addition to the difficulties Clapp outlined, some cultures prohibit women to remarry. To those women whose culture does not allow remarriage, divorce means that they will never be married again. This puts women in a disadvantaged position. In Pedi culture, for example, there is a saying that *Mohloalagadi ga a nyalwe* meaning a divorced woman does not remarry. This saying applies to women and not to men. A divorced man can remarry since polygamy is also allowed. But women according to Pedi culture should marry once and if divorced she is not supposed to marry again. This culture is patriarchal in nature. Even though we are living in the era of democracy, we cannot ignore a fact that some people are still living under patriarchal systems. It is difficult for a

Pedi man to marry someone who was married before. The reason for this comes from a belief in the ancestors that the divorced woman is connected to the ancestors of her previous husband.

### **3.8.2 The impact of divorce on men**

In case of divorce, women are not the only suffering party. “Men also lose social and emotional support that marriage provides” (Waite 2002:24). Some may suppose that men do not suffer after divorce. This is because men usually suffer in silence. They do not cry out as women do. There is a Pedi proverb that says *Monna ke nku o llela teng* which transliterate *Man is a sheep, he cries from inside*. By implication it means ‘a man should not cry out, even when going through difficulties.’ It is not for men to cry. To put it in Wimberly’s words: “Tears are for sissies” (Wimberly 2003:62). Divorced men are hurting, but they do not cry out because a man is not supposed to cry according to African culture.

In African culture, chores like cooking, cleaning, and laundry are reserved for women. A married man who is used to having a wife cooking and cleaning for him may find it difficult to adjust to the idea of doing those chores himself (see Clapp 2000:6).

When couple is divorcing, in most cases the custody of the children is won by the women. In that case it means that the children that are used to seeing their fathers every day in the home, suddenly arrangements and appointments should be made prior to seeing them hence they are with their mother who is living in a place separate from their father’s place (see Clapp 2000:7). Maintaining children who are staying in separate places may be more expensive.

### **3.8.3 The impact of divorce on children**

When married couples are divorcing, their children are being devastated. This process is explained by Lehohla who says,

“With regard to divorces, the data from the 51 out of the 63 courts that deal with divorce showed that 21 998 divorces were granted in South Africa in 2012. Starting from 2007 to 2012, the data showed higher proportions of divorces from



the black African population group than the white population group to the annual total divorces. The 2012 divorces were mainly from the people who had married for the first time. About 19 713 children aged less than 18 years were affected by divorce that took place in 2012” (Lehohla 2014:11).

According to this report, 19 713 children for 2012 alone will grow without both parents. Some of these children will grow to be bitter and wounded. “Many children are angry when their parents separate, feeling betrayed and abandoned by their fathers” (Magane 2000:37). Divorce has a negative impact on the children. When former president of the Republic of South Africa divorced his first wife Evelyn, Meredith reports that: “*the most deeply wounded was Thembi*” (Meredith 2010:144). Thembi was Mandela’s first born by Evelyn. Children can be deeply wounded in such a way that they become bitter and unforgiving towards their parents (especially towards the one they think is guilty). Meredith explains the feeling of Thembi (Mandela’s first born) this way:

“When Makgatho and Makaziwe visited their father (Mandela) in prison in 1968, his oldest son, Thembi, did not join them, even though he was living nearby in Cape Town at the time. Thembi never visited his father in Robben Island. The bitterness that he felt at the breaking of his parents’ marriage never left him” (Meredith 2010:431).

This African concept comes to mind, ‘when two elephants are fighting, it is the ground that suffers.’ This explains how the children are being adversely affected when there is quarrelling between parents that leads to divorce. Divorce is even more overwhelming. When the couple is abusing each other emotionally, the children are being disturbed by this process. Smith explains:

“Emotional abuse related to divorce may take many forms including a child repeatedly hearing one parent making threats or detrimental remarks about the other or threatening harm to the child or other parent. Its recurrence forms a second strand and is accompanied by an important plea; that emotional abuse should be given far more prominence when decisions regarding children are

being considered. At present the plight of a great number of unhappy children is ignored” (Smith 1999:xii).

The quarrelling and abuse that precede divorce are detrimental to the development of children. Divorce and the consequences thereof, also effect the children negatively. Popenoe & Whitehead say it better:

“Most children of divorce experience dramatic decline in their economic circumstances, abandonment (or fear of abandonment) by one or both parents, the diminished capacity of both parents to attend meaningfully and constructively to their children’s needs (because they are preoccupied with their own psychological, social, and economic distress as well as stresses related to the legal divorce), and diminished contact with many familiar or potential sources of psychosocial support (friends, neighbours, teachers, schoolmates, etc.) as well as familiar living settings. As a consequence, the experience of divorce is a psychosocial stressor and a significant life transition for most children, with long-term repercussions for many” (Popenoe & Whitehead 2002:37-38).

Witte asserts that it is healthy to have two parents raising a child rather than one parent or none (Witte 2002:58). Every child needs and deserves the love and the caring of both parents. Lack of love and support from both parents can be detrimental to the development of a child. Divorce is capable of turning an affected child into something undesirable. Some of them may turn to be violent and abusive like their parents. In other words, they act out their anger in the community, sometimes misdirecting their anger on wrong people. By one spouse divorcing the other, children are growing without fathers. Children are vulnerable to acts of crime because of the lack of parental care. Kopel explains, “For all the talk about the complexities of the “root causes” of crime, there is one root cause which overwhelms all the rest: fatherlessness” (Kopel 2014:1). For children to grow and become responsible and valued members of the community, they need the family support of both their parents. When one marriage partner is abandoning the other in divorce, the children will end up growing without the comfort of being nurtured by both parents. As a consequence, they resort to criminal activities.

Some children find it difficult to concentrate at school, and some develop poor self-esteem due to the divorce they witnessed in their homes. Magane comments:

“Other areas of a child’s development may also be affected by divorce. The absence of a father might deprive children of a male role model. Supervision and discipline of the child may become problematic if the mother has to work to provide for the family. The mother may also become involved with another man, and the child’s relationship with the newcomer may create problems” (Magane 2000:26).

In most cases, when a couple separate, the custody of children remains with the women. That is the reason why divorce brings about absent fathers in some cases.

Pastoral caregivers are faced with the challenge of how to help the divorcees cope with divorce.

### **3.9 HELPING THE DIVORCEES COPE WITH DIVORCE**

As shepherds of God’s flock, the pastoral caregivers should journey with the divorcee in their painful and stressful circumstances. Pastoral caregivers as pastors, prophets, and counsellors should serve the wounded divorcees according to the spiritual gifts or graces God has given to them. Members of the clergy should use preaching and counselling in helping the divorcees to cope with their situation. Brister explains,

“God’s Word reminds us that his conversations with individuals are as old as the human story. As God’s minister moves along the continuum of caring, from experiences with the *many* in worship to conversations with the *few* or *one* in counseling, we recognize that God himself continues his conversation with humankind . In the listening-responding dialogue of counselling, the caregiver functions as a facilitator of the divine-human conversation and as a catalyst, accelerating a counselee’s spiritual change and growth. Both the public dialogue of the sanctuary and the private interviews are essentially transactions with God. Critics who neglect or scorn counseling are profoundly mistaken about its nature, worth, and redemptive intent” (Brister 1992:178).

Pastoral caregivers should help people unburden loads, support them in the process of unburdening, and equip them for relationships and tasks now and in the future (see Brister 1992:180).

Wimberly uses Job as a model for privileging God conversation over any other conversations (see Wimberly 2003:109-120). When investigating the Book of Job one realizes that during Job's suffering, the following happened:

- Job lost everything—his wealth, health, and children (see Job 1:6-2:10).
- His friends shared his anguish (see Job 2:11-13).
- In his suffering he argued his case with God (see Job 13:1-14:22).
- Job was finally restored and comforted (see Job 42:7-16).

When investigating the story of Job, one would realize that the story began with Job being a happy man, an upright man who was wealthy and healthy. In the middle of the story Job is suffering. At the end of the story Job is restored and happy. A pastoral caregiver should not be overoptimistic to believe that all our stories will have a happy ending. A counsellor should not promise a happy ending to his or her clients because of what happened with Job. It is the duty of counsellors to journey with the suffering and to comfort them without giving them unnecessary promises.

Those who lost their marriages due to divorce, like Job lost his wealth, health, and children, should learn to privilege God conversation just as Job did. Suffering is part of life. Wimberly explains,

“Job's life teaches us that the process of becoming holy takes place in the midst of one's own suffering. In the midst of suffering, God encounters us and provides sustaining fellowship” (Wimberly 2003:69).

Suffering does not always mean that the sufferer did something wrong and he or she is away from the grace of God. The suffering of the divorcee is not an indicator of them being guilty of sin. “Jesus and Job in Scripture are two perfect examples of innocent sufferers” (Longman III 2012:68). Pastoral caregivers should approach the suffering with

sensitivity. “Not all suffering is the result of someone’s sin” (Longman III 2012:71). Job’s friends came to comfort him (see Job 2:11-13).

Pastoral caregivers should always be ready to pastorally journey with and comfort others in times of need. In the process of comforting Job, his friends explained that Job must be suffering because of some terrible sin he committed (see Job 22:5-7). By so doing they were judging him. It is not for Christian counsellors to judge others (see Matthew 7:1; Romans 14:10; and James 4:12). They resorted to retribution theology in addressing Job (see Longman III 2012:459).

From the Book of Job we learn that personal sin is not the only source of suffering. The sources of suffering can be personal sin, others’ sin, avoidable or unavoidable physical or natural disaster. One of Job ‘s friends (Eliphaz) accused Job of endless sins and wickedness including stripping men naked, refusing water to the weary, and withholding food from the hungry (see Job 22:5-7). All this was wrongful accusation. Pastoral caregivers should avoid assuming the worst of the care seekers and to accuse them wrongfully. They should journey with the care seekers sympathetically. Wrongful accusations by the counsellor can be interpreted to mean that he or she is disrespectful and judgemental towards the counselee. Beeselaar explains,

“Some counsellors (not the better ones) quickly categorize people. It may be assumed for example, that a counselee is a “carnal Christian,” a “carefree bachelor,” or a “phlegmatic type.” The people are pigeon-hole into categories and dismissed with hurried evaluation, quick confrontation, judgemental statements, or insensitive and rigid advice. No person wants to be treated with such disrespect, and nobody likes to be dumped into categories and made the object of prejudice. Rarely is anyone helped by counsellors who judge or fail to listen sympathetically and respectfully” (Beeselaar 2011:35).

It is advisable for pastoral caregivers not to utter judgemental comments in the process of helping care seekers. Counsellors should help counselees and urge them to value conversation with God and privilege it over other conversations. Job is a perfect example on privileging God conversation. In times of suffering he uttered these words,

“If I only knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments” (Job 23:3-4). Job was not satisfied with arguing with his friends. He wanted to reason with God. Pastoral caregivers should encourage pastoral care seekers to value God conversation over other conversations.

In dealing with the divorcee, the church and the pastoral caregivers should keep in mind that the divorcees are the people created in the image of God.

### **3.10 *IMAGO DEI* AND THE DIVORCEE**

Due to unfair treatment of the divorcee by the church and the society, the divorcees do no longer see themselves as people created in the image of God. Genesis 1:26-27 says,

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (NIV).

Both male and female were created in the image of God. One may ask: In what ways are people created in the image of God? The answer is simple. People cannot be exactly like God, but are capable of being as creative as He is. We are capable of reflecting His image in our love, faithfulness, kindness, and patience. Knowing that men and women are made in the image of God and thus share many of His attributes provides a solid basis for self-worth. Self-worth is what the divorcees may not have because of rejection they suffer by their former spouses, which is often followed by rejection by the church and the community at large. Men and women were created in the image of God so that they may rule. Arnold explains,

“The term *imago Dei*, “image of God,” so important in the history of theological ideas, is derived from the Latin Vulgate’s translation of v 27: “...in the image of God (*ad imaginem Dei*) he created them.” The amount of scholarly literature on this expression is enormous. Speculation has been wildly diverse through the

centuries, but found certain reasonable controls once ancient Near Eastern materials were deciphered and compared to Israel and compared to Israelite literature. On the basis of numerous parallels from both Egypt and Mesopotamia, it has become clear that the phrase is related to royal language, in which a king or pharaoh is the “image of (a) god.” Thus humans are created to function as the divine image through the exercise of “dominion” and “rule,” which of course is reinforced by the statement “and let them have dominion over ...” (v.26). This statement in v. 26 should be interpreted as a purpose clause, expressing the motivation behind God’s creation of humans in his image: “in order that they may have dominion over ...” The image of God is about the exercise of rulership in the world. While it may be objected that an entire species of humans cannot stand in God’s place as an individual king, it seems likely that the office of God’s representative has been “democratized” in 1:26-27” (Arnold 2009:44-45).

For men and women to exercise dominion and to rule as God wanted them to, they should first have their self-worth restored. The image of God within the divorcee is distorted due to shame and guilt they encounter in life. When talking about shame, Wimberly explains:

“Such feelings of shame comes from a variety of sources, including increased evil and insensitivity toward other human beings (despite human progress), dehumanizing stereotypes that degrade physical and gender differences, child abuse, eating disorder, drug addiction, poverty, sexism, homophobia, classism, and racism. In addition, shame accompanies and is reflected in the breakdown of nuclear and extended families, consumer individualism, anomie, and isolation” (Wimberly 1999:17).

Divorce brings about shame and guilt on the parties involved. We concur with the last part of Wimberly’s comment. In African culture, divorce does not hurt only the spouses and their children, it hurts the entire community and changes the caring of the vulnerable ones.

The people should recognize that God is the author of life and thus created humanity in His image (see Genesis 1:27; and 9:6). If people can do that, they will abstain from any form of abuse. Whenever one is thinking of hurting another, one should remember that he or she is hurting one made in the image of God.

### **3.11 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

South Africans are divorcing in large numbers. Some are divorcing for valid reasons and some are divorcing for just anything. The Divorce rate is devastating. The society at large is distressed by divorce and its consequences. Husbands, wives, and children are affected negatively. The society at large is affected by the plague of divorce. Those affected need pastoral caregivers who will not judge but journey with them in their pain caused by divorce. The above problems that cause people to divorce, share an idea of how pastoral caregivers should care for the vulnerable in society. Pastoral care should work with those who are troubled by life.

The Bible has something to say about divorce. The following chapter will focus on Scriptures that address the issue of divorce as well as the stigma associated with divorce in an African context.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE BIBLICAL AND AFRICAN VIEWS OF DIVORCE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Bible is not silent on the matter of divorce. Few passages of Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments address the issue of divorce. They include among others the following: Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. Proper exegetical study of the above biblical passages will be undertaken in order to correct the wrongs done by South African preachers who are not theologically trained. The study will employ a critical hermeneutical approach in order to address this discrepancy and wrong teachings by preachers. The study will investigate the practical application of some biblical passages concerning divorce since our study is in the area of practical theology. The African view of divorce will be discussed. When reading through this chapter, the reader will realize that the study is from a black African cultural, background, and context.

Let us first examine the Biblical view of divorce.

#### 4.2 BIBLICAL VIEW OF DIVORCE

##### 4.2.1 Exegesis of Deuteronomy 24:1-4

The purpose of doing this brief exegesis is to attempt to discover (as far as possible) the original intended meaning of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. This is basically a historical task. We attempt to hear this passage of Scripture as the original recipients (the new generation of the Israelites entering the Promised Land) were to have heard it (see Fee & Stuart 2003:23). The study intends to consider the practical application of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The aim is to investigate how this passage of Scripture should be applied in the lives of the believers in our present times and circumstances.

##### 4.2.1.1 Translation

*1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she finds no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then*

*let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; 4 Her former husband , which send her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance (KJV).*

#### 4.2.1.2 Commentary on Deuteronomy 24:1-4

When Chianeque comments on Deuteronomy 24:1-4, he says:

“While the passage permits divorce, in the NT Jesus taught that it was only permitted by God, not approved of. Marriage was intended to be a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman” (Chianeque 2006:241).

In Moses' day, as well as in Jesus' day, the practice of marriage fell far short of God's intention. The same is true today. The numbers of people frequenting divorce courts in South Africa proves that marriage is falling far short of God's intention. Jesus said in Matthew 19:7-8 that Moses gave this law (referring to the law concerning divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4) only because of people's hard hearts—permanent marriage was God's intention and still is. “Divorce never happens without violation of the divine ideal and without sin. Divorce arises from hard hearts and represents a final declaration of failure in the most fundamental of human institution” (Block 2012:565). But because sinful nature made divorce inevitable, Moses instituted some laws to help its victims. These were civil laws designed especially to protect the women who, in that culture, were quite vulnerable when living alone. Because of Moses' law regulating society, a man could no longer just throw his wife out—he had to write a formal letter of dismissal. This was a radical step toward civil rights, for it made men think twice about divorce. God designed a marriage to be indissoluble. Instead of looking for reasons to leave each other, married couples should concentrate on how to stay together (see Matthew 19:3-9).

Verse 1 says, "... *let him write a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house*" (KJV). The word "send" is from the Hebrew **שלח** which means "to send away, or to let go free" (Braithwaite 2012:83). By implication it means to divorce. For Harris, the same pattern can be seen in Isaiah 50:1, God used an analogy of divorce to express His dealings with Israel at the time of captivity. Some suppose this passage supports divorce, but that is not the case. It simply recognizes the practice that already existed in Israel. All four verses must be read to understand the point of the passage; it certainly is not suggesting that a man divorce his wife on a whim. Divorce was a final act for the couple. Once divorced and remarried to others, they could never be remarried to each other again (24:4). This restriction was to prevent casual remarriage after a frivolous separation. The intention was to make people think twice before divorcing. In Mark 10:2-9, the Pharisees used Deuteronomy 24:1 as a proof text for the sanctioning of divorce. God allowed divorce as a concession to people's sinfulness. Jesus explained that divorce was not God's ideal: instead, God wants married people to consider their marriage permanent. Moreau puts it nicely:

"God's ideal for marriage remains one man and one woman for life in a one-flesh relationship. Divorce, for whatever reason, violates this intended union both for marriage in general and for each affected marriage in particular (Gen. 2:18-24; Mark 10:2-12). Though a violation of God's will and therefore sinful, divorce, like other sins, can be forgiven and persons involved cleansed "from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)" (Moreau 2000:287).

South Africans should not enter marriage with the option of getting out. One's marriage is more likely to be happy if from the outset one is committed to permanence. South African couples should not be hard-hearted like the Pharisees, but be hard-headed in their determination, with God's help, to stay together in marriage. The study is mindful of a fact that divorce is sometimes necessary (for physical survival, for well-being of children, etc.). Jesus clearly gave God's ideal for marriage in Genesis a priority over Moses' permission for divorce. Jesus did not cancel Moses' teaching, however.

Prophet Malachi as well has something to say about divorce.

## 4.2.2 Exegesis of Malachi 2:14-16

Different people interpret the passage of Malachi 2:14-16 differently. Some believe that when Malachi speaks of divorce he was referring to a divorce between God and His people (the Israelites) and not a divorce between people (see Peterson 1995:205). The study will briefly examine this text exegetically.

### 4.2.2.1 Translation

*13 And this you have done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering anymore, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. 14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously” (KJV).*

### 4.2.2.2 Commentary on Malachi 2:14-16

The word “treacherously” is from the Hebrew word **בגד** which means “to cover (with a garment); figuratively to *act covertly*” (Meyers 2009 no page). By implication it means to deal unfaithfully. This word appears *three* times in the above passage (once in verse 14, 15, and 16 respectively). The repeated use of this word shows the emphasis the writer or God is putting against unfaithfulness. Yilpet comments:

“Divorce is just as abominable to God as mixed-faith marriages. Divorce seems to have been rampant in Malachi’s time, so that the Lord’s altar must have been flooded with tears shed by the forsaken wives. Consequently, God refuses to acknowledge the sacrifices made by the husbands who divorced them. He has

forsaken them, and will not respond to their tears or prayers and bless them” (Yilpet 2006:1095).

Divorce in Malachi’s time was practiced exclusively by men. That is why the above passage is talking about men acting unfaithfully against their wives and not the other way around. Men broke faith with their wives and ignored the bonding between a husband and a wife that God installs (the two becomes one person), as well as His purpose for them (raising children who love the Lord, “a godly offspring”). Not only were men breaking faith with their wives, they also were ignoring the bonding relationship and spiritual purpose of being united with God. God hates divorce. O’Donovan seems to suggest that God hates divorce because it destroys God’s plan for marriage and family (O’Donovan 2000:292). God is against the hatred in the husband preceding divorce. Today in South Africa men are divorcing their wives and women are divorcing their husbands. Whether it is men or women divorcing, God hates divorce. But on the other hand, in case the circumstances of violence prevail in marriage, it can be a better option. Petersen seems to have a different understanding on the text under study. He comments:

Verse 16 begins with a pronouncement: “Divorce is hateful!” This is itself a strong statement, since divorce was a permissible legal act in ancient Israel (Deut. 24:1-4). The key to understanding what this scholiast intends is provided by the simile that follows the formula of divine identification, “divorce is like garment that covers wrongdoing.” For this writer, divorce is judged negatively not because divorce itself is illegal or improper—at least the author does not say this—but because it serves to veil something that is amiss. The term that this author uses does not allow us to be specific about precisely what is wrong, what is being covered up, unless we read this interpretation within the context of the text that is being interpreted. In my judgement, the writer is drawing attention to a situation that develops logically out of the impropriety articulated in vv. 13-15. There we heard about Israel as male spouse acting improperly. (Just as the term *hmn*, “wrongdoing,” was used earlier to complain about an improperly developing family and marital situation, so now here the term may describe any improper

marital situation involving Yahweh and Israel.) Israel/Judah had ignored Yahweh and gone after another woman, Asherah. Now, the logic articulated by Hosea centuries before weighs in. Divorce between Yahweh and Israel would be one possible outcome, the more so since Israel the male spouse was actually the one who sued for divorce. Israel might sue to divorce Yahweh in order to respond to Yahweh's charge. However, Mal. 2:16 claims that such divorce, though legally correct, might mask the impropriety of Israel's ignoring Yahweh. Hence, divorce would not be a viable solution in this situation, if the goal is to maintain the marital unit constituted by Yahweh and Israel. And this appears to be the purport of Mal. 2:16. The scribe insists vigorously that now is not the time for Judah or individual Judeans to sever its or their relations with Yahweh. Much journals and commentary literature has understood Malachi 2:10-16 to be a negative judgment on human divorce. Such is simply not the case. Rather, as with Hosea or Jeremiah, language about marriage and divorce has been used metaphorically to depict Yahweh's relationship with Israel. In this case, the author uses language of human relationships to comment on the manner in which the improper veneration of another deity, namely, Asherah, constitute a primary affront to Israel's relationship with Yahweh, the wife of Israel's youth" (Petersen 1995:204-205).

The study would venture to differ with Petersen as he seems to suggest that Malachi was not talking about human divorce but addressing the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. He suggests that Israel divorce Yahweh for Asherah, and that is what Malachi is warning about. But Malachi 2:10 says, "...Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?" It talks about breaking faith with *one another*, not with Yahweh. Breaking faith with one another may be legal but it is not ideal, especially when we break the relationship for selfish reasons.

These days divorce is common as it was in the days of Malachi. God hates divorce but He loves the divorced person. Members of the clergy should hate and discourage the act of divorce, but should not hate the divorcees but pastorally care for them. In other words, they still have the image of God in their lives despite their circumstances. The

divorcees are hurting, they deserve to be supported, cared for, and loved by the Christian community. Those who consider being unfaithful to their spouses should keep in mind that God is not happy with the idea of one being unfaithful to another.

The New Testament as well has something to contribute on the subject of divorce.

#### **4.2.3 Exegesis of Matthew 5:31-32**

Divorce is not a new problem. It was there in the Old Testament times, and it is evident as well in the New Testament times. It happened in Jesus' times, and it is happening in our times. The Gospel of Matthew addresses the issue of divorce in Matthew 5:31-32. We will briefly examine this passage exegetically.

##### 4.2.3.1 Translation

*31 "It hath been said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a letter of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (KJV).*

##### 4.2.3.2 Commentary on Matthew 5:31-32

The phrase "put away" in verse 31 is from the Greek ἀπολύω (*apolyo*) which means "to free fully, that is, to divorce" (Meyers 2009 no page). When Jesus was teaching about divorce in Matthew 5:31-32, He was actually quoting the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Moses said whoever divorces his wife must give her a letter of divorcement (ἀποστασίον *apostasion*). By doing this Moses was not implying that divorce is good. Divorce is capable of being as cruel and destructive today as in Jesus' day. God intends marriage to be a lifelong commitment. When entering into marriage, South Africans should never consider divorce an option for solving problems or a way out of a relationship that seems dead. If they enter marriage with such intentions they can never commit or covenant in that relationship. In these two verses, Jesus is also attacking those who purposefully abuse the marriage contract, using divorce to satisfy their lustful desire to marry someone else. Kapolyo explains:

“Jewish scholars used this law as the basis for long arguments about what were the legitimate grounds for divorce. Some insisted that the only ground for divorce was sexual unfaithfulness, while others permitted divorce for just about any reason (including a more attractive woman, bad cooking and quarrelsomeness” (Kapolyo 2006:1121). Some religious leaders in Jesus’ day permitted a man to divorce his wife for nearly any reason. Some were divorcing because they were lusting after other women. Jesus taught that impure sexual thoughts are the equivalent of adultery. What He was saying is that “the root of the problem is the impure desires of the heart” (Boice 2001:91). Jesus’ teaching about divorce went beyond Moses’ (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Stricter than the then-current schools of thought, Jesus’ teaching shocked his hearers (see Matthew 19:10) just as they shock today’s readers. Jesus says in no uncertain terms that marriage is a lifetime commitment. To leave one’s spouse for another person may be legal, especially if there is a third person involved in breaking the marriage, but divorce will always be considered a bad practice in the eyes of the Lord.

Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? This question is similar to the one asked by the Pharisees in Mark 10:2. This is the issue of gender. Power is given to men and not to women. It has oppressive elements in it. The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus with their question. If He supported divorce, He would be upholding the Pharisees’ procedures, and they doubted He would do that. If Jesus spoke against divorce, however, some members of the crowd would dislike His position—some would have used the law to their advantage to divorce their wives or the Pharisees would attack Him for changing laws God gave to Moses. More importantly, He might incur the wrath of Herod, who had already killed John the Baptist for speaking out against divorce and adultery (see Matthew 6:17-28). This is what the Pharisees wanted. South Africans need passion in the marriage relationship to keep the commitment and intimacy satisfying. In order to cure the issue of divorce, pastoral caregivers need to prepare a solid teaching on marriage as a preventative medicine.

Jesus said that divorce is not permissible except for unfaithfulness. Divorce is allowed when a spouse is involved in prostitution. Pohlmann comments,



“Circumstances can be such that makes a marriage untenable, especially if that marriage is betrayed sexually before the wedding, during the wedding or after the wedding” (Pohlmann 2012:49).

This does not mean that divorce should automatically occur when a spouse commits adultery. The word translated “fornication” is the Greek πορνεία (*porneia*) which means “harlotry (including adultery and incest)” (Meyers 2009 no page). It implies a sexually immoral lifestyle, not a repented act of adultery. In African culture, if a woman seems to enjoy a sexually immoral lifestyle, she is not to be divorced. But her husband may marry a second wife and continue to provide for the sexually immoral first wife and her children. This is done because it is against African culture to throw out one’s own wife and children. Divorce is against *ubuntu*. Ubuntu according to Broodryk, is a “Comprehensive ancient African world view based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family” (Broodryk 2002:13-14). The breaking of marriage is the breaking of a spirit of family.

Jesus prohibited divorce except in the case of adultery. Luz comments:

“Thus Jesus’ prohibition of divorce was in effect in the Matthean community, unless there was a case of adultery. Here it accepts a basic Jewish conviction: unchastity is an abomination that pollutes the land of Israel. One did not even ask whether in the light of God’s love adultery might not also be forgiven. Instead, the community seems to think, similar to Judaims, in cultic ritual terms: adultery and unchastity are the defilements that destroys marriage. Since adultery already destroys marriage, for Judaism divorce is mandatory when adultery happens. Thus according to the Jewish Christian Matthew, a marriage *must* be terminated in the case of πορνεία, because according to Jewish conviction continuing it would contradict God’s commandment. The earliest Christian history of the interpretation of the text also usually sees it this way. Thus the Matthean community did not understand this exception as the liberalizing of the commandment that was too severe but as God’s commandment that protected marriage from impurity. Thus the practice of the Matthean community is close to

the Shammaites, while Jesus himself is more likely close to the Essenes” (Luz 2007:255).

In our churches today we still have people who believe that divorce is a must in the case of adultery. They do not emphasize therapeutic ways of pastorally caring for the troubled soul. The English idiom is right to say, “It takes two to tango.” The study accepts as true that adultery is a sin, yes, but the question is: what caused this sin in a relationship of the couple? Perhaps lack of sex in marriage might be a problem that leads to one partner looking outside marriage for sex. In that case, when dealing with the problem of adultery, we should as well address the issues of sexual dissatisfaction within the marriage. Adultery is prohibited in Scripture, but the study also believes that adultery is not a sin that cannot be forgiven. Husbands and wives should consider forgiving each other in case one or the other had fallen into sin of adultery. Block explains:

“In Matthew 5:31-32 we observe a reflection of early rabbinic interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-2. According to the Mishnah the rabbinic schools of Shammai and Hillel offered narrow and broad interpretations respectively of Deuteronomy 24:1-4: The school of Shammai say: A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her, for it is written, *Because he hath found in her indecency in anything*. And the school of Hillel say: [he may divorce her] even if she spoiled a dish for him, for it is written, *Because he hath found in her indecency in anything*. R. Akiba says: Even if he found another fairer than she, for it is written, *And it shall be if she finds no favour in his eyes*” (Block 2012:563).

If South Africans is to follow the school of Hillel, then it means that the husbands may divorce their wives for reasons such as gaining weight, and or losing shape after child birth. And women might as well divorce their husbands for reasons such as job loss. Some people by their actions, one may notice that they are following this school of thought (school of Hillel). South Africans should consider forgiving each other in case of unfaithfulness in marriage. Those who discover that their partner has been unfaithful should first make every effort to forgive, reconcile, and restore their relationship. Couples should always look for reasons to restore their marriage relationships rather

than for excuses to leave their marriages. One mistake of unfaithfulness in one of the partners does not necessarily warrant for divorce, especially if the wrong party is remorseful and willing to change.

Apostle Paul has something to contribute on the matter of divorce, in his first letter to the Corinthians.

#### **4.2.4 Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 7:10-11**

The book of 1 Corinthians was written by Paul approximately A.D. 55 (see Harrisville 1987:14). He wrote to identify problems in the Corinthian church, to offer solutions, and to teach the believers how to live for Christ in a corrupt society. One of the problems he faced was *divorce*, which is spoken about in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

##### 4.2.4.1 Translation

*10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife (KJV).*

##### 4.2.4.2 Commentary on 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

According to Mounce, when Paul is talking about woman in this case, he is using the word “depart” from the Greek χωρίζω which means “to dissociate one’s self, to part” (Mounce 1993:484). And to the man according to Meyers, Paul used the phrase “put away” from the Greek ἀφίημι which means “to send forth,” “to send away”, or “to forsake” (Meyers 2009 no page). The verb used of the wife is different from the verb used of a husband, but the results according to Morris are the same (see Morris 1988:105-106). A wife should not separate from her husband and the husband should not forsake his wife. Neither of the two is advised to divorce the other. Collins comments:

“Paul’s command on divorce is similar to the Jesuanic logion of Matt 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18, but Paul makes no attempt to cite the words of the historical Jesus. The traditional logion essentially focused on man divorcing his wife. Only in Mark is there reference to the parallel case of a wife divorcing her husband. That Paul first addressed himself to the wife divorcing her husband—a departure from the male-female sequence that has thus far dominated his gender-equal exhortation, and different from the traditional logion—would seem

to indicate that Paul was aware of the situation in Corinth in which a woman had divorced her husband or was about to do so. On the authority of the Lord Paul commands that she not do so, that she not divorce her husband. The situation is that of the Hellenistic world, in which it was possible for a woman to divorce her husband. To speak of her divorce Paul uses the verb *choristhenai* (see vv.11,15), which means “to divorce” in Hellenistic legal texts. I have translated the verb as “separate” so as to distinguish it from the synonymous *aphienai* of vv. 11c, 12, 13. In the synoptic version of Jesus’ logion the verb *apolyein* is used. If there is any distinction to be made between “to separate” (*choristhenai*) and “to divorce” (*aphienai*) it may be that Paul is reflecting his traditional Jewish understanding of marriage that calls for active verbs to be used of men and passive verbs to be used of women” (Collins 1999:269).

Marriage is to be honoured. The Corinthian church was in turmoil because of the immorality of the culture around them (see 1 Corinthians 6:12-20). Some Greeks, in rejecting immorality, rejected sex and marriage altogether. The Corinthian Christians wondered if this was the way they should do also, so they asked Paul several questions: “Because sex is perverted, should not we also abstain in marriage?” “If my spouse is unsaved, should I seek divorce?” “Should unmarried people and widows remain single?” Paul answered many of these questions by pointing out that for now, the Corinthians should stay put. Be content in the situation where God has placed them. He advised those who are married not to seek to be single and those who are single not to seek to be married. He instructed them to live God’s way, one day at a time, believing that God will show them what to do. Sampley asserts that the Roman laws allowed men and women to practice divorce and Corinth was a Roman colony city following the Roman law. Consequently, Paul’s teaching on divorce affirms his understanding of Jesus’ teaching on the subject. Paul’s teaching runs counter to the Roman law (Sampley 2002:875). Datiri comments:

“It is surprising that Paul says *a wife must not separate from her husband*. At that time, it was usually the husband who divorced his wife. Probably, Paul was addressing an actual case that had occurred in Corinth, especially as the

parenthetical statement added in 7:11 refers only to the woman leaving. Paul insists that in a case like this, remarriage is forbidden” (Datiri 2006:1385).

A man should not divorce his wife and a woman as well should not divorce her husband.

### 4.3 AFRICAN VIEW OF DIVORCE

It is the study’s assumption that lack of proper care towards the divorcees in the church is due to the stigma associated with divorce, especially in an African context where a person is isolated. Divorce is frowned upon in African culture. There is a Northern Sotho saying that, *Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi* which translates ‘a grave of a wife is with the husband’s family,’ by implication it means that a wife should stay with the husband until she dies. Magane explains this notion this way:

“It is said *lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi*, which means the daughter-in-law must stay with her in-laws until she dies, no matter how unbearable the environment is. Her plight could include tolerating her husband having extramarital affair, waiting for her husband if he has left the family without reason, and accepting that he supports her unmarried sisters-in-law financially. It is unacceptable for a woman to return to her home from the in-laws” (Magane 2000:43).

Mothiba further reinforces this notion in Pedi language by saying, “*Mosadi wa setso o nyalwa ga tee, a kgotsofala. Le ge go ka ba le mathata ka lapeng, dipula tsa duma ka dikgadima, a ka se boele morago; ke gore a ka se hlale ka gore setso se re lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi. Go nyalwa la bobedi e ka ba kgobogo e bile ga se molao wa setso*” (Mothiba 2014:152). The words in italics translates, “Traditional woman get married only once and get satisfied. Even if she may experience marital problems she cannot return back home, that means she cannot divorce because tradition says that the grave of a woman is with her in-laws. Getting married for the second time as a woman is considered a disgrace and it is not a way of tradition.” African people despise a woman who abandons her marriage. In African culture, divorce is a *taboo*, especially in villages and rural areas. Afriyie says,

“The word *taboo* comes from the Polynesian word *tupe*. It refers to any act that is prohibited because it will have negative supernatural consequences for an individual or community. These consequences follow because it opens a door for evil forces” (Afriyie 2006:159).

African people revere ancestors. In African culture, divorce is said to be offending the ancestors. That is the reason why it is not tolerated. In African culture when there is a wedding, cattle are slaughtered. The shedding of animal blood in the wedding ceremony is believed to be communicating with the ancestors to inform them that the family is being extended. When one is divorcing, believe is that the ancestors will not be happy, and therefore, the people will suffer the consequences.

Pedi wedding preparation, for example, takes the entire week. On Monday is when the older ladies start with the process of brewing traditional beer because it takes four to five days to brew, depending on the temperature. On Thursday afternoon they (the family members and close relatives) would take a little of home brewed traditional beer and go to the graveyard. When they arrive by the cemetery they would pour traditional beer on the head of the graves of their departed family members and begin to talk to them—telling them that there is a wedding. They would mention the name of the person who is getting married; the name and family name of the person to be married to. This practice of talking to the dead on their graves is called ‘*Go bega*’ in Sepedi. *Go bega* means ‘to tell.’ It is about telling the ancestors about the new union. After the practice of *Go bega*, then they would slaughter some cattle for the wedding. The shedding of animal blood is believed to be reinforcing and sealing the covenant between the two families and their ancestors. Divorcing after going through with all the above processes of traditional marriage is believed to be angering the ancestors. And when they are angry there will be consequences—calamitous aftermaths.

The Zulus after receiving some cattle for *lobola* they would slaughter a goat and take out a gall bladder and pour a gall upon the head of their newly wedded son-in-law and also on his hands. The gall is called ‘*inyogo*’ in Zulu. The pouring of *inyogo* upon the son-in-law is believed to be communicating with the ancestors informing them that they welcome the groom as a new member and an extension to their existing family. When

divorce happens, it is not a matter that concerns the two married couple only, but the two families and their ancestors are involved as well. And the ancestors will not tolerate divorce. Matooane writes,

“In traditional society, getting married was regarded as something important, and was accepted as fulfilling a sacred and religious duty, for the happiness of one’s family. The continuity of the lineage and pleasing the family’s ancestors (Balimo)” (Matooane 2008:4).

Because marriage is pleasing to the family’s good ancestors in traditional African society, divorce does the opposite—it angers the ancestors and disappoints the members of the family.

Divorce was permitted in Scripture because of the hardness of human hearts (see Matthew 19:18). This hardness of the heart is a reality in both the believing and the unbelieving people. When two people are becoming one in marriage, two families come together as one family. When the two are getting divorced, it is also a matter of the entire community. The entire community will be affected by the separation, if they decide to divorce. Haselbarth explains:

“In Africa we know better than in the West that divorce concerns society, not least because of children. Whether the marriage is kept or dissolved affects the whole order of the law and society” (Haselbarth 2004:78).

Divorce is harmful to the public because it brings about fatherlessness. And children who are brought up without fathers become problematic. Kopel pointed out that fatherlessness can be the root cause of violence (Kopel 2014:1). Children from broken families are growing up without a father’s instruction (see Proverbs 4:1). And because of that they resort to violence.

#### **4.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

Divorce is not supported in Scripture (see Malachi 2:14-16). It is permitted in some circumstances, but not prescribed (see Matthew 5:31-32; and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Moses legalised divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 due to the hardness of the hearts of the

Israelites. But it was not in God's original plan for couples to divorce. Couples were meant to be united as one flesh (see Genesis 2:24) and not to divorce. On the other hand, divorce in some instances can be a solution to problems (see Ezra 10:1-3).

In African culture divorce is frowned upon. It is believed by Christians to be against God and by those who revere ancestors to be against ancestors. When one divorces, especially woman, she would be called names like 'returned soldier' to suggest that one is a failure. But in some cases divorce might be necessary, especially where the marriage is destroying one or both partners.

The following chapter will focus on the interviews. It was pointed out in chapter one that the study would interview divorced men and women, as well as members of the clergy (the pastoral caregivers) who journeyed with the divorcees during the painful time of divorce.



## CHAPTER 5

### INTERVIEWS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to two segments of empirical data. “Data’ are ‘stuff’ you work with, the records of what you are studying. The researcher makes them data by selecting and using them as evidence in an analysis” (Richards 2005:34). The first part discovers the journey of divorced men and women as the study is dialoguing with them. “Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research” (Greeff 2002:292). The divorcees will be sharing their experiences of divorce. They will be the source of knowledge as stated in chapter one and two. It is mentioned in chapter one that the participants will be used as the living literature. The study interviewed the participants because it is interested in their life stories. “Stories are a way of knowing. The root of the word “story” is from the Greek word *histor*, which means one who is wise and learned. Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process” (Greeff 2002:292). The telling of stories by the participants will be educational in this study. Participants in this study are the custodians of wisdom.

The names in this study are fictional in order to protect the identities of the participants. A questionnaire was employed for these interviews (see Appendices A, and C).

The second section discovers the journey of pastoral caregivers who were involved in counselling the divorcees. Pastors who are caring for the divorcees were interviewed as promised in chapter one.

#### 5.2 REPORT BACK INFORMATION

The first group of the participants consists of the divorcees. The aim here was to get the participants’ emotional journey of divorce in their own words. The study will be selective on what data is to be used. Oliver says,

“The selection of data is often an important issue with qualitative data, such as deriving from interviews or observational research. The volume of data is often

so great in such cases that some degree of selectivity is necessary” (Oliver 2008:124).

The interview questions were crafted carefully, but some of the respondents were free to give their lengthy stories. The study was selective on what information would be used depending on its relevance to the study. Riessman reinforces Oliver’s sentiments by saying that,

“It is common experience for investigators to craft interview questions carefully only to have participants respond with lengthy accounts, long stories that appear on the surface to have little to do with the question” (Riessman 2013:168).

The study will be selective by avoiding some of the long stories that are deemed not relevant or not answering the question.

### **5.2.1 Profiles of participants**

The participants’ real names will not be mentioned to protect their identities.

#### **5.2.1.1 Participant one**

Participant one is a thirty four years old divorced women living in Soshanguve with her children. Her divorce was finalized in court approximately two years ago. She is a member of a church that has been supportive to her throughout her divorce ordeal. She was interviewed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2015. The interview lasted for about thirty minutes.

#### **5.2.1.2 Participant two**

Participant two is a thirty one years old divorced woman living in East Rand (Ekurhuleni). She is a member of a church at Elsburg and her church has been supportive to her. Her divorce was decreed two years ago after she was married for 10 years. She is now single parenting her three children. She is a pastor’s daughter. She was interviewed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2006. The interview lasted for 31 minutes and fifty nine seconds. It started at 11:29 and ended at 12:01.

#### 5.2.1.3 Participant three

Participant three is a thirty three year old divorced man from Eastern Cape. He is now pastoring a church at Vella Lisa (Ekurhuleni). He is the father of one young boy from his broken marriage. He was interviewed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 at Vella Lisa. The interview lasted for 34 minutes and 51 seconds.

#### 5.2.1.4 Participant four

Participant four is a divorced man who is in his late 50s. He was married for 11 years, and then got divorced. He became single for 5 years and after that he remarried. Now he is happily married to his second wife, and his first wife is still alive. He had no children with the first wife. Now he has one child with his second wife. He has been married to his second wife for 21 years now. He is a professor of theology with two doctoral degrees. He is based in Randburg. He was interviewed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 at Ferndale (Randburg). The interview took about 21 minutes and 52 seconds.

#### 5.2.1.5 Participant five

Participant five is a divorced woman in her early 50s. She is a teacher by profession from Limpopo province. She is blessed with three children. After divorce she decided never to marry again. She is a devout Christian. She was interviewed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2016. The interview carried on for 48 minutes.

#### 5.2.1.6 Participant six

Participant six is a divorced woman in her early 50s (approximately 52 years old). She was born in Limpopo province. She is a sincere Christian. She is her parents' only child. She was interviewed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2016 at Moreleta Park (Pretoria). The interview continued for 1 hour, 31 minutes, and 39 seconds.

#### 5.2.1.7 Participant seven

Participant seven is a 50 year old divorced man from Soweto. He has been married for 12 years. He is the father of two children from his broken marriage. He was interviewed

on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 at Weltevreden Park. The interview took about 1 hour 45 minutes. He is now planning to remarry.

#### 5.2.1.8 Participant eight

Participant eight is a 52 year old divorced man from Soweto. He has been married twice and he divorced twice. His first marriage lasted for 12 years, and his second marriage lasted for 5 years. He had two children from the first marriage and no child from the second marriage. He was interviewed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2016. The interview took place at Roodepoort and it lasted for about 30 minutes.

#### 5.2.1.9 Participant nine

Participant nine is a divorced woman in her early 40s. She was married from 2006 to 2011. She is the mother of one child from her broken marriage. She is now a self-employed business woman. She is the last born from her family of nine children in Limpopo. She was interviewed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 at Tafelkop (Limpopo province). The interview lasted for about 30 minutes.

Participants ten and eleven are pastoral caregivers. One of their responsibilities is to care for the divorcees pastorally.

#### 5.2.1.10 Participant ten

Participant ten is Pastor Moloto, a pastor of Apostolic Faith Mission at Tafelkop (Limpopo Province). He is married and blessed with three children. He is offering pastoral care and counselling to members of his church and to the community of Tafelkop. He was interviewed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 at Tafelkop. The interview lasted for about 34 minutes.

#### 5.2.1.11 Participant eleven

Participant eleven is Pastor Gladwell Zabane from Saulsville (Attridgeville). He is the senior pastor of Indumiso Family Worship Center. He is a married man with children and grandchildren. The interview took place at Sunnyside (Pretoria) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2016, and it lasted for 26 minutes and 33 seconds.

## 5.2.2 Responses from participants

The following are the questions the study probed to the first group of participants (the divorcees).

- ❖ Are you a religious person, who practices your faith daily?
- ❖ Would you share with me about your family background?
- ❖ What was the journey of your marriage like?
- ❖ Share with me, your understanding of marriage based on your religion.
- ❖ Share with me how you felt during the process of separation or divorce?
- ❖ Could you share with me about the rate of divorce these days?
- ❖ How would you define divorce in your own words as an African man/woman?

The following are responses from the participants (divorcees).

### 5.2.2.1 Response from participant one

I'm very religious. I am from Mamaneng (Next to Siyabuswa) in rural area. I am the third born from my father's first wife. I am from a Christian family. I started school at Mamaneng until matric. I went to Technical College after matric for two years and dropped out because of pregnancy, then stayed at home for a period of a year and half... We started our relationship when I was still at home before moving to Pretoria. At first things were right. But I as well saw some difficulties and ignored them for the sake of a child. Again seeing the relationship of my parents I thought persevering is the right way. Then I moved to Pretoria, that is when I saw other couples living better lives than ours. Then I started consulting with social workers and pastors but things were out of control by then. Having dealt about domestic violence at work as a police, I knew that things will never be normal between us as my situation was worse than of those people I was dealing with. I decided to end the marriage because I didn't want my children to keep witnessing violence in their house. The violence was both physical and emotional.

You must marry someone who is from the same religion as yours. Our upbringing determines our success in marriage. Good relationship with God helps in marriage. Love and respect should be exercised in marriage. Both partners should know their positions. Do not do to your partner what you do not want him or her do to you. Trust each other.

Mhh ... ok, because it was not the first time I applied for divorce, I wanted support from others. I was asking myself if I did the right thing knowing that from both my father's and my mother's family I was the first to experience divorce. Then I cancelled the divorce trying other avenues then I failed. Until I applied again, by that time it's like I prayed that divorce should be finalised quickly. And I wanted things to go his way for the sake of peace because there are children involved. I never stressed about a divorce because I was ready for it. And I accepted that it was over and there is nothing I can do and there is nothing to save.

Divorce rate was low before but people were abused too much. Most women then used to put up with the abuse because they wanted to be provided for. Today women know that they can live peacefully alone. Divorce rate is high because people know what they want. They know what to do.

Divorce is a relationship between two people, they lived together, shared everything together, along the way they disagree. One of them along the way becomes disrespectful, begin to ill-treat the other up until the other decided to end the relationship knowing or seeing that it won't survive.

#### 5.2.2.2 Responses from participant two

Very religious! I'm from a Christian family. My father was a pastor. I was born in a Christian family. ... So ... I grew in a Christian Church until I got married at the age of 19. Ha ha ha (she is laughing and the interviewer is joining her). Very young age *neh?*

Yoh... I don't know where to start. My first year of marriage ... I won't lie and say it was the best year ever. I couldn't understand what was happening. It was chaos. It was fight after fight immediately after marriage, I don't know if it was bad luck or what! I don't know the happiness of marriage. ... He believes this, you believe that and as a Christian you were told that you have to submit ... It's been a chaos in my marriage. I married someone I didn't know. And you know *Bazalwane* [Christians], my parents were happy at first that their daughter is getting married at an early age, but the happiness I had was very little. Four months after marriage I got pregnant. So, I cannot say it was because of pregnancy because even before and after it was chaos. He grew in this family that believes in this, you believe in that, even if you see that this is nonsense you still have to submit. It was worse because I married a person I didn't know and to my family it was

a blessing I will get married at an early age, and I am getting to marry someone who is a Christian. You don't know each other. You don't understand each other. You are from different families then you have to forsake your way of doing things and follow their way of doing things because you have to submit. I met him and in six month time he wants to marry. Parents were saying our daughter is getting married to someone who doesn't have a child. It was a blessing to them saying our child is getting married to a Christian. But it was a chaos. A Christian or no Christian when getting into marriage you must enter with someone you know.... According to my understanding, you must know each other before jumping into marrying. Before entering into marriage you should ask yourself if you know the person you are getting married to. Know his or her background. Know his weaknesses and strong point and ask yourself if he will be strong where you are weak. Marriage is about knowing the person, loving the person, being sure that I'm comfortable with this person ... completely comfortable, you trust each other, love each other completely. Don't marry a person saying "I think I love this person." And worse thing *neh* ... don't marry someone you are not ... sorry... sexually attracted to him or her. *Never... Never*. That's the biggest mistake. Don't. You have to be sexually attracted to that person. He or she must hook you when you look at him or her. Once he or she is not like that you will look at others and say this one is better than him or her, this one is appetizing... and that is a mistake ... that is a mistake.

Mhh ... ok, first let me tell you, before you divorce you feel like you know 'I am tired,' I want to get off this thing, if I can see myself out of this thing I will say *thank you*. It will be a process. Once you are being decreed divorced officially, I don't know how to put it. It is a pain... a trauma or something. It's like you are left with a stigma. It's like everybody who is looking at you will see divorce written on your face. The stigma, it's painful. You cannot bear that. Even though you I know that I didn't want to be in this marriage, I want to come out, but once it happen no one is worse than you in this world. No bad person like you... and you don't feel comfortable around married people. You feel like you have disease "somehow ... somehow" that is contagious and will infect them. You feel like leaving them. You feel like the stigma of bad luck is following you. It's painful, humiliating, embarrassing. You need the grace of God. It's the stigma that you are left with, to get rid of it you just need the grace of God.

You see... that old thing *neh*, I didn't understand it when our parents were saying it before we got married, now that I got divorced I understand they were telling the truth. People of old would tell you that you cannot marry from this family you can marry from that one. They are respectful and you will adjust well with them. I wish we would listen to parents. If only we listened to our parents we wouldn't be divorcing this way. We are stubborn. We saying, "They cannot choose for me who to marry." I will choose for myself. Look at the divorce rate now!

Yoh, It feels like spiritual slaughter. It feels like you are being slaughtered emotionally, brutally. It is ...I don't know, not even slaughter, *you are being crucified*. It's like humiliation of a woman caught in the act of adultery in the Bible. You feel like a woman who was bleeding non-stop. I don't know if you understand me. I'm putting it in different ways so that you can understand me. It's a bad feeling, a terrible feeling. It's worse because in the Bible God says, "I hate divorce." How do you go to God and pray to Him while you know He hates what you are doing. Sometimes you cannot even pray. Sometimes you would pray and when that thing comes to your mind you will find yourself saying 'Amen.' It happened to me several times. It's over 2 years now being divorced but it is still happening.

#### 5.2.2.3 Responses from participant three

The answer is yes! Yes... ehh... I'm the fourth born from the family of eight children. My father and mother were ... yah ... married for ... mhh... I'm not sure but about more than 40 years now. We grew up as normal family. As the first born son after three girls, somehow my childhood was somehow special, until the age of 7 years. That is when things changed because now my mother most of the time was here at Gauteng. So, we were alone as children at home, myself and my three sisters.

Mhh... the journey of my marriage ... mhh... it has too many parts, but first and foremost ... mhh... towards the marriage it was not easy. It was totally not easy because my wife was staying with her relatives and those relatives did not like actually her to be my wife. Many things actually happened, until we got married. Her relatives did not attend the wedding. So, but anyway we got married in 2009 ... ehh... on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November. It was good. We went home, celebrated, we did everything. 2009 to 2012 it was *supper*. 2011 is when problems started. My wife got a job then somehow she met



her ex-boyfriend, who was working close to her work place. Somehow they reconciled and I heard about it. But we fought over that and it passed, and from then there was no trust between us. From that day it was up and down. No trust between us. Even when she went to work I wasn't feeling comfortable ... She is a very good person. She was a very good person. Ehh... in ministry, ehh... sometimes I would sit down and say to myself, some things are irreplaceable because she stood by me when many women would have gave up.... Ehh... 2012 she just decided to go back home to Eastern Cape. After three weeks she came back and when I ask her the reason why she left, she just said, "No I'm tired." Tired of what? Of waiting for something that she doesn't see the future in ... 2013 is when things became very messy. Ehh... I found out that she was dating another man. I was very angry and chased her out of my house. She left. We separated for eight months. On the eighth month she has been asking for forgiveness; asking to come back home. So, I said to myself, let me give her another chance because God is giving us second chances. I gave her another chance. It was July 2014 and we stayed August and September. End of September she asked to go and support another preacher who was having a revival in Eastern Cape and I was preaching somewhere in Gauteng by then in Soweto, and I was supposed to go and minister in Eastern Cape also. On the second week of the revival at Eastern Cape, I was supposed to go there and I was waiting for them to send me money for transport. But the preacher who was supposed to send me money suddenly cancelled my trip to Eastern Cape, while my wife was already there leading worship with songs in the revival.... We exchanged words with that preacher and I suspected he was having an affair with my wife. I got furious... I phoned my wife and told her how that preacher insulted me and she sided with him. And I asked her, "Where were you when that preacher was swearing at me." She said, "I was in the bedroom and he was in the sitting room... After revival she didn't come home. She said she was going to her home. Then I called her sister and asked her sister about her whereabouts. Her sister said, "No she didn't come here. Later she told me that she was with her friend.... Sometime later she wrote a message saying, "I no longer want you. Go and divorce me. There are many people who are better than you. You are useless." She wrote many things. Our parents tried to intervene. Our friends and pastors tried to intervene, but there was no solution, until I

made a decision to divorce her. When the summons came she signed freely. Later before the divorce was finalised she went to report me at civil court. She went to open a case against me saying I abused her emotionally. How emotionally? I was accusing her of every wrong thing happening in the church. I was forcing her to go to church, forcing her to read the Word. I went to court, attended a court case, unfortunately she did not attend. And they asked me if we were both Christians when we marry, and I said, “Yes.” They couldn’t understand. The magistrate dismissed the case. That was the end of my marriage.

Ehh... marriage... ehh... I would say it’s an institution, or it’s a college that one will never graduate until deaths do the two people who are in love part. I would say again that marriage is the reflection of God and the church. And marriage is actually a partnership between two people who are from different backgrounds coming together to do one thing or to pursue a common goal, with one foundational discipline which is love. That is what basically, I can say marriage is.

Ooh... man of God it was not easy. It was not easy. Out of all the pains I’ve been through in life that was the worse pain ever. There is nothing, no pain I can compare with, because looking back, when you enter into marriage, you sacrifice everything. You sacrifice a lot of things in order to build a new life with that person you love. When you divorce or separate is like you written in a page. Then you have to rub off and start afresh in a new page.... It is very painful. When you make plans, your plans were revolving around her. Now you have to start new plans. It was painful. I remember after divorce I would close the door and cry the whole day. Sometimes I would go to church to preach but couldn’t preach but crying. If you enter into a taxi and people are laughing it’s like they are laughing at you. You lose your self-esteem... It was very painful. There is no pain in life that I can compare with that pain. The church was very supportive. There is one pastor in particular who was very caring maybe it was because he knows the pain of divorce from personal experience.

Ehh... according to my view, divorce is too high because of our environment. The principles and values somewhere have been lost.... Before when a person gets married she or he would be prepared and told that forward ever, backwards never. These days when couples are fighting the parents would take sides instead of advising the couple.

Another thing is that there is too much freedom. Again there is too much of lust these days. Married people lust after people they are not married to. My heart was painful when I was signing the register of the divorced people. It was big and it was only records for three months.

Ehh... I can define it in so many words, but I would like to use this one, it is an escape. Because it is an escape, we have seen men and women killing each other. So, what gave me a drive to go and sign is that if this person can do this thing once more, I would do something that I would regret later.

#### 5.2.2.4 Responses from participant four

Very religious! Ok ... I started as ... ehh... the eldest son of my parents and ...ehh... we are three brothers from that set of parents. And my father and my mother also divorced. I come from a divorced home. Ehh ... My father remarried more than once. Ehh ... So, he was the one who couldn't keep his women, and ...ehh... has children with all of them. My mother remarried only once. She is still alive and living with her second husband (my stepfather). And I have brothers ... just brothers from that union. I grew up in my mother's house. So, I consider my stepbrothers ...ehh... from my mother's new marriage more as my brothers than the others that my father had. So, I come from a ... a broken family. And ... ehh ... I was a Christian when I married the first time. I believe that divorce is against God's will says His Word. And so, my first marriage having been a failure ... ehh ... because ...ehh... my first wife ...ehh... did not want the Christian life as ...as I know it. And ...ehh... she ended up divorcing me for that reason. So, that is how I got divorced ... got divorced in the first place. I don't believe in divorce but divorce was brought upon me. So, I needed to ... ehh ... check out the Scriptures ... ehh ... what that means for me. Ehh... but I did remarry after 7 years of being divorced, and ... ehh ... I now remarried ...ehh ... for 21 years.

I was married to my first wife for 11 years. But I must admit looking back that ... ehh ... I made a mistake marrying this woman; 1) because I believe, and I now have reason to believe that she initially ... ehh ... you know "accepted the Lord" for my sake. After we were married, particularly 5 years, ... ehh ... she decided that that kind of life is not the life she wants. She wanted to see "more" about life and enjoy life in a way she felt she

wanted to enjoy life. So, ... ehh ... she started being unfaithful, ... ehh ... while I was faithful to her the whole time. Not because of what; but because of my faith in Christ. Ehh... so, my faithfulness to my unfaithful wife was in essence my faithfulness to God and the teachings of the Bible. And ... ehh ... even though our marriage became very rocky after 5 years and from the 6<sup>th</sup> year onwards, she ... she became blatantly unfaithful. Ehh... I didn't divorce her and ... ehh ... after 10 years in the eleventh year, she decided she wants a divorce. So, I had to succumb to that ... ehh ... because there was nothing left. Ehh ... but she instituted that ... that divorce.

Marriage is something that comes from God. God instituted marriage, I believe so. According to the Bible, when God created ... ehh... female as a helper for the man, the whole idea of companionship came from God. And so, God is the one who instituted marriage. And God stated what He believe marriage should be, by ... ehh ... in that creation story simply saying, "For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and the two of them shall become one flesh and what God has put together, later Jesus said, "let no man separate." So, that is my fundamental belief of marriage; it comes from God; it is meant for life. I can even expand on that and say, I believe marriage to be heterosexual between a man and a woman because God created a female for Adam. And ... ehh ... God had also in mind the possibility of procreation and a homosexual relationship or homosexual marriage is unable to ... ehh ... procreate and so, therefore, is not ... ehh ... in compliance with God's will. Besides the other ... ehh ... Scriptural indicators that homosexuality is ... ehh... not acceptable by God. Ehh ... so, I believe in marriage as from God; as ...ehh... heterosexual, as for life; and ...ehh ... that therefore, divorce would be a contravention of that. Ehh ... but we also see from the Scripture that ... ehh ... in the imagery of God's relationship with Israel, He also refers to divorcing Israel. So, we see then later on in the bible that the bible does give grounds for divorce and those grounds are generally in my belief, ... ehh... the unfaithfulness of the spouse or ... ehh ... according to 1 Corinthians 7, if unbelieving spouse wants to leave, that person can leave, and the believer is not bound in ... in that instance. Ehh... the other grounds, the third grounds for divorce according to the bible, is the ... if they decide together to get divorced and in that context ... then to remain single and not remarry. So, remarriage actually is what makes divorce wrong.

But remarriage is ... ehh ... I believe ...ehh ... allowed in case ...ehh... of unfaithfulness on one hand, or in the case of unbeliever leaving on the other hand.

It was emotionally ... ehh ... challenging ... uhm .. and I think in the beginning for me it was an emotional challenge because I loved this woman and ... ehh ... it was heart-breaking that she was being unfaithful to me. Ehh ... but then you ... you ... you get used to the idea, and ...ehh ... I then began to wish that either she would die or she would leave me. I know that ... that is ... is hypocritical in one sense, but that is the truth. Ehh ... I reached the stage in my marriage where I just hoped the Lord would bring an end to it. And sometimes even with the possibility of me dying. Ehh... but ... I ... I knew that ... that marriage couldn't continue in the way that it was, and I also knew on the other hand, that I didn't want to divorce. So, I wouldn't have instituted... ehh ... any... ehh ... move to divorce. I would rather leave that up to her to do. But...ehh... yah... it was emotionally painful in the beginning, and then it became ... I became impervious to the pain; to the hurt. Then I became recluse in the sense that ... you know ... I would rather be alone ... ehh ... and do other things that ... that I wanted to do more. And ... ehh ... I started giving myself to studies and reading and ... you know ... something to take my mind off what was happening. Ehh ... I gave myself more ... dedicatingly or devotionally to my job. Ehh ... that was another way of escaping the pain. Ehh... I ... also devotedly gave myself to Christian work as an escape for what was happening. So, I think there ... there perhaps was ... was my biggest struggle; where I was leading young people in youth ministry. I was running a bible study. Ehh ... and in the meantime, I was going through this turmoil. Ehh... some people knew about it and others didn't. But I didn't share it freely with everybody. Ehh ... But those who knew me a little better ...ehh ... knew that I was facing the struggle, but also knew my life and personality to know that it ... it wasn't anything of my making. And so, I had a lot of people who knew what was going on sympathize with me.

Yah ... I ... I think that ... that the divorce rate is climbing, and will always climb, and particularly for as long as people are becoming more and more secular in their approach to life. Ehh ... the traditional contexts ... ehh ... are able still to maintain the idea of marriage and so, even a non-Christian traditional context ... ehh ... we have a man and a woman sticking together no matter what. Ehh ... but in a democratic society;

and this is one of the down sides of democracy; is that people know they have a choice, and they exercise their choice even in relation to marriages, and ... ehh ... you know ... So, marriage is seldom entered into these days for life. And many people see this as ... 'ok ... let me do it, but if it doesn't work, we can divorce.' And that unfortunately, it is not good for the ... the institution of marriage. And I believe then that this is perhaps where we ... ehh ... a Christian ministry can make a difference; first of all by ...ehh... demonstrating good marriages. And I'm happy to say that my second marriage ... ehh ... I am able to demonstrate successful marriage. A marriage that people admire; a marriage that people often say, "I wish ... ehh ... my marriage can be like yours. Ehh ... its possible. Ehh ... But it's only possible if both parties have the same goal and the press towards that goal. Then you know what, you ... you can stick through the difficulties, and you understand that sometimes there are disagreements; and even heated disagreements. Ehh ... but you ... you base your relationship on the kind of principles that says, 'Ok even if we fight heatedly, we will not give up our bet together, or even if we fight heatedly, we will not fight in such a way that ... ehh ... impacts negatively on our children, or we will not take our fights beyond ourselves to others, and so, we will live by those principles that regulates our relationship within marriage. And so, ehh ... you know ... these are ways that you can safeguard your marriage. But for me the most important thing is the Christian principle: "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." So then, my prerogative as well as my responsibility; my duty is to love my wife; love my wife whether she is unlovable or whether she is unlikable at the moment ... you know ... but I must still love her. And I can by God's grace. I can if the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in my heart the love of God. Ehh ... I can love my wife even in difficult times. But I know then ... that my wife needs also to be sensitised to my love. She must be able to respond to my love, and when she does ... ehh ... then that response is positive, and that response is what gives us the injection; the boost to carry on and to make things better. And you face married life in that way; and I mean we just continued to try and to live by the biblical Christian principles. On the other hand, while I must love ... ehh ... she must submit to me. And I realize that my love for her is not going to make submission an orneriest burdensome task for her, in fact, she is going to do it delightfully because she is responding to my

love. And ... ehh ... those biblical principles work. And ... ehh ... we believe in them, and that's why additionally they are working. So, not only is God giving us the strength to make our marriage work, but we believe in the principles that He set in place for it to work and we live by those principles.

It's a failure of marriage. Divorce is a failure of living together. Divorce is choosing to go separate ways rather than sticking it out. Divorce is failing God. Divorce is failing our children. Divorce is failing the two families, because ... you see ... when you get divorced it doesn't just implicates you and your spouse; it implicates the children; it implicates her family; it implicates his family; it implicates their friends together, and so, I mean the implications are much broader than people realize. And ... ehh ... divorce is bad news ... ehh ... and we need to realize that, and we need to preach that ... that it's bad news. There is an alternative—and that is good news about what marriage really should be. So, I mean ... ehh ... we should look for role models with good marriages, so that we can begin to preach the good news of good marriage.

#### 5.2.2.5 Responses from participant five

Very religious! Yes I can. Umh... I was born in a family that was a Christian faith. Unfortunately I haven't seen my father. My mother was divorced before I could be able to know who my father is. And thereafter my mother raised us ... because of her background she did not want us to get married. So, but as a young woman ... you still have a desire to go through all the process of getting married ... and even think that maybe your mother was divorced because she was not loved and you see this one is like he is so sincere in everything he says and he does only to find that you are also going to go through the same process of divorce and abuse. Of course, my mother had to divorce because she was physically abused; mine was emotional, not physical.

Ehh... Ah! The dating was so good. The only problem came after we committed ourselves to becoming married (woman and man). That is where the reality surfaced out. This man who used to love me so much was no longer the person he was before... The possibility is that the marriage was not based on love. Umh... it was materialistic, and I think in his mind he had told himself that this marriage is going to push him somewhere financially. So, I kept on praying because I trusted God. I thought that

maybe he was going to change. Sometimes as a pastor, because I was married to a pastor he would come home drunk ... He was without any respect in any way ... In the house he was like a lion. In the church and on the streets he was an angel.... He was very unfaithful ... unfaithful to an extent of transporting his girlfriend to school while I was using public transport.... He started coming home late in the early hours of the day—2 o’ clock, 3 o’ clock. He did not fear God because he could come on Sunday morning ask me to give him water to bath and go to church to preach. I remember one day he was offering Holy Communion in church and I did not partake and other said, “Ahh... *Mmamoruti* (pastor’s wife), you don’t partake? And I said, “No its fine, don’t worry.” I did not partake because from Friday he was with his girlfriend.... The abuse went on and even my son because he was not his biological child, he abused him... I was only in possession of my clothes. He took everything (everything I worked to accumulate for 10 years), telling me that I can only take a car... In my heart I was saying, “If this man can only give me a house, if he can repent and come back after sometime I will take him back.... And what I can tell you about divorce is that it is very painful. While I filed for divorce, every time I visited my attorneys and they said, “What is your case?” My attorneys whenever I go there and they say ehh... “What is your case?” I have to say this word, and when I say this word “divorce” I felt like I’m being torn apart. You know ... divided into two parts, vertically. I felt like that ... and from there I learnt that when God has put two people together and they go separate ways it’s too painful. It’s very painful. You feel like you are being divided into two, vertically, not horizontally. Your other part is like going the other side, and the other part is going the other side... That’s what I felt...

Marriage is an institution that was started by God. I still honour marriage even though I am divorced. The only thing I fear is myself trying to get married. Because I don’t know the type of person that will be, because that one destroyed my faith in men. I don’t trust men. I trust them when they a far away from me, but I don’t want them close to me because when they are close to me they will show me their other colours.

I felt like my other half is going this direction and the other one is going that direction. It was like I’m being torn apart. That is it, and I was sad. I was very sad. I was stressed; very much stressed. Yah... and I was so scared ... because he even wrote a letter



again after divorce that you must know that by signing divorce papers you are signing your death sentence. So, I was scared. I wasn't going to town alone. I wanted always to go with someone ... because he was actually harassing me.

Well! ... Divorce rate is high though I don't know the exact statistics, but ... ehh... even people that you would never thought they would divorce they divorce, especially in the house of the Lord. Pastors are divorcing their wives, and pastors are abusing their wives. Actually during my times, many Christian men were killing their wives.

Divorce I see it as the biggest enemy. It is a weapon Satan uses to make sure that children are growing without the love of both mother and father. It is like when a person is killing you. Children feel that they are the cause of divorce. Divorce affects them negatively. Some are even killing themselves because of their parents' divorce. I hate it.

#### 5.2.2.6 Responses from participant six

I'm very religious! My family background ... ehh ... I'm born at Botlokwa... I got married at the age of 21 and the marriage had only one child (a son).... Unfortunately he died. And the death of my son we grew apart with his father. In 2000 we got divorced. And now I'm remarried. I got married in 2009. I stayed alone for about 7 years. My first marriage lasted for 15 years.

It [the broken marriage] was ... it was beautiful when it started. Mhh... but I think for me ... when I realise that this marriage is got problems ... I realised that the problem was not starting at that time. I think I was at the age of 30 when I realise that this relationship is in trouble.... When my first husband approached my parents for hand in marriage ... I don't know what my father saw in him but he told me that he does not see this man looking after me... He was stressing it in *Setlokwa* saying, "*Ngwanaka a ke bone mothaka yo a tla go tlhokomela.*" Meaning "My child I don't perceive this man as someone who is capable of looking after you." ... Then three years past and my father I think he realised that he was dying maybe, because he called me and he said to me, "Are you still serious about this man marrying you ... and I was saying, "Yes." And he said, "Ok, call him." And he said, "I have got a duty to bless you." And he accepted *dikgomo* (lobola). That is when we got married in Sesotho (Northern Sotho culture).

Then two months later my father died. But when it started to come out that ... man ... we got cracks here.... This man we do not see things the same way. Ehh... ehh ... at some point I think the way he hated me... I think... he lost his father ... he was the only one who was older when his father died. And he loved his mother so much. I think it's because he vowed to himself when he grow older he was going to take care of his mother and siblings. But then he treated me like one of his siblings and not a wife. ... And he was a successful man. He would go for trips, when he comes back he would come with gifts for his siblings and me. And the gifts would be similar.... I wouldn't feel that I come first.... His mother didn't like me and he wouldn't defend me. I would feel like an outsider. Sometimes he would discuss things with his mother without me.... His mother was the one deciding where we are going to spend our Christmas... We were both working ... we had this budget together, but it was spent on his mother all of it. ... It was always that and when I talk to him he would tell me that I am a spoiled bred.... Again ... he started to womanise. ... And there was a question of infidelity ... especially after the death of our son.... Ehh... we became strangers.... Maybe it's because of the way he died. He died in a car accident..... We were from the church and I think he blamed me for the death of our child... He said he was ok, but he was not ok with it. ... After the death of our son that is when he started with infidelity things. Then I realised that he is got affair ... And when I was grieving the death of our son there was this relationship ... we spoke about it ... I cried ... and this woman used to call me to insult me.... Then I told him that if this marriage is not working it's better if we call it quits. ... So, it was his family and his relationship (extramarital). He used to come home at 03 o'clock in the morning. We had no child. Nothing is happening. I remember there was a wedding for his sister. He took all our savings to cater for her sister's wedding. He accused me of not loving his family. ... So, it was like that towards the end of our marriage.... What hurts me towards the end of our marriage is that his mother came to Pretoria. She was terminally ill and I was told (not by him) that his mother was ill.... And I realised that we do not have a relationship here because some relatives came to my house and told me that my mother-in-law is very ill and they came to see her.... There was also a lady that he was involved with who was accusing him of impregnating her.... Bu then I said, "No, your mother can come." ... You still want to live the way you

want.... And he prepared a room for her... I was disrespected in my own territory. I just decide I'm getting out of this house ... that is when I filed for divorce ... and I thought ... I was in charge at first... I thought it was going to be better because *ke a mo tlhala mothaka yo* (I'm the one who is initiating divorce). ... But ... yoh... it was so ... so ... painful. That was the journey of divorce because when you go into marriage, you do not get married to get out.... So, I then realised that even when we had problems I thought he would change. What hurts most was that two weeks later my ex mother-in-law died. And I did not hate her. Then I was blaming myself saying maybe I could have stayed until she died... People were saying I deserted him. He was telling people that I deserted him in time of need.... We got divorced... The divorce route lasted for a year... And for me what was so painful was the fact that ... it's like I was sleeping... and people were going on with their lives.... For those fifteen years I had nothing to show.... I couldn't say to people this is a sofa I came out with—nothing.... It was my relationship with God that helped me. It was my spiritual journey with God. ... My Mother died in 2011. She helped me... She walked with me ... because at some point it was very painful. And what I was asking myself is that this man did not want divorce. He just did not want to leave whatever that he was doing. Divorce he did not want it ... but I started it. It's like it doesn't matter whether somebody walked out on you or you walked out, the fact of breaking that contract is so painful. ... It is painful ... very painful. Yah ... Marriage is like an institution where you see that I belong... You Know.... When it is not there you feel like ... You feel like you are undressed. Even when filing the forms ... you know ... when you were married you still ok with your status ... then suddenly you talk of divorced.... It hits you. ... You know... When you are taken out of medical aids ... I remember when I had to stay in this small place, before I got married ... you know ... when I had to go and get a step ladder ... I wanted to do some paintings ... this is my house, I must do the paints ... then I go with my small car, then I was like ... oh, my God! But it was a walk till now. I never thought I will get married again ... ehh ... this man just found me, and he told me that he had met his wife, he wants to marry me. And I was like, 'what?' You just met me. ... And we just married from 2008 till today. And it's like God is addressing me. He is also using him

(my new husband) to heal me. He is also divorced.... He is also helping me to understand divorce from man's point of view.

Yes ... Yah ... the marriage according to my belief ... is that ... ehh ... you leave ... and that is a man .... That is my understanding. A man shall leave and cleave to his wife. ... And I see it with my people that were around me. If one is unable to do that, that's where the problem starts. And I think that's where you need to be comfortable with the person ... love the person you want ... and ... ehh ... you must love this person... I think because love for a woman is something automatic, but a man must love to an extent that he would leave his family and cleave to me. He must cleave to me ... and when cleaving to me and loving me, it's easy for me to love. But when it says, "You must leave" it doesn't say you must abandon. Together now you are one, and one in agreement; you agree that we are going home ... at home they do not have this and that; to do things for them together. But it's when you are able to leave ... the people who got successful marriages they practice that. ... When I look at my parents, they are my role models of how marriage is. They got married at about 1958 and at that time my father was a rural boy ... he was a Lutheran. ... They didn't have me immediately ... they didn't have children. I think I came ... six years thereafter. But my father could have gone out of this marriage ... but because he loved my mother. ... The leaving and the cleaving for me basing on my religion of Christianity, it makes a base for marriage.

It [divorce] is a problem. ... You were married. Marriage comes with ... you are protected when you are in marriage; that institution. You've got all these even if you do not have everything; just because you are Mrs So and So. I found myself ... during separation ... people were so suspicious of me ... even our friends. The feeling is so terrible.... You feel like you are naked.... And even the people, they will not ask you but you will just notice that they know about your situation. The fact that somebody was with you.... Somebody was paying for some things. Then you deal with people who are looking at you saying, "shame." ... It's a feeling that is not so nice.... You feel a failure ... you feel a failure. It's lot of things. ... Even when I would ask myself, why would I have to subject myself to things I subjected myself to? ... The other day I walked in and

I found that man sleeping with other woman in our house. I don't know why I reacted that way ... that was in 1997 and I walked out of that marriage in 1999, and divorce as finalised in 2000.

I'm not sure about the rate because I'm not a researcher there, but from looking, not based on research, it [divorce rate] is high ... and ... yah... it is high. I think it's because people do not understand what marriage is ... and now materially ... people are married for ... and I think even me, with me at the age of 21 I was just excited to marry an educated man. He is educated ... I'm educated. And that was the wrong base for marriage.... That was not marriage. ... Most people think that because he is having this and that ... and we forget that there is life after wedding. ... When I woke up to go and finalise divorce ... I woke up and one friend of mine who is also divorced called to ask who is going with me and I said, "No I'm going alone." And she said, "No I'm going with you." She was driving me. Arriving there I found many people (his relatives, family and friends). Then I realised that coming alone was going to be bad ... and by then we were still fighting for settlements.... When they said, "This marriage is annulled," I cried.... And then I got sick.... She drove me ... I emptied myself that day ... I cried ... I used to tell people that they should try hard to work on their marriages.... That thing is not nice.... Marriage is for two imperfect people who should live together, but there must be something that makes us to be able to live together; something common.

Hey ... it's [divorce] a separation of one flesh into two (the living flesh). ... That is why it is said that a person who is grieving death doesn't have bitterness. He or she can grieve, but the divorced people are bitter because it is not a natural thing. It's a separation of living flesh.... It is very painful ... very painful.

#### 5.2.2.7 Responses from participant seven

I'm very religious person! I was born and raised in Soweto, but my family originates in Lesotho. So, ehh... Yah... I'm the last born from the family of five... ehh... I'm the last born.... My father has five kids, I have one big brother, and he is the first born. And then three sisters in between, then I am the last born... my father past away in 1978. Yah... when I was just about 12 years ... just before I was 12 years old. So, my mother

is a matriarch of the family. She raised all of us by herself.... I went to school. We straggled like any other kids in the township in Soweto at Orlando Wes.... and... ehh... I managed to go all the way to matric. My mom always reminded me that it was my father's wish for me to go to varsity. And... ehh... I had to study hard so that I can go to varsity. So, I studied; passed my matric, and I went to varsity; I went to the University of Lesotho. I studied at Lesotho. That was from 1985 to 1989, I completed my B. Com, then.... And then I came back home, started working from 1989, and then ... ehh... in 1992 I left home... to work at Cape Town... From Cape Town... ehh... at that stage, the lady that I was dating was living at Lesotho. So, when an opportunity presented itself to move from Cape Town to Bloemfontein. I then took the opportunity because it was costly for me to drive every month, from Cape Town to Lesotho to come and see my girlfriend. Then I moved to Bloemfontein, but things did not work out with my girlfriend; we broke up, but I was at Bloemfontein by then... So, I was living at Bloemfontein and then... I met my new girlfriend from Bloemfontein, and we started dating. We dated from 1994 in 1998 we got married, and I left Bloemfontein for Welkom.... I lost my job there... we had no kids.... Then we moved from Johannesburg.... I had to get my own place to stay, this when I bought this house, when I started working... we moved in here three months before our first child was born.... We stayed in this house from 1999, then a child was born in 2000, and my daughter in 2003.... Around 2010, I lost my job. So, they gave me a package... then I decided to look for another job. But at that stage ... my wife at that stage was not supportive. Ehh... she even suggested that we are going to lose the house... she was even telling me that I was going to put her into debts... In 2003 I had grown to spoil her. In 2002 I bought her a car and in 2005 I changed it for another car. She was used to luxury life... I spoiled her... I was paying for a house and two cars, and she was working but not helping financially.... She was not happy with the fact that I lost a job because she was used to luxury life, even without contributing... She suggested we move out of the house to rent it and ask for accommodation at my sister's place... I was a bit reluctant at first, but later I agreed. Then we moved out and a tenant came to stay here and we moved to my sister's place. Five months when we were at my sister's place, I found a job, but couldn't move back to my house because I had already signed

a year contract with my tenant... What was painful is that when we were still at my sister's place she said something like, "It is better if we get a divorce because you will leave me in debts," ... and when I interrogated her she said, "No I was just joking" ... anyway we eventually moved back into the house the beginning of 2011.... And what used to happen during Decembers ... ehh... the whole family ... we would go for holiday ... sometimes we would go to Bela Bela (Warmbath). So, that year we had decided to go on a cruise ... we went to travel with a ship ... all of us ... she was busy with my sisters... they started arranging from April.... So, we paid a deposit... and my sisters were saying cabins will accommodate four people... The plan was that females will sleep together and males will sleep together. But she decided that she wants to be with her husband and children.... And then as the year went by, around September, we decided to go on holiday with children... because they were always nagging me saying they never saw a snow. So, I took the kids to the mountains at Lesotho... and they were playing with a snow... suddenly... few weeks after we came back... when we came back we had an argument and she decided to move out of the bedroom to use guestroom.... When I ask, what is the problem... no she doesn't want to talk about it (that was in October - November).... Later in November she decided that she is having stress... she wants to go and relieve her stress. She went to clinic to relieve that stress... I went to visit her and she told me that "No you mustn't come here because I left home because you are the one who is giving me stress" ... but then had to go and take my children there.... And I would just sit there and keep quiet... And she would forget and tell me that she did spend some time with her friends, they were laughing until they got evicted at night... And I would say, "Oh, she is having more fun with friends than with me." She did spend two weeks at the clinic and she came back.... One of my aunts, who were supposed to go on a cruise with us, her husband died. So, she pulled out because of that. So, she decided to bring her younger sister and one of her friends... and I asked: why do you bring other people because this was supposed to be a family thing.... The plan was for us to travel together... but then she decided to take a flight with her friends... she decided to sleep with them and not share a room with me and the kids... I had budgeted for my family (myself, her and our two kids) but now she is expecting me to pay for all of her additional friends.... So, they arrived there before

us because they were using flight.... Arriving there she didn't even come to greet her children. She had no time for me... she was flirting with other guys ... behaving like single lady.... Then I told her that when you are flirting with boys you are not only disrespecting me; you disrespect your children when you flirt before them.... We slept next door to each other, and because the walls are too thin, we could hear them gossiping about me saying, "Did you see how he stressed was when he saw me flirting with boys." ... It was not nice... We came back... she continued sleeping in separate room. She was using the car I bought her.... I think on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December... I went for golf with my colleagues; coming back they were not here at home. My neighbour told me that the police were here. The following day I called them (the police). He came and served me with a protection order.... I was surprised. The protection order was written things like physical abuse, financial abuse, emotional abuse; all kinds of abuses.... Then I called her to say I got the protection order, what is going on! When I called her she doesn't want to talk to me. So, for Christmas I went home to Soweto... it was not nice.... My mother did not enjoy that Christmas... she was crying... I tried to call my kids... their phones were closed... I tried to call her, she didn't answer the phone... then I did send her a message saying, "I want to talk to my kids, if you don't want to talk to me, then, I understand but as for my kids I don't understand, I want to speak to them." ... Later I called, and she answered, and I spoke to my kids.... As we were talking with my kids, I could hear them on the background saying, "Yah... he is not going to enjoy Christmas because I served him with protection order... she wrote there that she wants divorce... So, she is afraid I might be violent. I asked my son, "Why don't you answer the phone? And he said that "No my mother took our phones." On the 26<sup>th</sup> I went to court to ask how can I prevent this protection order... unfortunately, the guy I met there was the one who served me with protection order... I had to send her an SMS to say, "You promised to bring the kids. When are you bringing them?" And she said, "No I do not bring them, if you want to see them, come and take them." And my lawyer advised me not to go there because doing so would violate protection order.... Sometime later, my boy called and I asked him, "Where are you? And he said, "No, we are at Bloemfontein." After few minutes I saw them coming into my house... then I asked him, "Didn't you say you were at Bloemfontein? And he



said, “No, we were trying to surprise you.” Then I realised that it was their mother’s idea. She wanted to find me with a girl.... So, we had a divorce... she had her lawyer, I had my lawyer.... And she said she wants to take kids and I must maintain them with R15 000, 00 (Fifteen thousand rands) per month. So, one of the things that I needed to do even before we finalised the divorce was to prepare a parental plan.... My birthday is on April and her birthday is on March. I decided that we will alternate. They will spend six months with her and another six months with me. They would spend even numbers with me and odd numbers with her. For example, they would spend February, April, June, and so on with me, and January, March, May, and so on with her.... And not only monthly, even the weekends we alternate. They would end the weekend with me and the next with her.... I presented the plan to the magistrate and he was happy with it. So, because of that, she had to get a townhouse closer, so that the kids can be able to go to school because they didn’t change school.... So, I do everything for them. When they are here they walk to school, but with her they need a transport to school at her own cost.... I told the court that I will not maintain her because she is working, and the court agreed with that.... The divorce was finalised ... it has been delaying for long time... she had been hiding her asserts.... Now everything is sorted. She bought a car before we divorce... but she was saying it is not hers... she borrowed it from somebody but she was lying. But I had a proof that it was hers. Right now I decided to buy her out... I told her that I’m not moving out of this house... I’m not selling this house. So, I’m buying her out. I will give her money to pay her out. The house will belong to me alone.... But the sad thing is that... someone is divorcing you for... I’ve seen people who are fighting... but with this one, it is her friends that are misleading her... to such an extent that she got me arrested twice. On two occasions I slept in jail... we had an argument and she went to another room... I was watching TV on TV room, she came with the police and they told me that the protection order says that I cannot abuse this woman... and they took me to the cells.... And the police were asking me, “What happened?” And I told them what happened and they asked for R500, 00 (five hundred rands) and I gave it to them as bail.... The next day I came back... I was traumatised, never been to jail. I came to the house... and she came back with plastics of groceries. When he entered the house she saw me and she was angry... and she made a call...

and I heard her saying to her friends, “How is this law working? They said they will lock him up for a weekend, now he is here.” And she called all her friends to tell them that the party is off because I am back from jail. Then I realised that she had me arrested so that she can enjoy a party with her friends without me.... We were sleeping in separate rooms and one day I was lonely, So, I decided to go to my son’s room to take him to my room so that we may sleep together.... So, the door handle was broken... So, I used a hanger to open the door.... So, it was making a noise. She heard the noise and called the police; telling them that I wanted to kill her... I opened; took my son and we went to sleep.... After some time police came and told me that my wife says that I want to kill her and our kids.... The police could see that I was fast asleep and I couldn’t have tried to kill anyone. And my kids were even surprised by her accusations in front of the police.... So, I left them to go and sleep... my kids decided both of them to come and sleep with me; the kids she was saying I wanted to kill them.... The next morning my daughter came to knock at her door to get some clothes and she refused to open saying, “Your father wants to kill me.” The kid said, “Why are you saying daddy wants to kill you? Where is that coming from?”... I took my kids out for breakfast... and my sister asked me for my gun... I gave it to her... I took my kids’ clothes and she came to help me asking me, “Where are you going?” And I refused to tell her... I drove and I ended up in Lesotho... we arrived Sunday night. She called asking: “how was the journey?” And I refused to talk to her; I gave the phone to her kids.... We have been divorced since 2012.

I’m a Christian.... You know... and marriage is something that is sacred... something God created... and... ehh... I respect marriage... I do not start talking about marriage lightly... I don’t take it lightly.... But what is also important is then when people are married, they should have shared values.... The challenge I had with my ex-wife is that she is coming from those churches *tsa Bazalwane* (the Charismatic churches)... They have this arrogance of undermining traditional churches. I grew up in A.M.E and she would tell me that we should go to Grace Bible Church... So, I used to make it alternate; one Sunday we would go to Grace Bible Church... and next to my church. When we are at her church she would be very happy, but when we go to my church she would be angry.... So, those are some of the important thing sin marriage. A family

should pray together.... But I espouse the idea that marriage is sacred... I never cheated on her... in this marriage I tried to be an honest husband.... In marriage you become one... and you cannot have two heads... you cannot have marriage where you do things differently. Today I'm very involved in the church... and I believe that if there is no God in marriage... that it's problematic.

It [divorce] hurts... It hurts me a lot... considering where I took this woman... from... ehh... I found her with nothing... with just matric... and I pushed her; helping her with homeworks... I even paid for her studies... I brought her here; she didn't even know Jo'burg.... And my sister got her a wonderful job at Standard Bank. And I bought her a car... So, when I think of all that I have done for this woman... and then she dumped me... I feel betrayed... I felt abused.... But worse... I felt sorry for her... because she did all this taken by the storm of Jo'burg.... You know... she is a pretty woman... she is beautiful... but when she allowed herself to be used by her friends... she would say something like, *"where did he think he would end up? Money will be finished. He is broke now. He doesn't have money...."* What she forgets is that her beauty will come to an end. She didn't drink by then; now she started drinking.... I used to look at her these days... her beauty is fading.... So, I feel cheated. I feel abused... but at the same time I feel sorry for her... because at the end of the day she is the mother of my children.... So, but she chose it... I tried to rescue the situation by trying to reconcile with her, but she chose to be an independent person... she was misled by her friends... One of her friends used to say to her, "Divorce him my friend, I will even help you with money for divorce." How can a married woman say that to another woman? The only problem is that the victims are our children.

It [divorce rate] is prevalent right now... Two of my best friends.... My best, best friend is divorced.... So, the unfortunate thing is that the kids are the victims in all this.

Ehh... well... I think ... ehh... divorce has always been there, even in Sesotho when marriage is collapsing... when you look at it in Sesotho culture, so long as you didn't return lobola, she is still your wife.... But the way I see divorce, is something that is becoming more prevalent.... I remember one day we were travelling; four of us, and I realised that the four of us were divorced. I always believed that the first five years are

the difficult years... then the rest are easy. But then I realised that that is not true... because we have been married for 12 years with my wife... but it wasn't easy... then suddenly this. Yesterday we were still talking about this: Do people marry for love, companionship, or for security.... And that determine the outcome of the marriage. If you marry for security, once that security collapse, then that's the end of marriage. If you marry for money, once the money is no longer there, then it's a problem... For me the main ingredient is love.... And it needs to be reciprocal. It mustn't be one way traffic... I loved my wife, but I feel that she did not reciprocate.

#### 5.2.2.8 Responses from participant eight

I'm very religious! My understanding ... it is people loving each other, working to build a home together.... That's how I understand marriage.

I felt very bad ... It [divorce] was painful.... I would say the cause to that ... I would say when couples get into marriage ... they do not take vows seriously. ... They do not consider them as serious ... because if the couples were taking them serious ... there would be no cheatings and affairs in between. Because there is a certain vow that says, "I will hold on to this one." Divorce is there but there is this thing that causes people to go there. There are things that cause the escalation of divorce.... The second thing I picked up is that ... whenever you meet a person ... all of them wants to be married ... just to say ... she feel like *I'm married*. They marry for titles of Mrs So and So... But then there are rules to life based on characters; but there are standards. There are vows to be taken. ... Two characters must live together to build a family. But nowadays trend has changed. It's like people just marry without principles. People are getting married for the sake of getting married. When challenges of getting married surfaces people are not ready to handle them. ... When people are going to lawyers for divorce, lawyers will lead them to divorce route because they are after money. They do not give proper advice on building marriages.

As a traditional man ... you know ... according to my analysis, as a Zulu man, there is no divorce. ... There is no divorce in Zulu culture. To be realistic there is no divorce in Zulu culture because a man may stay away from his wife for some time, even if there is

an English divorce; there are divorce papers, you can always visit your wife and perform all the duties of a husband. Because you introduced her to your ancestors, even if she can change a surname and get married to another man, she will always be called *Vusi's wife*, (not a real name).

I stayed in marriage for 12 years. Then I met another lady after my divorce.... We had an affair.... When you meet another person... I realised that the first one was very pushy... She would tell me that let's get married. We dated for a year and she pushed for marriage. The second one her husband died and I was divorced. She had two children and I also have two children.... We stayed together nicely. But she as well had an affair.... She had an affair on the fourth year of our marriage.... She used to refer back.... When I go out for some time... she would just assume that I am dating someone, and she would say, "I will do as you do." And she would go out and have an affair. And she was doing it openly. She disrespected me too much. She was worse than my first wife.... So, basically there was a common factor in both relationships.... They both cheated on me. Now as a man... then I started saying, "No let me also go out." The situation got worse, then, I moved back to my home.

#### 5.2.2.9 Responses from participant nine

Yah... I'm a Christian and I practice my faith daily. I am the ninth child from a family of nine. Five died and only four of us are still alive. I have one parent; my father died. And now I'm married, then got divorced... and we have one child. So, during courtship... our courtship was positive; things were going according to the plan. But when coming to marriage... slightly... our plans... the plans we had about being faithful to each other; to support each other financially and spiritually were less after marriage.... Before marriage and after marriage I saw things being very different... because it was like a method to win me over to marriage. After marriage we developed a lack of trust; we kept secrets from each other; and our lifestyle was not so good.... And then closed rooms—there are places in marriage where he did not involve me... in some cases he would do things without considering me. I was just married for the sake of being married.

Marriage is about transparency. And then... the other thing is that we are two parties. And the one comes with his mind and the other with her mind. And then, when we are married I expect us to share our minds, not for one to become a slave and follow the mind of a man... I as well have needs, when we spoke about our needs we should make sure we compromise, if I like Christian things for example, and he like sports, then we should support each other and share our time. We shouldn't oppress each other and we shouldn't judge each other. In some cases one gets oppressed just because she is a woman and she is married.

Yah... It was painful... because emotionally you become affected... because we had a foundation we built together... and when that foundation becomes broken... there is a loss involved because most of the time you were expecting that which you were building together to progress. And it is also affects... because... ehh... immediately when you move from point A to point B... it affects you mentally... because the way you planned... you become a loser because you do not reach the point you expected to reach... this affects you and it is hurting. And if you do not attend counselling or associate with the right people, you may end up taking a wrong decision... just because what you were promised... you got discouraged.

So, ehh... what I think is the cause for divorce to be this high is that we think marriage is when a partner is working... You marry someone because he or she is smart... and then when those things come to an end, is then that people got disappointed because what they were looking for in marriage is no longer available. So, divorce rate is becoming so high because we want marriage based on things that do not have value; because when talking about shape, after having a baby I may lose it. If you marry me because I have money, I'm ok financially; you might have a problem that will make me to end up jobless. It [divorce] becomes more... because we look for things that are temporal, we do not look for quality... we look for things we can survive with.

Divorce is like separating with someone... then separating will affect you physically and emotionally... because when we mention that you are divorced, it means that you were somewhere... and now you are no longer there... and that affects even your environment... because sometimes people will point fingers at you saying, "That one

was married, now she is back at home.” It affects you.... It’s painful because you had built something... now it is broken... and then, one goes to the left and the other to the right. It’s where you experience split and it is hurting, that’s the process of divorce.

The next group of participants are the pastoral caregivers. The following are the questions posed to them.

- ❖ Could you share with me your experience on counselling the divorcees?
- ❖ Are you aware of the escalation of divorce since the dawn of the new democracy? If “yes” or “no” share.
- ❖ In your own words, will you share with me what the cause could be?
- ❖ What advice will you give to those who are to be married?
- ❖ Have you journeyed with divorced people that are seeking to remarry?
- ❖ Is there any other thing you would like to share concerning divorce?

The following are the responses from pastoral caregivers.

#### 5.2.2.10 Responses from participant ten

Yes... ehh... counselling to black people is still a problem because as black people we do not take counselling seriously. When preparing for a wedding they do not take counselling as something important... They are more of... wedding celebration preparations (arrangements)... ehh... not about the life after the wedding celebration... that is not much considered in most of... in as far as people I have become able to can counsel or officiate or solemnise their wedding celebration, 90% of people whom I have solemnised their marriages did not consider counselling as a serious factor that is needed in their lives as a result they discovered the importance of counselling later when they are in trouble... Most churches do not have support groups to teach young wedded couples after marriage. And some couples when having problems they do not feel free to speak about their problems as they see us as perfect people (couples) who may not understand their predicaments... when you call them for counselling they do not come.

Divorce escalated amongst the blacks.... Ehh... from 1995 to 2008 whites were divorcing in large numbers but towards 2008 blacks are divorcing in large numbers... One of the reasons is that they are not equipped for marriage... You will remember that marriage had a problem from the beginning when Adam and Eve fell into sin... And the institution was challenged when humanity became sinful... Women today are getting educated... they are joining the working force... but some men do not get education and so good jobs.... These days we live in the era of gender equality and human rights.... We see domestic violence... friends interference... family interference... we as well see single parents who doesn't want to enter marriage because of the problems they witness in marriages.

When entering into marriage, one need to understand what marriage is.... One must know and learn from those already married. One needs to understand that we cannot eradicate divorce... we can only minimise or control it... One needs to attend pre-marital counselling either from pastors, chiefs... elders in the community and so on... We need marriage enrichments to fight the problem of divorce.

Divorce... or the causes are not the same. People divorce for diverse reasons. I would ask the person, "What exactly caused your divorce?"... Then advise on how to avoid that problem in future. Let's say maybe they had conflict because of finances or one is earning more than the other, then I would advise them so they can understand that money shouldn't be a problem. Those entering the second marriage need to heal the wounds from their first marriages before entering second marriage so that they can be a complete couple.

#### 5.2.2.11 Responses from participant eleven

Mhh... some [divorcees] feel rejected and misunderstood by the church. Remember divorce affects you, your family, your church, and people around you. Some after being divorced feel more comfortable outside the church that inside the church... The church needs counsellors who are informed and knowledgeable on how to handle the divorcees...



I think there is a link between democracy and the escalation of divorce. Since 1994 divorce escalated as compared to before 1994. The reason is that the law was very strict before 1994. To get a legal divorce was not easy... Freedom... I can say came with an easy way to divorce.

One of the causes of divorce is unrealistic expectations.... When two people meet each other for the first time for courtship, they form expectations for each other. For example, when you meet someone who is a Christian you already form your own expectations of how a Christian should behave. And when those expectations are not met you get disappointed. That is why it is important for people to attend pre-marital counselling... Pre-marital counselling that is practiced in some churches where a pastor would give counselling to people two weeks before the wedding is not enough. I believe that pre-marital counselling should last from six months to one year.

To those who are to be married I would advise them to seek pre-marital counselling because if one did not get pre-marital counselling later in life they will realise the importance of counselling when they are already in marriage. That kind of counselling will be about doing damage control.

Those who are to be married for the second time should realise that the grounds for divorce are either infidelity or one partner deciding to leave the other because of newly found faith. Then they are free to remarry. But if the grounds for their divorce are just about anything, then their remarriage will be against the will of God. If you are divorcing just for anything, then you might be divorced in the eyes of the law but in the eyes of God you are still married, and the one who will marry you will be committing adultery. The cause of divorce is hardness of human hearts according to Jesus Christ. If our hearts were not hard we would forgive each other and move on. Divorce in the Bible is permitted but not mandatory.

### **5.3 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

Eleven people were interviewed with the aim of hearing their experiences related in their own words. Nine of them are the divorcees, and two are pastoral caregivers. Most of the divorcees cite marital unfaithfulness as the cause of their divorce. They all agree

that divorce is painful. Pastoral caregivers on the other hand, blame lack of preparation for marriage as a cause of the problem of divorce. They believe that proper pre-marital counselling would be beneficial, if couples may consider it as something important. Participant eleven believes that marital unfaithfulness does not make divorce to be mandatory. He pointed out that couples are divorcing because of the hardness of their hearts. He believes that people are divorcing because they do not want to forgive in case of adultery.

Divorce and its causes as cited by the participants in this chapter will be analysed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study intends in this chapter to analyse the responses of the divorcees who were interviewed as well as the members of the clergy (pastoral caregivers) who journeyed with the divorcees during or after their divorce. “The aim of analysis is to look for trends and patterns that reappear within a single focus group or among various focus groups” (Greeff 2002:318).

The experiences of the divorcees will be analysed as they are our source of knowledge. Members of the clergy gave their responses which will be analysed so that the study could establish whether the church was successful or not in ministering to the divorcees. An attempt was made to identify data similarities and differences between literature and pastoral care. The study employed thematic analysis.

#### **6.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

The study analysed data according to themes. One may ask: what constitute a theme?

“A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke 2006:82). According to Braun & Clarke, “Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun & Clarke 2006:79). In employing thematic analysis, the study intended to identify and analyse the themes as they unfolded; and interpret various aspects relating to divorce that is so rampant since 1994. The study first examined the impact of pain caused by divorce.

## 6.2.1 The pain caused by divorce

Going through a divorce is a very painful experience. All the participants agreed that divorce was painful. Participant six cried bitterly when and after the divorce was declared in court though she was the instigator. Participant three articulated his feeling during divorce this way: “Out of all the pains I’ve been through in life that was the worse pain ever.” Due to pain caused by divorce, participant four even went as far as isolating himself from other people. He (participant four) expressed his feeling this way: “... it was emotionally painful in the beginning, and then it became ... I became impervious to the pain; to the hurt. Then I became recluse in the sense that ... you know ... I would rather be alone.” Participant two likened the pain of divorce to death itself. She (participant two) voiced out her feelings this way:

“Yoh ... it feels like spiritual slaughter. It feels like you are being slaughtered emotionally, brutally. It is ...I don’t know, not even slaughter, *you are being crucified*. It’s like humiliation of a woman caught in the act of adultery in the Bible.”

### 6.2.1.1 Feelings of shame and guilt

Divorce is stigmatised, especially in African culture. Participant two shared her experience by saying that, “It is a pain... a trauma or something. It’s like you are left with a stigma.” She (participant two) went on to say that, “It’s painful, humiliating, embarrassing. You need the grace of God. It’s the stigma that you are left with; to get rid of it you just need the grace of God.” The notion of participant two is reinforced by the words of participant three who says, “If you enter into a taxi and people are laughing it’s like they are laughing at you. You lose your self-esteem... It was very painful. There is no pain in life that I can compare with that pain. From the above comments by participant two and three, it is clear that divorce brought about shame into their lives. Divorce brings about the feeling of shame and guilt. Participant nine pointed out that “sometimes people will point fingers at you saying, “That one was married; now she is back at home.”” The divorcees are being ridiculed sometimes.

Participant six articulated her feelings of guilt this way: “What hurts most was that, two weeks later my ex mother-in-law died. And I did not hate her. Then I was blaming

myself saying maybe I could have stayed until she died... People were saying I deserted him. He was telling people that I deserted him in time of need....” She felt guilty for divorcing a man just when his mother was about to die.

#### 6.2.1.2 Anger

Participants one, two, three, five, six, and nine showed the signs of anger. Their facial expression and some of the words they spoke displayed some feelings of anger. Participant one exhibited some form of anger when she was saying these words “I decided to end the marriage because I didn’t want my children to keep witnessing violence in their house. The violence was both physical and emotional.” Participant four said, “*I was very angry and chased her out of my house.*”

#### 6.2.1.3 Sadness

All participants exhibited some degree of sadness. They all agreed that divorce was painful. Some were still displaying some signs of depression. In sadness, participant four said, “*It was emotionally ... eh ... challenging ... uhm .. and I think in the beginning for me it was an emotional challenge because I loved this woman and ... eh ... it was heart-breaking that she was being unfaithful to me. Eh ... but then you ... you ... you get used to the idea, and ...ehh ... I then began to wish that either she would die or she would leave me. I know that ... that is ... is hypocritical in one sense, but that is the truth. Eh ... I reached the stage in my marriage where I just hoped the Lord would bring an end to it. And sometimes even with the possibility of me dying.*” He was so miserable during that time of divorce.

### **6.2.3 The relationship between divorce rate and democracy**

#### 6.2.3.1 Human rights and freedom of choice

Though divorce is painful, it is within the people’s democratic rights to divorce. Among other things the exercising of that democratic right may be a cause of divorce. Participant three cited freedom as a possible culprit. He said, “Another thing is that there is too much freedom.” Participant four shared the same sentiments by saying that, “... but in a democratic society; and this is one of the down sides of democracy; is that

people know they have a choice, and they exercise their choice even in relation to marriages...” People have freedom. If they are not happy in their marriages, they are free to look for greener pastures on the other side. It is within their democratic rights to divorce.

## **6.2.4 The causes of divorce according to the participants**

### **6.2.4.1 Marital unfaithfulness**

70% of the participants blamed marital unfaithfulness for causing their divorce. Participant three blamed cheating for breaking his marriage. He (participant three) said, “2011 is when problems started. My wife got a job then somehow she met her ex-boyfriend, who was working close to her work place. Somehow they reconciled and I heard about it.” He believed that people cheat because of lust. He went on to say that, “Again there is too much of lust these days.” People are being unfaithful in their marriages. Participant four as well mentioned unfaithfulness as something that broke his marriage and his heart. He (participant four) said, “...she started being unfaithful.” He went on to describe how he felt when his wife was being unfaithful to him by saying that, “it was heart-breaking that she was being unfaithful to me.” Participant four did not want to divorce his wife even when she was unfaithful. He did not want to initiate divorce because of his Christian belief. He says, “...while I was faithful to her the whole time. Not because of what; but because of my faith in Christ. Ehh... so, my faithfulness to my unfaithful wife was in essence my faithfulness to God and the teachings of the Bible. And ... ehh ... even though our marriage became very rocky after 5 years and from the 6<sup>th</sup> year onwards, she ... she became blatantly unfaithful. Ehh... I didn’t divorce her and ... ehh ... after 10 years in the eleventh year, she decided she wanted a divorce. So, I had to succumb to that ... ehh ... because there was nothing left. Ehh ... but she instituted that ... that divorce.”

Participant four surrendered to the idea of divorce because his wife was not faithful to him. He wanted this marriage to end, but he did not want to be the one to end it. He articulated his heart’s desire this way: “I then began to wish that either she would die or she would leave me.” Though participant four’s wife was unfaithful to him, he decided not to divorce her because divorce according to his belief was not good. But later his

wife filed for divorce. Participant five described the extent of what? her ex-husband by saying that, “He was very unfaithful ... unfaithful to an extent of transporting his girlfriend to school while I was using public transport...”

Participant six caught her husband in the act of cheating. She says, “... I walked in and I found that man sleeping with another woman in our house.” Two years after this incident, she decided to divorce him believing that there was nothing to save.

Participant eight was married twice and got divorced twice. Both divorces were caused by cheating. He articulated his experience this way, “She [the second wife] was worse than my first wife.... So, basically there was a common factor in both relationships.... They both cheated on me. Marital unfaithfulness broke these marriages.

#### 6.2.4.2 Physical, emotional, and financial abuse

Participant one cited violence as the cause of divorce in her case. She (participant one) says, “*We started our relationship when I was still at home before moving to Pretoria. At first things were right. But I also saw some difficulties and ignored them for the sake of a child. Again seeing the relationship of my parents I thought persevering is the right way. Then I moved to Pretoria, that is when I saw other couples living better lives than ours. Then I started consulting with social workers and pastors, but things were out of control by then. Having dealt with domestic violence at work as a police officer, I knew that things would never be normal between us as my situation was worse than that of those people I was dealing with. I decided to end the marriage because I didn’t want my children to keep witnessing violence in their house.* She was abused physically and emotionally. She went on to say that, “The violence was both physical and emotional.”

Marriages are broken because of physical and emotional abuse. Participant three was verbally abused by his wife. He (participant three) explained, “*Sometime later she wrote a message [SMS] saying, “I no longer want you. Go and divorce me. There are many people who are better than you. You are useless.”* For a man, especially an African man, to hear words like “*You are useless*” from his wife sounds painful. Participant one divorced his wife after receiving this message. Participant one was abused physically and emotionally. Participant two, five, and seven were abused emotionally. And

participant nine was abused financially. Physical and emotional abuse caused the above participants to divorce.

#### 6.2.4.3 Religious and cultural differences

Half of the participants (participant one, two, four, seven, and nine) cited religious differences as one of the problems in marriages that led to their divorce. Only participant two cited cultural differences as a problem, but it is observed in this study that cultural and religious differences sometimes go hand in hand because one's religion affects the way one does things (culture).

#### 6.2.4.4 Interference by in-laws

Participant four and six cited interference by in-laws as one of the challenges that led to their divorce. Couples should learn to create boundaries for themselves and their relationships. Interference by in-laws is capable of causing marriage breakdown.

#### 6.2.4.5 Sexual incompatibility

Marrying someone who is a mismatch sexually proves to be problematic. Participant two said: "Don't marry someone you are not ... sorry... sexually attracted to him or her. *Never... Never.*" Participant seven pointed out that his wife left him in their bedroom to sleep in the guest room. That showed that there was no sexual harmony between the two. Married couples should sleep together and have sex as often as possible. If one partner is not happy with sleeping with another, then there is a problem that may lead to divorce.

#### 6.2.4.6 Marrying for wrong reasons

Participant five was married to a pastor. She was a teacher by profession. She had a house of her own and a car. Participant five says, "The possibility is that the marriage was not based on love. Uhm... it was materialistic." She believes that her husband was after her money. Pastors have this tendency of marrying people for security reasons (see Msimango 2012:3). The abuse her husband put her through shows that their marriage was not based on love, but her husband married her for selfish reasons.



Participant six mentioned that she was married to her ex-husband for wrong reasons. She explained, “I think it’s because people do not understand what marriage is ... and now materially ... people are married for ... and I think even me, with me at the age of 21 I was just excited to marry an educated man. He is educated ... I’m educated. And that was the wrong base for marriage...” Marriage should not be based on social status. Participant seven explained his experience this way, “Around 2010, I lost my job. So, they gave me a package... then I decided to look for another job. But at that stage ... my wife at that stage was not supportive.” He went on to say that, “She said something like, “It is better if we get a divorce because you will leave me in debts.” When participant seven was working his wife never said anything about divorce, but when he became unemployed, divorce was suggested by his wife (ex-wife). And she was working; earning enough money to support and help herself and her family where possible. He believed that he was not loved; his wife just abused him by spending his money. So, participant five, six, and seven were married for wrong reasons. They were married for money and social status; not for love.

#### 6.2.4.7 Lack of communication

Participant six said, “What hurts me towards the end of our marriage is that his mother came to Pretoria. She was terminally ill and I was told (not by him) that his mother was ill.... And I realised that we do not have a relationship here because some relatives came to my house and told me that my mother-in-law was very ill and they came to see her...” This is an indication that the couple were not communicating with each other. Lack of communication coupled with cheating lead to divorce.

#### 6.2.5 Church’s success or failure in ministering to the divorcee

When talking about *church* in this instance, the study refers to both the clergy and the congregation. The study believes in the priesthood of all believers (see 1 Peter 2:9). The study is of the opinion that ministering to the divorcee is the duty of the entire church and not only the clergy. All the participants seem to be happy with the ministry they received from the church during their emotional and painful time of divorce. Participant four was a youth leader in the church during the emotionally painful time of

divorce. But the church was so supportive of him. He articulated the support he received from the church this way: “Ehh... I ... also devotedly gave myself to Christian work as an escape for what was happening. So, I think there ... there perhaps was ... was my biggest struggle; where I was leading young people in youth ministry. I was running a bible study. Ehh ... and in the meantime, I was going through this turmoil. Ehh... some people knew about it and others didn’t. But I didn’t share it freely with everybody. Ehh ... but those who knew me a little better ...ehh ... knew that I was facing the struggle, but also knew my life and personality to know that it ... it wasn’t anything of my making. And so, I had a lot of people who knew what was going on sympathize with me.” Participant three as well praised his church for their support during divorce. He expressed his gratitude to one pastor in particular by saying that, “The church was very supportive. There was one pastor in particular who was very caring maybe it was because he knew the pain of divorce from personal experience.” Participant nine received counselling from her pastor and she explained the importance of counselling this way, “And if you do not attend counselling or associate with the right people, you may end up taking a wrong decision.” The church seems to be doing well in ministering to the divorcees.

### **6.2.6 Who initiates divorce?**

Five divorced women were interviewed in this study. All of them initiated their divorces. Five divorced men were also interviewed. Only two out of five initiated their divorces. That means three of these divorced men were divorced by their wives. By implication it means that out of ten divorces in this study, eight were initiated by women and only two were initiated by men. The literature review also points to women as the main initiators of divorce. More wives than husbands initiated divorce during 2012 (see City Press 17 December 2014). Both the literature review and the data collected from the interviews agree that women are leading instigators of divorce in South Africa.

## **6.3 DATA SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH LITERATURE**

In this section the study will tabulate the similarities as well as the differences between data and literature in terms of the causes of divorce.

Let us first examine data similarities with literature.

### 6.3.1 Data similarities with literature

<b>The causes of divorce according to literature</b>	<b>The causes of divorce according to data (interviews)</b>
Preller (2010:1); and Lippman and Lewis (2008:1-17) cited adultery/infidelity as a cause of divorce	Participant three, four, five, seven, eight, and nine cited infidelity/adultery as a cause of divorce
Lippman and Lewis (2008:1-17) cited cultural differences as a cause of divorce.	Participant two cited cultural differences as a cause of divorce
Preller (2010:1) cited emotional and physical abuse as a cause of divorce	Participant one cited emotional and physical abuse as a cause of divorce
Preller (2010:1) cited religious differences as a cause of divorce	Participant one, two, four, seven, and nine cited religious differences as a cause of divorce
Preller (2010:1) cited sexual incompatibility as a cause of divorce	Participant two cited sexual incompatibility as a cause of divorce
Marrying based on an attraction that cannot bear the weight of life's pressure (Biddle 2003:348).	Participant six, seven and nine confessed to having married to their ex-husbands for wrong reasons.

Table 6.1

The study examined data differences with literature

### 6.3.2 Data differences with literature

Data differences with literature are tabulated as follows⊗Doesn't make sense?

<b>The causes of divorce according to literature</b>	<b>The causes of divorce according to data</b>
	Participants nine cited keeping secrets from her by her husband as one of the problems that lead to her divorce

Social networks—Facebook, Twitter and Mxit,	
Addictions,	
Parental responsibilities	
Differences in priorities	
Physical and or mental illness,	

Table 6.2

#### 6.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The first group of participants (the divorcees) shared their experiences of divorce. The causes of divorce according to them ranged from marital unfaithfulness; domestic violence; physical, emotional, and financial abuse; religious and cultural differences; sexual incompatibility; interference by in-laws; lack of communication; job loss by a partner; and the keeping of secrets. Data from interviews was analysed according to themes. The second group of participants were the pastoral caregivers who shared their experience in caring for the divorcees.

The next chapter will focus on the summary findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this final chapter is to present an overview of the study. The study will examine the findings and conclusion of the study commencing with chapter one until chapter six. In other words, findings will be examined chapter by chapter. Recommendations regarding the problem of divorce will be discussed.

The study will now examine the findings and conclusions of this enquiry.

#### 7.2 CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

##### 7.2.1 Summary

In the first chapter the research topic, research methodology, and the research approach were outlined. The following aspects were described in detail:

- ❖ Introduction and rationale to the topic
- ❖ Problem statement
- ❖ Problem question
- ❖ The aims and objectives of the study
- ❖ Research gap
- ❖ Research methodology, and
- ❖ Ethics issues

This chapter was necessary in planning and specifying the way in which the study had to be conducted in order to reach the aims and objectives.

##### 7.2.2 Conclusions

Based on the enquiry, the following conclusions were made:

- ❖ The study was conducted according to the initial proposal without having to make any major changes or adaptations.

- ❖ The general approach to this study was empirical, qualitative, narrative, and hermeneutical. The qualitative part of the research consisted of semi-structured questionnaires that were done with both the divorcees and pastoral caregivers. This approach worked well to ensure that the data was rich in content.
- ❖ It has been realised that research has been made on the topic of divorce, especially in the fields of theology, law, psychology, and sociology. As a consequence, the study employed a multidisciplinary approach in executing this investigation.
- ❖ The aims of the enquiry were to examine the present divorce rate in South Africa; to compare the statistics of divorce during and after apartheid era; to investigate the reaction of our communities and churches towards the divorcees; to derive an understanding on how the church viewed a divorce; to derive an understanding on how African culture viewed divorce; and to create a pastoral care model for divorcees. To the best of my knowledge, the aims have been met. Divorce statistics were tabulated in chapter three. The reaction of our communities and churches were discussed and supported by empirical evidence. Scriptures concerning divorce were analysed and interpreted. African view of divorce was also discussed. And a pastoral care model for the divorcee was suggested.
- ❖ It was promised in chapter one that gender equality and human rights would be investigated, as possible contributing factors to the problem of the upswing of divorce in South Africa. This was the research gap. The promise was fulfilled in chapter three and five with scientific and empirical evidence.
- ❖ Ethical issues were taken into consideration to ensure that participants were not harmed by the research or the outcomes of the research. Their participation was voluntary and they will remain anonymous.

## 7.3 CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

### 7.3.1 Summary

In chapter two, the nature and the methodology to be used in this study, which was briefly discussed in chapter one, was discussed in even greater detail. The following were discussed:

- ❖ The nature of the research which was empirical, qualitative, hermeneutical, and narrative
- ❖ Postmodern paradigm as a way of thinking and reasoning was followed in this study
- ❖ Pastoral care model were proposed

### 7.3.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached:

- ❖ The study honestly followed the approach as promised
- ❖ The general approach to this study was empirical, qualitative, hermeneutical, and narrative.
- ❖ This study was based on scientific observation. The study followed qualitative method of data collection. The divorcees were interviewed as well as pastoral caregivers who journeyed with the divorcees pastorally. The participants narrated their life stories which were interpreted and analysed by the study.
- ❖ Biblical passages concerning divorce such as Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; and 1Corinthians 7:10-11 were as well analysed and interpreted. A Hermeneutical approach was necessary as the study was interpreting the life stories of the participants as well as the above mentioned passages of Scripture.
- ❖ It is mentioned in chapter two that the study came from a not-knowing position. In other words, the investigation was executed by a postmodern thinker who was investigating a postmodern problem of divorce. Interviews were conducted, and

participants willingly shared their experiences of divorce. Participants were the source of knowledge.

- ❖ Books and academic theses were consulted, as well as internet sources related to the topic of the breaking of nuptials.
- ❖ The study followed a multidisciplinary approach. In other words, the study used material or sources dealing with the problem of divorce from psychology, sociology, law, and theology, as promised in chapter two.
- ❖ The model of caring proposed by this study is a shepherding model by Gerkin. Gerkin used Psalm 23 to depict Jesus as a caring shepherd. It is believed in this study that the pastoral caregivers should function as priest, prophets, and wise guide for the sake of the divorcees.
- ❖ An additional caring model used in this study was Wimberly's model of reclaiming God reclaiming dignity. This model was used in attempt to reclaim the dignity lost by the divorcees.

## **7.4 CHAPTER 3: DIVORCE RATE IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994**

### **7.4.1 Summary**

Chapter three was focusing on the rate of divorce since 1994. Aspects that were part of the literature study were:

- ❖ The stages of divorce
- ❖ The Catholic understanding of divorce
- ❖ The upswing of divorce since 1994
- ❖ The possible causes of divorce
- ❖ Gender equality and human rights as possible newly emerging contributing factors to the problem of divorce
- ❖ The impact of divorce on parties involved
- ❖ Helping the divorcees in coping with divorce
- ❖ Restoring the image of God within the divorcee



## 7.4.2 Conclusions

The following are the conclusions drawn from chapter three:

South African are breaking nuptials in large numbers. South Africa is representative of the rest of Africa with its high rate of divorce. The causes of divorce included among others the following, Lack of communication; physical, psychological, financial, or emotional abuse; marriage infidelity; social networks—Facebook, Twitter and Mxit; addictions; sexual incompatibility; finances; parental responsibilities; religious differences; differences in priorities; physical illness; mental illness; growing apart; and childlessness (see Preller 2012:1; and Lippman & Lewis 2008:1-17).

The study considered gender equality and human rights to be the possible contributing factors to the problem of divorce in South Africa. Empirical evidence in chapter three supported the suggestion (as fact.) Women enjoy equal status with men in the work place. Women are independent. They are capable of supporting themselves and their children financially. As a consequence, they do not see the point of staying in unpleasant marriages; they divorce whenever they feel like divorcing. The movement of women into the labour force has been a potent generator of divorce (see Popenoe & Whitehead 2000:44).

Men, women, and children are affected negatively by the problem of divorce. Society at large is distressed. This is where a model of caring by Gerkin comes in. This is where pastoral caregivers should come in to give counselling to those who are suffering due to divorce. According to Gerkin, a pastor functions as a priest, prophet, and wise guide. Gerkin's model of caring was suggested for members of the clergy in helping the divorcees to deal with their pain. Wimberly's model of "Reclaiming God Claiming Dignity" was employed in order to reclaim the dignity of the divorcees. Empirical research proved that there is a stigma attached to divorce, especially in African culture. Wimberly's model was helpful in dealing with the stigma and the poor self-esteem that is developed during divorce.

## 7.5 CHAPTER 4: THE BIBLICAL AND AFRICAN VIEWS OF DIVORCE

### 7.5.1 Summary

Chapter four focused on the biblical passages of Scripture that addressed the issue of divorce from both the OT and the NT. Exegetical study of the following Scriptures was executed:

- ❖ Deuteronomy 24:1-4;
- ❖ Malachi 2:14-16;
- ❖ Matthew 5:31-32; and
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

This exegetical study was performed in order to correct the wrongs done by theologically untrained preachers. A Critical hermeneutical approach was employed. On the other hand, the study discussed the African view of divorce. Divorce is stigmatized, especially in rural villages.

### 7.5.2 Conclusions

- ❖ Divorce is permitted but not approved of (see Deuteronomy 24:1-4). In other words, it is allowed in case of *porneia* but not mandatory (see Matthew 5:31-32).
- ❖ Apostle Paul, like Jesus disapproved of divorce, especially frivolous divorce (see 1 Corinthians 7:10-11).
- ❖ In African culture divorce is frowned upon. It is considered a taboo.

## 7.6 CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEWS

### 7.6.1 Summary

#### 7.6.1.1 (A) Sampling

Two sets of people were interviewed.

- ❖ It was promised in chapter one that fourteen divorcees would be interviewed, but only nine divorced men and women were available for interviews. They shared their life stories concerning their respective journeys through divorce.

- ❖ It was also promised in chapter one that four pastoral caregivers will be interviewed, but only two were interviewed. They shared their know-how on how to journey with the divorcees in their difficult times of divorce.

#### 7.6.1.1 (B) Transcription

Tape recorder was employed for doing interviews. Recorded information from interviews was transcribed.

#### 7.6.1.1(C) Responses from participants

The first group of participants (the divorcees) agreed that divorce was painful. Two of them got remarried and they are happy in their second marriages. Participant eight got married twice and divorced twice for the same reason—marital unfaithfulness. Participant five believed that marriage was instituted by God, but due to her painful experience, she does not trust men. As a consequence, she decided never to marry again. Eight out of nine participants were willing and planning to remarry. The causes of divorce according to data included the following, (1) marital unfaithfulness; (2) domestic violence; (3) physical, emotional, and financial abuse; (5) religious and cultural differences; (6) sexual incompatibility; (7) interference by in-laws; (8) lack of communication; (9) job loss by a partner; and (10) the keeping of secrets.

Pastoral caregivers were of the opinion that marriages were broken due to lack of preparation. They believed that pre-marital counselling was a necessary tool needed for preparing people for marriage. The problem according to participant eleven was that people did not take pre-marital counselling seriously.

### **7.6.2 Conclusions**

Most of the participants (seven out of nine) cited marital unfaithfulness as the cause of their marital breakdowns. Participant eight got married twice and was divorced twice for the same reason—marital unfaithfulness. The study suggested that marital unfaithfulness might be the main cause of the problem of divorce South Africa is faced with.

Engaged couples should consider pre-marital counselling as part of the preparation for marriage. Young people who were not yet engaged should get advice and guidance on how to choose a life partner.

## **7.7 CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS**

### **7.7.1 Summary**

Chapter six was devoted to an analysis of interviews. The study identified data similarities and differences with literature and pastoral care. The study employed thematic analysis method in analysing data from interviews. Themes were analysed as they unfolded. The themes included marital unfaithfulness; religious and cultural differences; interference by in-laws; Marrying for wrong reasons; lack of communication; and sexual incompatibility.

### **7.7.2 Conclusion**

People enter into marriage unprepared. Some enter for the wrong reasons. Wrong reasons may include amongst others, (1) beauty, (2) money, and (3) status. When one got married unprepared and for wrong reasons, it was easy for one to be unfaithful in marriage. Pre-marital counselling might be the best way of preparing couples for marriage and to ensure that they married for love and not for beauty, money, and or status. Pre-marital counselling is where the counsellor may even foresee potential problems such as religious and cultural differences that may cause divorce.

## **7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section will examine recommendations for the clergy on how to care for the divorcees; examine recommendations for the divorcees on how to cope with their situations, as well as recommendations for future study.

### **7.8.1 Recommendations for pastoral caregivers**

Members of the clergy and the parents are capable of playing a significant role in ensuring that marriages are successful and divorce is avoided (where possible) in our communities. It is recommended that pastoral caregivers, together with the parents

should be involved in the affairs or relationships of the children. When a young person is considering dating, his or her parents should be made aware and be involved. Pastoral caregivers on the other hand should also be informed, so that, together (parents and pastoral caregivers) should be able to journey together with the dating child. This will allow parents and pastoral caregivers to give advice and guidance to the dating children. “Recommendations are normally directed to those individuals or organizations that are in position to consider and implement them” (Oliver 2008:138). The advice and guidance of older and experienced people is capable of reducing the problem of divorce South Africans are faced with.

- ❖ Pre-marital counselling is essential for the success of marriages. Pre-marital counselling for couples engaged for marriage should be compulsory in churches in order to avoid the problem of youth entering into marriage unprepared.
- ❖ The clergy should ensure that there are programmes for married couples, where they will be taught the biblical way of living together as husbands and wives in order to avoid divorce.
- ❖ The clergy should ensure that there are programmes for divorced men and women, where they will be able to encourage one another in their struggle with divorce. This will help them in coping with their situations.
- ❖ Survivors of divorce should be afforded an opportunity within the churches to share their experiences and to become wounded healers.
- ❖ Parents should ensure that their children are psychologically and emotionally prepared for marriage prior to giving them a parental blessing to marry.
- ❖ Parents should consider the maturity level of their children before handing them over in marriage.

Taking into consideration the literature review and the data collected for the study, the author proposes the following as a pastoral care model for the divorcee:

- ❖ The pastoral caregivers should care for the divorcees by affording them empathetic listening
- ❖ Pastoral caregivers should encourage and strengthen the divorcees with the Word of God

- ❖ Members of the clergy should give the divorcees helpful advice and guidance on how to cope with their predicament
- ❖ A pastor should be a shoulder to cry on for the divorcee
- ❖ Pastoral caregivers should pray with and for the divorcees
- ❖ Pastoral caregivers should also encourage the congregation to give financial support to the divorcees, especially those who lost the financial support that marriage provided.

The church should, after facilitating healing for the divorcees, consider using them as wounded healers in caring for others who are going through painful stages of divorce. Van Jaarsveld explains:

“When you’ve been through a significant life trauma and have felt as if no one else understands your pain, once you work through that, you are bound to be more compassionate with other people and the difficulties they face” (Van Jaarsveld 2007:63).

The survivors of divorce are better equipped for caring for others who are going through the same ordeal as theirs.

### **7.8.2 Recommendations for divorcees**

- ❖ The study recommends for divorcees to seek counselling.
- ❖ They divorcees may as well consider forming support groups where they will meet and share their challenges and walk together in their journey of healing from their hurts.
- ❖ Forgiving the former marriage partner is necessary for the wrongs they have committed. Forgiving in this case is part of healing.
- ❖ If there are children involved, divorced parents should try not to make negative comments about each other in the presence of their children.

### **7.8.3 Recommendations for avoiding divorce**

#### **7.8.3.1 Love unconditionally**

“The cure for divorce is commitment, unselfish godly love and the willingness to forgive. Biblical, self-denying love is the strongest medicine in the world of a sick marriage” (O’Donovan 2000:89). Marriage is a holy union, a living symbol, a precious relationship that needs tender, self-sacrificing care (see Ephesians 5:22). Marriage couples should love each other as Christ loved the church (see Ephesians 5:25). Unconditional love is necessary for marriages to survive.

#### **7.8.3.2 Avoid sexual sin**

Failure to deal with sin within the marriage is one of the major causes of divorce. “Adultery is prohibited, probably in order to protect the family...” (Chingota 2006:159). 77, 7 % of the participants cited marital unfaithfulness as the cause of their divorces. The seventh commandment in Scripture addresses the sanctity of marriage which adultery ignores (see Adjerareou 2006:128). Adultery is the killer of marriages and creator of divorces—it should be avoided at all costs.

#### **7.8.3.3 Learn to forgive**

In the case of adultery, divorce is allowed but it is not mandatory. Couples should consider forgiving each other in case one fell into sin of infidelity. Divorce should be considered as a matter of last resort. Forgiveness is important for any relationship to survive.

### **7.8.4 Recommendations for future study**

The subject of divorce is researched in many disciplines including amongst others, theology, law, psychology, sociology and philosophy. The subject or topic of divorce cannot be fully exhausted. There will always be something to discover around the subject or topic of divorce. Oliver explains:

“A research study is not usually thought of as an isolated piece of intellectual activity, separated from other similar studies. It is perhaps best seen as existing

on a continuum. It adds to previous research, and acknowledges that other research will take place in the future in the same field” (Oliver 2008:137).

There will always be an emerging contributing factor to the problem of divorce that was not heard of in the past. In other words, there will always be a need for a research to be made on the topic of divorce. For future study on the subject of divorce, the following topics may be explored:

- ❖ African view of divorce and remarriage: A pastoral challenge
- ❖ Stigma associated with divorce amongst black South Africans: A pastoral challenge, or
- ❖ Stigma associated with divorce in an African context: A pastoral challenge

The following questions may be explored for future research:

- ❖ Is it wrong to remarry after divorce?
- ❖ Why is it that African culture, especially Pedi culture, forbids women to remarry?
- ❖ Why is remarriage in Pedi culture (and other African cultures) wrong for women, but not for men? Is it because of patriarchy?
- ❖ What should one do when one realises that he or she married the wrong person?
- ❖ Is remarriage allowed in Scripture after frivolous divorce?
- ❖ Can a man divorce his wife just because she gained weight?
- ❖ How can divorce be avoided?
- ❖ Why is divorce so stigmatized, especially in African context?
- ❖ Why it is that African woman become stigmatized when divorced, while a divorced African man is not so stigmatized? Is it because of Patriarchy?
- ❖ How can the members of the clergy journey with the divorcee in dealing with the shame that results from divorce?
- ❖ What role should parents play in helping their divorced children to cope with the stigma of divorce?
- ❖ How should the divorcees respond to the stigma divorce impose on them?



## 7.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It was promised in chapter one that the study would interview fourteen divorcees and four pastoral caregivers, but only nine divorcees and two pastoral caregivers were interviewed. This was due to the fact that some divorcees and pastors pulled out at the last minutes. What the investigator would do differently in the future when executing an enquiry of this nature is to allocate more than enough time for interviews, so that when some are pulling out, there would be more time to search for others who might be willing to be used as participants.

The other challenge was budget. A study of this nature requires enough money to travel to where the participants are. At some points the interviewer would make appointments only during the period when he had money. When there is no money to travel he would stop doing interviews. This was because he preferred face to face interviews over cell phone interviews. In future when working under time constraints, the use of cell phone interviews will be considered in case there is not enough money to travel to participants.

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire to divorcees

Name of participant (fictitious name preferred)

Name

Address (optional)

Age

Gender

Marital Status

Occupation

Employer

Highest Standard of Education

Tertiary

Education

**Purpose of the questionnaire:** to get participants 'emotional journey in their own words.

1. Are you a religious person, who practices your faith daily  
Very religious.....religious.....not religious.....
2. Would you share with me about your family background?
3. What was the journey of your marriage like?
4. Share with me, your understanding of marriage based on your religion.
5. Share with me how you felt during the process of separation or divorce?
6. Could you share with me about the rate of divorce these days?
7. How would you define divorce in your own words as an African man/woman?

## Appendix B



University of Pretoria

Faculty of Theology Lynnwood road Hatfield

0083

Researcher's name: Rev. C.H. MAGAMPA

Contact details: 072 024 4357

Student number: 14450624

Title of the study: DIVORCE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE

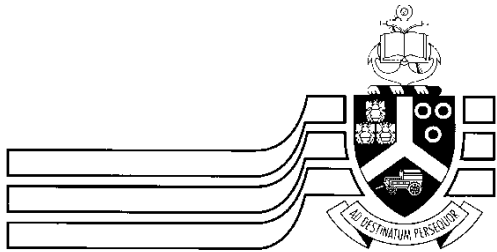
This serves to confirm that I..... agreed to be interviewed by the researcher for the purpose of the study he is conducting. The purpose of the study was explained to me thoroughly. I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I am assured anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher will use fictitious name when referring to me and the information is treated as confidential.

Signed at ..... On this ..... day  
of..... 2016 Participant's signature:

.....

Researcher's  
signature:.....

## Appendix C



University of Pretoria

**Faculty of Theology Lynnwood road Hatfield**

**0083**

### **QUESTIONS FOR MINISTERS**

1. Could you share with me your experience on counselling divorcees?
2. Are you aware of the escalation of divorce since the dawn of the new democracy, if “yes” or “no” share
3. In your own words, will you share with me what the cause could be?
4. What are the reasons that cause divorce these days?
5. What advise will you give to those who are to be married?
6. Have you journeyed with couple that are divorced and are seeking to marry for second time?
7. Is there any other thing you will like to share concerning divorce?

## Appendix D



Faculty of Theology: Post Graduate Committee

Student: Rev C.H. Magampa

Student Number: 14450624

Department: Practical Theology

Degree: *Magister Artium*

Study leader: Professor M.J.S. Masango

Contact details

Mobile: Collen: +2772 024 4357 Professor: +2772 195 8063

Email: collenmagampa@gmail.com Prof.: Maake.Masango@up.ac.za

### **Re: Consent Letter**

I have read the information pertaining to this project. Collen has explained to me the purpose of the interview. I understand that I am free to request for information gathered from me at any time.

I also understand that the information gathered from me will immediately be destroyed the minute I decide to withdraw from the study. Such information may not be used again. I also understand the following;

- That all personal information shared by myself will remain confidential through the research.
- My participation is entirely voluntary.
- I will receive no payment or compensation for participating in this research.
- I am aware that I can withdraw from the project at any time without any feeling of regret.
- I am willing to share my experience of this research.

- I prefer a pseudo name to be used in the reporting of the outcome of what I will share.

Name to be used:.....

Signature of participant:.....

Signature of researcher... ..

Signature of witness:.....

Date of interview. ....

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