

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN CHARISMATIC CHURCHES: THE VIEW POINT
OF SOME SELECTED PASTORS IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS**

ANITA ADDAE

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JULY, 2016

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OF SOME SELECTED PASTORS IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS**

BY

ANITA ADDAE

(60000032)

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN
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DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY WITH MANAGEMENT**

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

JULY, 2016

DECLARATION

I..... do hereby declare that this thesis report is the result of my own original research, except for sections for which references have been duly made, and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has been presented to this University College or any other institution for the award of a degree.

Signature:

Date:

Anita Addae

(Student)

Signature:

Date:

Mr. Francis Benyah

(Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

Dr. Samuel B. Adubofuor

(Head of Department of Theology)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all members of the Power Chapel Worldwide

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most importantly, I would like to give appreciation and praise to the Lord for the opportunity to do this research. I would also like to thank the staff of the theology department especially Dr. Samuel Adubofour for guidance and support anytime the need arises. Besides, I want to acknowledge and share my deep appreciation to my husband the Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng, my children, and my entire family for their love, support and encouragement during my studies.

ABSTRACT

Marriage is a divine institution established by God. It is a covenant and a solemn binding agreement made first before God and then among people in society. God first instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:24). After that ancient union of one man and one woman in the Eden, many cultures have emerged and populated the world. Subsequently, peoples have now come to understand marriage differently in accordance with their own world views, cultural customs, beliefs and core values. This study looks at the issue of divorce and remarriage in the charismatic churches. It is an attempt to examine how the phenomenon of divorce and remarriage is dealt with in the charismatic churches. The study mainly focused on two selected churches within the Kumasi metropolis. A phenomenological approach was employed as a research methodology. Both primary and secondary sources has been used as method of data collection. Primarily, data was collected through unstructured interviews. Using a qualitative method of data analysis, this study discusses the data collected in the light of other scholarly views on divorce and remarriage. The study found out that most divorces cases in the Ghana especially those within the charismatic churches can be attributed somewhat to the inexperience and unclear understanding of the concept of marriage among young people today. The study recommends that the churches need to spend a lot of time in teaching the youth and/or the young adults on marriage. This will prevent them from having unrealistic motives about marriage and consequently, help resolve some of the issues leading to divorce in recent times.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.2 Background to the Study

A number of biblical scholars are of the view that the teaching on biblical marriage is typified in the statement “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24 RSV). The key phrase is the expression “one flesh” (Hebrew: *bāsāreā*). Flesh here implies kinship or fellowship, with the body as a medium, thus setting forth marriage as the deepest corporeal and spiritual unity of a man and woman. The purposes of marriage as found in Genesis chapter 2 are for mutual help and comfort, procreation, and companionship.¹

The very first description of the nature of marriage in the Bible, as consisting of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh (Gen 2:24), reveals the Biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant relationship. This meaning of marriage as a covenant of companionship is expressed more explicitly later in Scripture in such passages as Malachi 2:14: “The Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless” (RSV).

Both the purpose and intention of marriage are important from a Christian perspective. Marriage is a lifelong commitment between a male and a female that involves mutual sexual rights. There are at least three basic elements in the biblical concept of marriage as stated in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, they become one flesh” (RSV). From this text, one can argue that God intended marriage to be a permanent union. The man was to depart from his parents’ home in order to “be united to his wife, and ... become one flesh” with her (Genesis 2:24). Both

¹ Guy Duty, *Divorce and Remarriage: A Christian View* (Minneapolis, Bethany House, 1983), 63.

Jesus (Matthew 19:5) and Paul (Ephesians 5:31) quoted this passage from Genesis as the foundational premise of marriage.

To add up to this, God intended marriage to be monogamous. The Creator's acts in establishing marriage are focused on one man and one woman. The order of marriage itself (Genesis 2:24) is directed at a monogamous pair, "man" and "wife" being singular. However, there were few examples in the Old Testament. The first case was in Cain's line (Genesis 4:19) with many Old Testaments examples, including some of the patriarchs, to follow. But polygamy is never held up to be the ideal. The Old Testament writers indirectly criticize polygamy by showing the resultant strife (for example, Genesis 21:9, 10; 37:2-36; 2 Samuel 13-18). Passages that idealize marriage normally do so by speaking of one husband and one wife (see Psalm 128:3; Proverbs 5:18; 31:10-29; Ecclesiastes 9:9).

Jesus also affirms that God's ideal plan from the beginning was monogamy, speaking of "man" and "wife" in the singular, with the "two" becoming one flesh (Matthew 19:5,6). There is no reference to polygamy as a practice of the Early Church; and, in any event, it would be inadmissible for leaders by Paul's references to a "one woman one man" (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). The researcher can argue strongly that Marriage is a covenant. It is a solemn binding agreement made first before God and then among people in society. The nature of marriage as a covenant is strongly implied in the marriage order of Genesis 2:24.

God instituted marriage for humankind in the beginning of creation as an exclusive relationship, the total unity of persons – physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Thus, marriage relegates other human ties to a secondary role.

According to John Stott, marriage is in all societies a recognized and regulated human institution but not a human invention. Christian teachings on marriage affirm that marriage is God's idea not human.² He further argues that;

The biblical revelation identifies that God purposefully instituted marriage for the mutual society, help and comfort that one ought to have of the other both in prosperity and adversity, the procreation of children and their upbringing in an environment of love and discipline, and for reciprocal commitment of self-giving love which finds its natural expression in sexual union or becoming 'one flesh'.³

However, in today's world, there is siege against marriage in a dimension that has an effect not only within the church but the society in general. One can argue that today, marriage and the family are commonly viewed as social concords that can be entered into and severed by the marital partners at will. Divorce has become a canker that is eating up people and families. The question of divorce has generated a lot of debate over the ages among theologians right from the Bible times to our day and now. In the Old Testament, the Lord declared through the Prophet Malachi that He hates divorce. According to Kirkwood, Two fundamental questions are the basis of this debate: one is, when, if ever, is divorce permissible in God's eyes? And two, When, if ever is remarriage permissible in God's eyes.⁴

This study employs an extensive exercise to find out how pastors of the various charismatic churches are responding to the issues of divorce within their churches. Arguably, one can say that within the past few years, records have shown that a number of divorce cases in the charismatic churches are comparatively higher as compared to

² John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999), 319

³ Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 319.

⁴David S. Kirkwood, *The Disciple Making Minister: Biblical Principles for Fruitfulness and Multiplication*, (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Ethnos press, 2005), 191.

other churches. But as the focus of this paper demands, much attention is paid to whether or not divorce should be allowed.

1.2 Research Problem

Despite the fact that Pentecostal and/or Charismatic Christianity has become the representative face of African and/or global Christianity, there are a lot of challenges that are confronting the church. Despite its remarkable growth and development within contemporary Christianity, the issue of divorce and remarriage seem to be one of the hurdles that most charismatic churches are grappling with in recent times. The researcher identifies this as a major problem within the church that need to be addressed and reduced to the barest minimum if the beauty and family nature of the church is to be realised.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the biblical basis for divorce and remarriage?
2. How are the charismatic churches handling the issue of divorce and remarriage with particular reference to Power Chapel Worldwide and Shiloh United Bible Church?
3. What are the views of charismatic church pastors on the issue of divorce and remarriage in the church?

1.4 Aims and Objective(s)

From the above research questions, the researcher aims at the following:

1. To examine the concept of biblical marriage and find out if there is any ground for divorce and remarriage in the church?
2. To find out the various means the charismatic churches are adopting to address the issue of divorce and remarriage with a particular reference to Power Chapel Worldwide and Shiloh United church, Kumasi.
3. To find out and examine the views of charismatic church pastors on divorce and remarriage.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

In looking at the broad nature of the subject matter under study, the researcher cannot take into consideration all the views of charismatic church pastors within the Kumasi metropolis. Therefore, the researcher has limited the scope of the work to two charismatic churches in the Kumasi metropolis as point of reference for this study. However, in discussing of the issues, the researcher aims at addressing the issues in a broader perspective by looking at the case in other churches as well. This is to help present the general view of the situation as pertains in other churches.

Even though the researcher intends to look at some experiences of divorce, this work, particularly, is not looking at the effect of divorce on divorcees per se but deals with how charismatic churches are handling the case of divorce and remarriage in the church. This is because a number of works has looked at the effect of divorce on divorcees and

children and the researcher thinks there is no need to rehearse such issues here again. The work will be situated on the Power Chapel International and Shiloh United church.

1.6 Research Methodology

Generally, this is a qualitative study and employs a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological study involves the identification of a shared experience. A phenomenological research involves trying to understand the essence of a phenomenon by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon.⁵

In this case, the phenomenon that is being investigated is the issue of divorce and remarriage in the church. Particularly, a phenomenological research is interested in the individual experiences of people, in this case divorce and remarriage. It involves in-depth interviews with the pastors within the selected churches to get a full picture of their experience with the phenomenon. In this case, the researcher is interviewing pastors to find out their responses to the issue of divorce and remarriage to see how they have been able to deal similar cases that had befallen them in their lives or as part of their ministerial experience.

The researcher employed this method because of its relevance to the context of the study. The issue of divorce and remarriage is a lived experience and the methodology will go a long way to help elicit the views of the pastors who have handled the phenomenon and helps address the issues that emerged out of the study.

⁵James L. Cox, *Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*. (Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996), 26-41.

1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection

A research work such as this cannot be undertaken in vacuum; therefore, the researcher employed the following tools in collecting data for the work.

1.6.1.2 Primary Sources

The study employed unstructured interview. The interview formats involved having ‘one-on-one’ interaction with a respondent. With the unstructured interviews, there was no guided questions. This enabled the researcher and respondents to develop a personal friendship and rapport which was intended to create a conducive environment for the researcher to meet the respondents to elicit relevant pieces of information.

In the entire study, the researcher interviewed the head pastors of the selected churches to seek their view on divorce and remarriage.

1.6.1.3 Secondary Sources

The researcher also used different secondary sources including books, journals, articles etc. relevant to this work. These are published and unpublished materials of scholarly opinion. In addition, the researcher consulted dictionaries, newspaper publication and articles. The secondary sources helped in a way to provide views on the issue of divorce and marriage within the church and how the church is responding to the issues.

1.6.2 Sample/Sampling Technique

In this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select his respondents. In the work, *Research Methods Techniques of Social Research*, it has been

stated that in purposive sampling, “the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study.”⁶ The categories of people that were interviewed included the head pastors of the two selected churches and church leaders where necessary. The respondents were selected on the basis that they possess relevant information and opinions that are considered to be essential to the study.

1.6.3 Data Analysis

In evaluating the data gathered during fieldwork, a qualitative analysis was employed in analyzing the issues. This method relies on the quality of the information based on its relevance to the subjects being studied rather than on the quantity of responses to a particular issue.⁷ That is, instead of drawing from a large representative sample, the researcher sought to acquire in-depth and intimate information from relatively smaller group of people. This method of data analysis is also employed since the researcher dwells largely on interviews which are intended to elicit detailed information from individual respondents.

1.7 Literature review

In embarking on this exercise, relevant literature that has a bearing on the issues that are central to this study are examined. The researcher has employed a thematic approach in

⁶ Tom K.B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research*, (Ghana: Son Life Press and Services, 1999), 72.

⁷ Barbara M. Wildemuth, ‘Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research’, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63 (1995), 881.

the review discussions. Therefore, issues such as Christian concept of marriage, the African concept of marriage and the issue of divorce and remarriage are discussed. The aim of choosing these themes is to help the reader understand the issues that are addressed in this study. Again, the aim is to also examine and appreciate existing materials on the subject under discussion.

1.7.1 Christian Concept of Marriage

Generally, many biblical scholars believe that marriage is epitomized in the statement “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24 RSV).⁸ Christians believe that God first instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden when He saw that it was not necessary for man to be alone and therefore created a help mate for him. This was later quoted by Jesus when He was asked about permissible grounds for divorce, as a Word of God (Matthew 19:4-5).

The purposes of marriage as found in Genesis chapter 2 are for mutual help and comfort, procreation, and companionship. The very first description of the nature of marriage in the Bible, as consisting of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh (Gen 2:24), reveals the Biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant relationship. This meaning of marriage as a covenant of companionship is expressed more explicitly later in Scripture in such passages as Malachi 2:14: “The Lord was witness to the *covenant* between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless” (RSV).

Both the purpose and intention of marriage are important from a Christian perspective. Marriage is a lifelong commitment between a male and a female that involves mutual

⁸ Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, John Rea (eds), *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 258.

sexual rights. There are at least three basic elements in the biblical concept of marriage as stated in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, they become one flesh.” It can therefore be concluded that a marriage exists in God’s sight when a man ‘leaves’ his parents, with a view not merely to living apart from them but to ‘cleaving’ to his wife, and ‘become one flesh’ with her.⁹ The first description of the nature of marriage in the Bible, as consisting of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh (Gen 2:24), reveals the Biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant relationship. This verse mentions some characteristics that are vital to marriage in this contemporary era: it is an exclusive man-woman relationship (‘a man... his wife ...’), which is publicly acknowledged at some social event (‘leaves his parents’), permanent (‘cleaves to his wife’) and consummated by sexual intercourse (‘they will become one flesh’). The importance of these characteristics to the institution of marriage from its inception needs to be stressed. Samuele Bacchiocchi expresses these as ‘the components of the marriage covenant’¹⁰.

1.7.2 African Concept of Marriage

Marriage in the African context is a unique nature and has an identifiable look that is different from the western concept of marriage. There are many features that concerns African marriage which are uncharacteristic to western type of marriages. African marriages tends to be more of a communal relationship whiles western marriage is individualistic. Samuel W. Kunhiyop posits that, one area of difference between western and African marriage which is of much concern is who is involved in the marriage. He

⁹Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 323.

¹⁰ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, (Michigan: Biblical Perspective, 2001), 16.

argues that Westerners tend to forget that marriage is lived out in society and that society has an impact on the meaning, expectation and aspirations of this union.¹¹ Their individualistic worldview of marriage tend to think of marriage in terms of man and the woman. Kunhiyop argues that “such a view of marriage is far too narrow for the Africans”¹². He cites Laurenti Magesa as saying that at a performance of an African wedding, it would not be unusual for the pastor to tell the bride:

You are married not to your husband Paul, but to his family. That means you have to identify completely with all his relatives, look after them, care for them, go out of your way to make them happy. If you do that, you will have no cause for regret”. And to the groom he says “You, Paul, will have to do likewise with Mapule’s relatives. Her people are your people.”¹³

This understanding of African marriage is in conformity with the stance of most anthropologists, who insist that marriage refers to the customs, rules, and obligations that establish a special relationship between a man and his wife and any children they have, and between them, their kin and the wider society. To them, marriage rest on the biological complementarity of male and female.¹⁴

According Rebecca Ganusah, “to say that marriage in Africa is one of the greatest values of the people is not overstatement”.¹⁵ In most part of Africa particularly Ghana, to attain a certain age like say thirty five years and above without getting married, is to draw attention to oneself. Both relatives and friends would start putting pressure on you and almost every day asking you when you are going to get married. Many people are likely to give all sort of interpretation to the one who finds him or herself in such situations.

¹¹Samuel W. Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers, 2008),190.

¹² Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 190.

¹³ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 191.

¹⁴Nii Amoo and Margaret Amoo-Darku, *Biblical Marriage in an African Context* (Accra: SonLife Printing Press, 2005), 13.

¹⁵Ganusah, Rebecca, “Informed Choices on Marriage, Childlessness and Reproductive Technologies: An African Christian Theological and Ethical Reflection” *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, NW. Vol.3 Dec. (2008), 13.

Sometimes the society might think that all is not well with the person, that is, something might be wrong. In some circumstances, one might be seen as someone who is not sociable, and not responsible. It can also be that the person is suffering from a physical problem; or “one who is considered to be irresponsible, worthless, good-for-nothing, and contemptible”.¹⁶ Kwame Gyekye rightly put the expectation of man’s marriage in African societies as;

Traditionally in many African societies, a young man who has gainful employment of any kind and earns some income is expected, in fact, urged to marry. Any undue delay on the part of the young man to marry will cause his parents or the elders in the lineage to worry and even to interfere in his private life in order to advise and encourage him to marry.¹⁷

In the case of the woman, Gyekye again asserts the fact that presentation here on the unmarried woman is almost an anomaly”.¹⁸ Every woman is expected to marry.

On the same issue, Mbiti would also argue that,

For African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence.....Marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel and law-breaker, he is not only abnormal but “under-human”. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person concerned has rejected society and society has rejected him in return.¹⁹

Even from this view, Ganusah argues that Mbiti seems to be a bit generous in adding, towards the end of the above quotation, the phrase “under normal circumstances” since the African society does not seem to make room for “abnormal circumstances” where marriage is concerned – unless the person is “under human”, as Mbiti has put it in the

¹⁶ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* (Philadelphia, Pa/Accra: Sankofa Publishing company, 1996), 78.

¹⁷ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 76.

¹⁸ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, 76.

¹⁹ John S. Mbiti *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1980). 133.

earlier part of his very statement above.²⁰ According to Ganusah, this is the expectation of the society, even though the unmarried may know that there is no anomaly with his or her unmarried state.²¹ It can be argued strongly that African concept of marriage conforms to the biblical pattern of marriage. However, it falls short when it comes to how men perceive their wives-not as equals but as purchased items. Any marriage that reduces the personality of human being to a mechanical level reduces the integrity of the person as one who is created in the image of God. African Christians should surrender their worldview to the judgment of scripture and endeavor to live up to the set standards as ordained by God.

1.8 Significance of the Study

A research work of this nature brings into fore the various concept relating to the issue of divorce and remarriage in the church. It also helps to contribute to the continuing debate about the issue and help suggest possible avenues to address the issue.

Divorce in general and specifically among Christians is considerably on the increase. This project seeks to add to the existing body of knowledge about marriage and divorce among Christians.

It will also bring to the fore, the effect of divorce within the charismatic churches and what the pastors are doing about it.

The aim here is to explore the church's responsibility in curbing the situation.

The researcher also wishes to use this opportunity to sensitise both the church and public to the current trend of divorce and address some solution to the issue.

²⁰ Ganusah, "Informed Choices on Marriage, Childlessness and Reproductive Technologies", 12.

²¹ Ganusah, "Informed Choices on Marriage, Childlessness and Reproductive Technologies", 12.

1.9 Organization of Study

This work is organized under five chapters. Chapter one deals with the general introduction. It introduces the work by giving out the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research methodology employed, literature review, significance of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter two looks at the concept of marriage from the biblical perspective. The chapter discusses marriage from the Old and New Testament perspective by drawing out some implications for the contemporary situation. This will also give the researcher a fundamental basis to discuss some of the issues that remains very central to this study. Chapter three focuses on divorce and remarriage among charismatic churches using the two selected churches as a point of reference. The study interviewed the head pastors of the two selected churches to find out their views and opinions about divorce and remarriage in the charismatic churches. Chapters four basically deal with the analysis and discuss the issue that emerges from chapter three. Chapter five which concludes the study gives summary, conclusions and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

2.1 Introduction

Marriage is a divine institution established by God. It is a covenant and a solemn binding agreement made first before God and then among people in society. God first instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:24). Focusing on this biblical text as a basic text on which Christian marriage is anchored, the researcher in this chapter analyzes the basic component of marriage from a biblical perspective. This analysis and examination are made with the help of other scholars that have previously dealt with the issues that confront the researcher in this chapter.

2.2 What is Marriage or what is The Biblical View of Marriage?

For the past decades, the concept of marriage or the definition for marriage has been offered by different scholars or people according to their own predisposed understanding or misgiving on the subject of marriage. Today, our society has become so complex that there is no longer a short answer to any question. When it comes to defining marriage, the situation is even worse. With changing times, call it modernity, opinions of the proper functions of marriage continues to change, making it difficult to stick to a definition. The right of women's movement and gay rights movement have influenced some governments to amend the constitutional description of marriage, and have created new forms of relationships.

In spite of the evolutionary trends, there is one source that remains steadfast, resolute, and unchanging. Thus, the Holy Bible. Within the context of this study, the researcher

approaches the definition of marriage from a biblical perspective. As an institution ordained by God, the Bible can serve as a good source of examining the whole concept of marriage. That is where we can go for any information concerning the facts, functions, features, and fulfillment of marriage as an institution. In the wisdom and plan of God, he instituted the marriage relationship between man and woman right from the beginning of human existence. After God had created the earth and prepared it in every way to be suitable to man, He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help meet for him” (Gen. 2: 18 RSV). God saw that everything He made was good, but still realized that Man needed a Woman who could be his companion, receive his love, share in his dominion over the earth, and together replenish the earth with offspring. So it was God who designed and created the woman, and presented her to Adam.

According to the Bible, marriage is a covenant, a sacred bond between a man and a woman. Many biblical scholars are of the view that the Bible’s teaching on marriage is epitomized in the statement “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24 RSV).²²

In his article “Because your Hearts were Hard”, Francis Benyah expresses the view that the key phrase in the expression “one flesh” (Hebrew: *bāsār eā*) implies kinship or fellowship, with the body as a medium, thus setting forth marriage as the deepest corporeal and spiritual unity of a man and woman.²³ The purposes of marriage as found in Genesis chapter 2 are for mutual help and comfort, procreation, and companionship.

According to Benyah, the very first description of the nature of marriage in the Bible, as

²² Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, John Rea (eds), *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 258.

²³ Francis Benyah, ““Because Your Hearts were Hard”: An Examination of Jesus’ Discourse on Divorce in Mark 10:2-12”, *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* Vol. 18. No. 1, March (2014): 117 -132, 118. See also *Wycliffe’s Dictionary of Theology*, 344.

consisting of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh (Gen 2:24), reveals the Biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant relationship.²⁴ In Benyah's view, this meaning of marriage as a covenant of companionship is expressed more explicitly later in Scripture in such passages as Malachi 2:14: "The Lord was witness to the *covenant* between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless" (RSV).²⁵

Essentially, this verse (Gen 2:24), mentions three things that are crucial to the marriage union. Thus, to leave, cleave, and to become one flesh. After God formed and brought Eve to Adam to his wife, God delineated the threefold nature of the marriage covenant. Man shall leave, and cleave, and become one. If a man and a woman are going to live together as husband and wife for the rest of their lives, then they should be bound by some indissoluble accord, which is a covenant. For this to work successfully, there must be the three components, which are: Leaving, Cleaving and becoming one flesh.

In this chapter in particular the researcher looks at the concept of marriage from the biblical perspective by discussing and examining the importance of this three components to the institution of marriage from the very beginning of God's creation.

2.2.1 Leaving

The first step in establishing a marriage covenant is *leaving* all other relationships, including the closest ones of father and mother: "Therefore a man *leaves* his father and his mother" (Gen 2:24). Of course, leaving does not mean the abandonment of one's parents. The responsibility to "Honor your father and mother" (Ex 20:12) is applied by Jesus to adults (Mark 7:6-13). We do not evade our responsibility toward our parents as

²⁴ Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 119.

²⁵ Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 119.

they grow old.²⁶ Jesus scorned the hypocrisy of those who gave to the Temple the money they had set aside for their parents (Mark 7:9-13). As adults, however, we assume responsibility for our parents rather than to them. The Bible never suggests that married couples should sever their ties with their parents, but that they must “let go” of their former lives as sons and daughters in order to cement their relationships as husbands and wives.

What “leaving” means is that all lesser relationships must give way to the newly formed marital relationship. A leaving must occur to cement a covenant relationship of husband and wife. This principle of leaving applies likewise to our covenant relationship with God. It is said of the disciples that “they left everything and followed Him” (Luke 5:11 RSV).²⁷ According to Andreas J. Köstenberger, marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships, uniting a man and a woman in a “one-flesh” union (Genesis 2:23–25). Marriage involves “leaving” one’s family of origin and “being united” to one’s spouse, which signifies the establishment of a new family unit distinct from the two originating families. While “one flesh” suggests sexual intercourse and normally procreation, at its very heart the concept entails the establishment of a new kinship relationship between two previously unrelated individuals (and families) by the most intimate of human bonds.²⁸

In the view of John B. Ghartey “Leaving” defines the social side of the covenant. He asserts the fact that marriage requires that a person separates from every other relationship that provides companionship, comfort, consolation, and complement. These pleasures

²⁶ Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 119. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, (MI: Biblical Perspective, 1991), 6.

²⁷ Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant*, 7.

²⁸ Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Bible’s Teaching on Marriage and the Family” *The Family Research Council*.www.frc.org (accessed on 24th May, 2016).

ought to be found in only one person – the spouse. Family, friends, neighbours, and well-wishers may be important in one’s life, but the moment one decides to enter into the marriage covenant, all these must give way.²⁹ According to Ghartey, “the marriage union is so sacred that the couples must not depend on any of these external relations for emotional, physical, economic, and spiritual support. The couple may maintain some relationship with them, yes; but none should be made to provide the intended companionship reserved for spouses.”³⁰

He asserts the fact that in Africa, marriage brings families together. That is to say, marriages are not viewed as two individuals in love and doing their own thing, but rather two families coming together in an extended relationship. Couples are thus given all the needed support by both families. Unfortunately, this support is often carried too far, such that it creates a dependency syndrome. Much as we all need our families, friends, and other relations, we should bear in mind that they must never take the place of our spouses.³¹

2.2.2 Cleaving

In his examination of the biblical text as employed in this discussion, Benyah argues that the second essential component of a marriage covenant is *cleaving*: “Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and *cleaves* to his wife” (Gen 2:24). According to him “a leaving must occur before a cleaving can take place. This process reveals divine wisdom.

²⁹ John B. Ghartey, *Marriage Means More: Pragmatic Positive Principles for Building a Happy Home* (Accra: Living Word Foundation, 2011), 9.

³⁰ Ghartey, *Marriage Means More*, 9.

³¹ Ghartey, *Marriage Means More*, 10.

A man and a woman must leave all lesser relationships for the purpose of cleaving, that is, cementing their new relationship and establishing a new home.”³²

“Cleaving” reflects the central concept of covenant-fidelity.³³ The Hebrew word for “cleave” (*dabaq*), suggests the idea of being permanently glued or joined together. It is one of the words frequently used to express the covenant commitment of the people to God: “You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and *cleave to Him*” RSV (Deut 10:20; cf. 11:22; 13:4; 30:20). The word is used to describe Ruth’s refusal to leave her mother-in-law Naomi: “Ruth clave unto her” (Ruth 1:14).

In the sight of God, cleaving means wholehearted commitment which spills over to every area of our being. It means to be permanently glued together rather than temporarily taped together. You can separate two pieces of paper joined together, but you cannot separate without great damage two pieces of paper glued together. In fact, two pieces of paper glued together become not only inseparable, but also much stronger than if they were joined together. Cleaving involves unswerving loyalty to one’s marital partner. Note that man is to cleave to “his wife.” This excludes marital unfaithfulness. A man cannot be glued to his wife and flirt or engage in sexual intercourse with another woman. The two are mutually exclusive.³⁴

In expressing a similar view Köstenberger postulate that marriage is not only permanent, sacred, intimate, and mutual; it is also exclusive (Genesis 2:22–25; 1 Corinthians 7:2–5). This means that no other human relationship must interfere with the marriage commitment between husband and wife. According to Köstenberger, for this reason,

³² Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 120.

³³ Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant*, 8.

³⁴ Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 120.

Jesus treated sexual immorality of a married person, including even a husband's lustful thoughts, with utmost seriousness (Matthew 5:28; 19:9).³⁵

In a marriage covenant, cleaving does not allow the "freedom to leave" when the relationship is no longer satisfying. If the "freedom to leave" is retained as a real option, it will hinder the total effort to develop a marital relationship characterized by covenant faithfulness. As marriage counselor Edward Wheat observes, "Keeping divorce as an escape clause indicates a flaw in your commitment to each other, even as a tiny crack that can be fatally widened by the many forces working to destroy homes and families."³⁶

The "cleaving" addresses the spiritual dimension of the marriage covenant. How can two people, from different backgrounds, with different upbringings, pursuing different objectives in life, and holding on to different interests, come together and live as one? This is what is meant by cleaving. It is the fusion or a synthesis of two *personae*, two interests, two ambitions, two likes, two dislikes, two visions, and two aspirations. None is supposed to live for himself or herself. The man loses his identity in the woman; the woman loses her identity in the man. It is an inexplicable and almost frightening phenomenon. Yet this is what marriage is supposed to be. When people have severed themselves from depending on members of their families, they should find openness in their spouses. We can only have this ability to cleave when we have had the discipline to first of all leave. It is revealing to know that the coming together of the man and woman in marriage is a celebration of what the two were originally created to be. God originally had the man and the woman embodied in one Adam. God created only one man in His image and likeness, but within the one created being, was the duo – man and woman.

³⁵ köstenberger, "The Bible's Teaching on Marriage and the Family", 5.

³⁶ Ed Wheat, *Love for Every Married Couple* (MI, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 38.

The mystery is that, one complete life merges with another complete life, to become one complete life. The husband is not a “better half” of his wife. In marriage, the partners do not come together as “two halves” to form one whole, but as “two wholes” to form one. God, who initially made them one, later separated them into complete beings, and now brings them together again into a mystical union. The union is not physical merger, but one that is spiritual; and that is how God meant it to be. “For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery; but I am talking about Christ and the church” (Eph. 5: 31-32 RSV). The Apostle Paul explained it more clearly when he likened this union between the husband and his wife to relationship between Jesus Christ and His Bride—the Church.

2.2.3 Becoming One Flesh

The third essential ingredient of a marriage covenant is that “they become *one flesh*” (Gen 2:24). Note the progression: leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh. As husband and wife leave lesser relationships and learn to cleave to one another, they become a new entity, “one flesh”. According to Benyah, the phrase “one flesh” needs some explanation because it is frequently misunderstood to refer primarily to the sexual union.³⁷ To become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24) means to become one functioning unit. H. C. Leupold explains that becoming one flesh “Involves the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits, a union consummated in intercourse.”³⁸ The phrase “one flesh” does also refer to the physical or sexual aspect of

³⁷ Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 121.

³⁸ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis 2* vols. (MI, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1942), 137.

marriage. Paul explicitly uses the phrase in this way when speaking of sexual intercourse between a man and a harlot (1 Cor. 6:16). Sexual intercourse *per se*, however, does not automatically assure that a man and a woman become *one* in a mystical, emotional, and spiritual unity. Genital intercourse without spiritual communion often leaves people divided, alienated, and bitter toward each other.³⁹ Thus, sexual intercourse itself does not bring about *real* oneness.

To achieve the Biblical “one flesh” union, sexual intercourse in marriage must be the natural fruit of love, the crowning act of marital union. If sex is not the expression of genuine love, respect, and commitment, then it offers only a physical contact while keeping the partners mentally and spiritually apart. Sexual desire must become the desire for the total union and oneness of body, soul, and spirit between marital partners.⁴⁰

Ghartey refers to this third part of becoming one flesh as “weaving”.⁴¹ According to him, it suggests the fusion of physical bodies, which of course, connotes sexual fulfillment in the covenant. The weaving involves an intimate relationship, which is monogamous, heterogeneous, and permanent. According to Ghartey, “right after that statement, the writer of the Book of Genesis remarked that the two were naked but were not ashamed. The marriage covenant also grants each other the full rights over the physical body of the other.”⁴² 1 Cor. 7: 4 reads: “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does” (RSV).

³⁹ Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant*, 10.

⁴⁰ Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 121.

⁴¹ Ghartey, *Marriage Means More*, 14.

⁴² Ghartey, *Marriage Means More*, 14.

The husband's body does not belong to himself, but to his wife, and so does the wife's body remain the property of her husband. While we grow up, we share life with our family: mother, father, sister or brother; then later we find companionship with playmates. But at the time of puberty (which is the state of physical development when it is possible to beget or bear children) we instinctively are drawn to the opposite sex. This is the normal and natural development process in the human; it is the way God intended it to be.

The attraction does not cease until one finds a spouse and they build their lives together. It thus becomes easy for couples within the confines of the covenant to long for each other's physical touch and intimacy. There is nothing wrong with anything a couple does to bring about mutual sexual satisfaction. The only "sin" in the marriage bedroom is selfishness, where a spouse decides to use sex as a weapon of protest or seeks only his or her satisfaction. Whatever a couple consents to do with themselves in the bedroom is acceptable, as long as there is no selfishness.

2.3 God's Intention for Marriage

How does God intend marriage to be understood? In inference from the text discussed, it can be argued that God intended marriage to be a permanent union. The man was to depart from his parents' home in order to "be united to his wife, and ... become one flesh" with her (Genesis 2:24). Both Jesus (Matthew 19:5) and Paul (Ephesians 5:31) quoted this passage from Genesis as the foundational premise of marriage.⁴³

⁴³ Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 122.

As already emphasized, Jesus also affirms that God's ideal from the beginning was monogamy, speaking of "man" and "wife" in the singular, with the "two" becoming one flesh (Matthew 19:5,6). There is no reference to polygamy as a practice of the Early Church; and, in any event, it would be proscribed for leaders by Paul's references to a "one woman man" (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).⁴⁴ This, suggests that marriage, as an intuition, was not man's made idea but God's. That is to say, marriage is absolutely God's Design, and never Man's Desire. Marriage should thus not be regarded as the fulfillment of man's craving and passion, but as the accomplishment of God's ultimate plan for the happiness of mankind. It is part of the good plans that God has for those who love Him and wait for Him. It is part of the demonstration of His goodness and mercy in our lives. This is how we should understand and actually perceive marriage.

Finally, marriage is a covenant. It is a solemn binding agreement made first before God and then among people in society. The nature of marriage as a covenant is strongly implied in the marriage order of Genesis 2:24. Gharthey has argued that the Bible respects the institution of marriage in the same way it respects covenants. In fact, God Himself makes an allusion to marriage as a covenant.⁴⁵ In Malachi 2: 14, God declared, "Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant" (RSV). According to Gharthey, "Your wife by covenant," is how God describes the union between man and woman.⁴⁶ But why 'covenant'? What is a "covenant? Gharthey argues that in the plan of God, He intended marriage to be a lifelong agreement between a man a

⁴⁴ Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 122.

⁴⁵ Gharthey, *Marriage Means More*, 5.

⁴⁶ Gharthey, *Marriage Means More*, 5.

woman, a relationship exemplifying unconditional love, reconciliation, sexual purity, and fruitfulness. A covenant is an eternal agreement between two parties who commit themselves to each other for mutual benefits. It is usually in a form of a vow that promises blessings when kept, and curses when broken. It is established by invocation and an appeal to a superior being, who then becomes responsible for bringing the blessings or curses. Of course, since there is none greater than God, He swears by Himself, and ensures that He keeps His part of the stipulations.⁴⁷

God understands the seriousness of these principles, and that is why in entering into deep relationship with Israel, He did it by covenant. The main import of the covenant with Israel was that “the steadfast love of the Lord,” which came from His very heart would “never cease” (Lamentations. 3: 22).

Apart from the nation, God also entered into covenants with individuals such as Noah, Abraham, and David. Any covenant that God established with man was initiated by His love for us, and our need for His intervention in our lives. So when God alludes to marriage as a covenant, it means that He intends for marriage to be lifelong relationship between a man and a woman, who vow to share their lives, and to remain steadfast in unconditional love. If marriage is to last long, and truly become “one flesh” then there is the need for something more than binding than a mere piece of paper certificate. Covenant is the key. Köstenberger argues that marriage is intended to be permanent, since it was established by God (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9). Marriage represents a serious commitment that should not be entered into lightly or unadvisedly. It involves a solemn promise or pledge, not merely to one’s marriage partner, but before God.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ghartey, *Marriage Means More*, 6.

⁴⁸ Köstenberger, “The Bible’s Teaching on Marriage and the Family”, 3.

2.4 Conclusion

There are a number of significant conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion made in this chapter. However, basically, two important factors that the researcher wants to emphasize as far as the discussion made in this chapter is concerned is that, marriage as according to God's own statutes was meant to be a monogamous pair thus, between a man and a woman. Again, the researcher wants to emphasize that marriage was divinely instituted by God and humankind cannot always dissolve it at will. The permanence of marriage is clearly depicted in scripture and mankind must strive to keep the institution with honesty and the holiness it deserve.

CHAPTER THREE

VIEWS ON DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE IN THE SELECTED CHURCHES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter basically present the views of the head pastors in the two selected churches that are used as a case study for this work. In dealing with the issues that are central to this study, the researcher poses questions that are pertinent to this study and present the views or the response of the pastors. Some of the questions that the researcher sought to seek response from the pastors in this chapter include; their views on divorce rate in the charismatic churches, whether divorce should be permissible in the church or not; should re-marriage be permissible; measures the church can adopt to reduce the rate of divorce in the church and the factors that are contributing to the rate of divorce in the church. The churches selected include the Power Chapel Worldwide and the Shiloh United church.

3.2 Brief Background of the Selected Churches

3.2.1 *Shiloh United Church*

The Shiloh United Church (SUC) was established by God through the instrumentality of Archbishop Dr. Malachi Ramsay in Great Britain in 1965. The Shiloh United Church of Ghana, is an international branch of the Shiloh United Church of Christ Apostolic in Great Britain.⁴⁹

The arrival of Bishop Samuel Richard Addae and his wife from the United Kingdom in 1985 after many years of stay and study marked the beginning of Shiloh United Church

⁴⁹ Shiloh United Church, <https://iccmgb.com/shiloh-united-church/> (accessed on 12th May, 2016).

in Ghana. The couple were supported by Rev. Osei–Bonsu Nsiah and Dr. P.C Addae, a younger brother of the Bishop who is now living in the United States.⁵⁰ The fellowship started in one room in Mrs. Addae’s family house and later into a yard in the same house with fourteen (14) adults and twelve (12) children.

On 12th January 1986, it relocated to Kwadaso L.A Junior Secondary School (J.S.S) building and then to a bakery at Asuoeyeboah, Kumasi in November 1992 where it remained until 2006 when it moved to its permanent site at Tanoso. This site is also the ministry’s headquarters in Ghana.⁵¹

The vision of Shiloh is to advance the Christian education of the inhabitants of sex and race, in accordance with the articles of faith provided in the church’s constitution. Shiloh’s mission is to establish a house of prayer and worship centre with an atmosphere of love where all people are accepted and united; where needs are ministered to through the teaching and preaching in the demonstration of power of the word of God (1 Timothy 2:4-5).⁵²

3.2.2 Power Chapel Worldwide

The Power Chapel Worldwide (PWC) which was started in the year 1996 with 20 people under a tree has grown to become one of the prominent independent charismatic churches in Kumasi and beyond. It has both local and international branches. The establishment of PWC is as a result of the ministry of Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng. Rev. Kusi Boateng started as a village preacher moving from one village to another preaching the gospel.

⁵⁰ Shiloh United Church, <https://iccmgb.com/shiloh-united-church/>.

⁵¹ Shiloh United Church, <https://iccmgb.com/shiloh-united-church/>.

⁵² Shiloh United Church, <https://iccmgb.com/shiloh-united-church/>.

This desire for the preaching of the gospel and soul winning led to a formation of a missionary group known as the “God’s Power Ministry”.⁵³

He is a prophet and a teacher by call and operates in the office of the prophet which was brought to bear after he had been prayed for and anointed by the Archbishop Nicholas Duncan Williams of the Christian Action Faith Ministry who is his spiritual father.⁵⁴

As a church, they were meeting alongside God’s Power Ministry at the same time for thirteen years. The PWC which came out of God’s Power Ministry was meeting on Sundays at Rev. Kusi Boateng’s rented residence at Kwadaso. The missionary group was meeting at Hotel de Kingsway at Adum.

He later moved the church from his rented residence at Kwadaso to Sugar Hill Hotel at Trade Union Congress (T.U.C.) estates and later to the current site the Asuoeyeboah, Kumasi.⁵⁵

3.3 Views on Divorce Rate in the Charismatic Churches

Divorce or dissolution as it has increasingly become known is a legislative created and judiciary administered process that legally terminates a marriage no longer considered viable by one or both spouses. This permits both to remarry. A. M. Ambert, asserts that divorce is the final termination of a marital union, canceling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties involved.⁵⁶ Seneadza, also concurs that the breakdown of marriage always precedes a

⁵³Interview with Mr. Laud Moffat Agyekum Boampong, a former and first administrator of the church on 23th June, 2016, Kumasi.

⁵⁴Interview with Agyekum Boampong, on 23th June, 2016, Kumasi.

⁵⁵Interview with Agyekum Boampong, on 23th June, 2016, Kumasi.

⁵⁶A. M. Ambert, *Divorce: Facts, causes and consequences* 3rd ed. (Ottawa, Canada: Vanier Institute of the Family, 2009),

breakup of the marriage. In other words, before a breakup in the marriage (divorce) there must be a breakdown of the relationship.⁵⁷

Kwaku Opong Asante, Joseph Osafo, and Georgina K. Nyamekye also concur that;

Before the final stage of divorce, the couple's relationship goes through three general stages. In the first stage of isolation, the couples become separated from each other as intimacy behavior breaks down, although they might still converse and be polite to each other. In the second stage of invalidation, the couples begin to negatively assess each other's worth and belittle one another, which give rise to accusations. In the third stage of betrayal, trust is broken down and there is no support from each other.⁵⁸

Since God's ultimate concern for marriage is for it to be a lifelong commitment, it is always not considerate for a marriage to end in divorce. The real problem is not divorce itself but the breakdown of the marriage relationship. Christ when asked about divorce pointed to the true problem: thus marriage breakdown. He commended that marriage relationship fashioned by God, must not be severed or sundered by any person at all. Divorce is always a failure of God's perfect will being done.

It will be somewhat difficult to give a vivid view of all the divorce cases that are taking place in the whole country from the high courts or the municipal assemblies in the various regional capitals in the country. However, there is an undeniable fact that divorce is on the increase among Christians in Ghana. On Saturday, March 21, 2015, it was published on the front page of *Daily Graphic* with the title "Divorce rates high in churches". In the story, it was reported that the senior pastor of the Tema Community Four Assemblies of God Church, Reverend David Nabegmado, decries that the divorce rates in churches are becoming alarming and need urgent attention. According to the report, even though the reverend minister did not give figures to support his claim, the

⁵⁷Seneadza, O. *Judicial divorce in Ghana: The causes, procedures and related issues*. <http://www.articlesbase.com/law-articles/judicialdivorce-in-ghana-the-causes-procedures-and-related-issues-2388782.html> (Accessed on 13th August 2014).

⁵⁸Opong, Osafo, Nyamekye, *An Exploratory Study of Factors Contributing to Divorce Among Married Couples in Accra* (Accra: Sonlife, 2012), 17.

Ghana Statistical Service in a similar statement is reported to have indicated that about 600,000 marriages contracted in the country in 2014 collapsed. The number of divorce cases was said to be three times the number of divorce cases which occurred in England and Wales in 2012.⁵⁹

In recent times, there has been a perception that divorce and re-marriage in the charismatic churches seem to be very high in Ghana. As a result of that, the researcher sort to find out from the head of the selected churches or the respondents the authenticity of this claim concerning the charismatic churches using their church as a point of reference. In a response to the question whether or not divorce and re-marriage is high in the charismatic churches, the head pastor of the Power Chapel Worldwide (PWC) Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng indicated that it will be somewhat difficult to side with any kind of statistics concerning such claim because the population rate as of 20 years ago is not the same population rate today.⁶⁰

According to him, the exponential growth of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity today is as a result of the numbers of everything growing. He opines that “I remember when we were kids, the only telecommunication company we knew then was Ghana Telecom but now we can talk of almost 10 other telecommunication companies. You can imagine how many houses we had in Ghana. You can imagine the number of houses and cars we had then. I think that is proportional; I cannot say “yes” or “no” because I don’t have the statistics on my hands because every other thing is increasing and so it all depends on the proportion so I can’t side with that kind of statistics.”⁶¹ According to him he doesn’t

⁵⁹ Ann Adjajah, “Divorce rates high in churches” *Daily Graphic*, Saturday, March 21, 2015, 3.

⁶⁰ Interview with Rev. Victor Kusi Boateng, Founder and Head Pastor of Power Chapel Worldwide, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁶¹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

believe that the statistics of divorce and re-marriage in the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches far outweigh that of the orthodox churches. The fact that Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are more does not mean that there is higher rate of divorce. I think we should get our statistics correct.

On the same question however, Bishop R. S. Addae of the Shiloh United church argues that though he cannot speak on behalf of other churches, divorce and re-marriage is something that is really on the increase in Charismatic Churches. In his view, the charismatic churches attract the upwardly mobile youth in the country.⁶² According to him, the church's teachings against fornication mostly compels the youth in the church to marry early in order to avoid such and its consequences. However, most of these youth especially the pastors sometimes go into such marriages without any experience and hence result in troubles including unfulfilled expectations and misunderstanding which leads to the divorce.⁶³

At the PWC, the researcher found out that from the year 2009 to April 2016, 65 marriages have been recorded and three of such marriages have been unsuccessful. However, at the Shiloh United Church, Archbishop Addae indicated that there have not been any such issues in the church even though he does on weekly basis handle such issues outside his church.⁶⁴

⁶²Interview with Archbishop Richard Samuel Addae, President of the International Council of Churches and Ministers of Great Britain and Founder of Shiloh United Church, Ghana on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁶³ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁶⁴ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

3.4 Should Divorce be Permissible in the Church?

The researcher also sought to find out from the interviewees whether divorce should be allowed in the church or not? In response to this question, Rev. Kusi Boateng emphasized on the fact that this is a delicate question but thinks that the church should try as much as possible to go to every source of a divorce case rather than tackling the divorce issue itself. He is of the view that tackling the source or the issue contributing to the crisis in the marriage will help better address the issue than to talk about the divorce itself. According to him, “if you don’t teach people how to marry the right people then you stand the consequences of divorce and so one have to get back to the basis.”⁶⁵ He is of the view that, this is what the church need to do, teaching and helping the youth to choose the right partners for their lives. In explaining his point further, he indicated that “I am blessed enough to marry a good woman and so the issue of divorce is out of my vocabulary. But the fact that I am blessed enough to have a good woman does not mean I can also go out there to fight against people who were not blessed enough like I am who then encounter all kinds of limitations and all kinds of frustrations in their relationships and therefore they decide to opt out of marriage.”⁶⁶

According to Kusi Boateng the Bible gives room for divorce and so he cannot be totally against it but thinks that the church needs to address why divorce before any possible solution can be offered to the crisis. He is of the view that the only reason why a lot of people are opting out of marriage is the fact that “people get into marriage with a wrong

⁶⁵ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁶⁶ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

mindset, with wrong people, with a wrong idea, with a wrong expectations and obviously, when you sow a bad seed it grows to be bad tree.”⁶⁷

Kusi Boateng argued that the mistake the church is committing now is that, they are not giving the would-be couples proper counselling or teaching about marrying the right way and on how to make the right choices in terms of marriage decisions. According to him, the church is tackling divorces but are not tackling how people should marry.”⁶⁸ In the view of Kusi Boateng, the problem is not the divorces that the church is encountering but is because the church is not setting the platform well for people to get the right marriages into place. So the church has to go into the basic and start teaching how people especially the youth should prepare for their marriages and how they should choose their partner and things they should expect and the things they should not expect. And I think that will save us and that will save the church.”⁶⁹

According to Kusi Boateng, apart from the issue of fornication in which the bible gives a justification for which a spouse can seek for divorce, there is the need for the church to have a realistic position on some aspects of divorce cases. He argues that this is very important in the cases where life’s are being threatened in marriages.

Kusi Boateng assert the fact that marriage is an earthly affair and not a heavenly affair. He is of the view that marriage only takes place on earth and will not take place in heaven. From this perspective, he argues that something that is not in heaven shouldn’t prevent anybody on earth from going to heaven. According to him, the Bible emphasizes the fact that there is no marriage in heaven. He explains that marriage should rather help one to make it into heaven but should not deter one from the cause of heaven. So

⁶⁷ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁶⁸ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁶⁹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

according to him any relationship, “any marriage that can stop me [one] from getting into heaven is more serious than taking away one’s life.”⁷⁰ He states further that if that relationship or the wrong move that somebody took will take away his salvation, is it better to go to heaven divorced or it is better to miss heaven without divorce? He concluded by saying that;

So I think that the church has to take a holistic approach to the issue of divorce because a lot of people are also missing heaven because of marriage. A lot of people will go to hell because of marriage but unfortunately, marriage is not also in heaven and so we really have to evaluate it well and have holistic approach to the issue of divorce because a lot of people are losing their salvation because of marriage.⁷¹

When asked whether or not he would counsel a couple who are having issues in their marriage to opt for a divorce looking at the context of their situation, Kusi Boateng said that he has never approved of any divorce and he will not do such a thing. According to him irrespective of the counselling and advises you give to couples who are having issues in their marriage, the ultimate decision is not made by the pastor, it is made by the people who got into the marriage.⁷²

On the same question, Archbishop Addai, also disclosed that they don’t endorse divorce in their church. According to him, the reason is that God himself has said that He hates divorce and does not like it. “So we do everything possible to always bring couples that are having issues in their marriage together.”⁷³ However, he indicated that there are some individuals, immediately they made up their mind to divorce they hardly heed to any advice offered by the church. According to him, this sometimes makes divorce issues

⁷⁰ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷¹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷² Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷³ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

very difficult to handle in the church. “So we do our possible best to always teach couples not to divorce after marriage.”⁷⁴

According to Archbishop Addai, even though the church tries to prevent couples from divorcing their partners, there is very little the church can do in divorce cases where life is under threat. This is what he says, “we always teach them not to divorce. However, when someone complains of his or her life under threat, then we have no control over their decisions.”⁷⁵ He was however quick to say that in their church, they hardly encounter such issues. According to him, as the President of the International Council of Churches and Ministers of Great Britain overseeing over 2,000 ministers, the issue of divorce and re-marriage is very common to him because such issues always keep coming to him on weekly basis. According to him, even though some are able to resolve their differences and continue their marriage, others end up breaking the marriage. He cites an example where in one case, a wife was beaten by the husband (a pastor) to the extent that one eye of the wife got swollen. According to him, even though the neighbors of the pastors’ wife admonished her to report the husband to the police, she decided to bring the issue to him for resolution before any further action will be taken.⁷⁶ According to him, when it happens like this, it is very difficult to solve the issues. At the worst side of it, he argues, “is to always advise for separation.”⁷⁷ He opined that;

For me and my pastors, we will never counsel or advise anyone to go for a divorce because that is against the scripture. We advise people to take their own decision. Even if life is under threat we advise people to make their own decision we cannot advise them to leave their marriage. If we do that, we will falter against God and scripture.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷⁵ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷⁶ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷⁷ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁷⁸ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

According to Archbishop Addai, in one stance he told a couple that “marriage breakers will not go to heaven.” In a response, the man reiterated that then “he is already in hell. It is not now that he is going to be there.” Archbishop Addai argues that “he will not open his mouth to advice couples who are having issues to consider divorce because it will be recorded against him in heaven.”⁷⁹ He says that even in situation where life is under threat, “I will not advice for divorce but to give them the word of God and allow them to take their own decision.”⁸⁰

3.5 Should Re-marriage be permissible in the Church?

One of the delicate issues many Christians are grappling with regarding the issue of divorce in the church is whether or not couples who are divorced can remarry. The complexities involve in dealing with the issue arise out of the fact that the Bible seem not to be clear with such matters. As part of the study, the researcher also sought to find out from the head pastors whether or not re-marriage should be permitted after divorce and on what basis. In a response to the question, Rev. Kusi Boateng indicated that for a period of about fifteen years they have not encountered the issue of re-marriage in their church. So according to him, when the issue of re-marriage comes up in the church, there would be the need to do proper consultations before a final decision is taken.⁸¹

However, he emphasized that if such issues comes up, a proper scrutiny and evaluation will be made to examine the justification of the divorcee and weigh them on biblical terms, and if the person has to be re-married, the church will allow him or her. According

⁷⁹ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸⁰ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸¹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

to him, the Bible itself gives room for divorce and re-marriage and so there cannot be a decision not to allow anyone to re-marry when they divorce.⁸²

In a response to the same the question, Archbishop Addae indicated re-marriage in the church is dependent on the age of the divorcee. According to him, some of the divorcees are very young in age and they hold the opinion that in order for them to stay alone and by so doing commit adultery, they will marry to curtail such sins and its consequences. He is of the view that re-marriage can be allowed in the church if the divorcee wants to re-marry and there are no regulations against him or her.⁸³

3.6 Factors that Influences Divorce: Cultural or Modernity

There has also been some arguments that changes in society as a result of modernity and other cultural factors has somewhat contributed to divorce decisions among couples. As part of this study, the researcher sought to find out whether or not modernity or some cultural factors has effect on marriages in Ghana.

In the view of Rev. Kusi Boateng, cultural factors to some extent had an effect on marriages in Ghana some two or three decades ago. However, according to him, our culture and not modernity rather bounded couples. In his opinion our cultural and traditional system rather bounded couples together because the cultural system accepted polygamy.⁸⁴ According to him, on the basis of that, when a man gets into marriage and he is not satisfied, he will not divorce the woman but get married to another woman. In his view, one cannot argue that relationship between the man and the woman was a divorce.

⁸² Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸³ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸⁴ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

However, that is not to say that they had a perfect marriage but our culture accepted polygamy.⁸⁵

Again, the cultural system also used to frown on divorce, but now, according to him, our cultural system no more frown on divorce. According to him, in recent times, culture has been diluted because of education, modernity and westernization. As a result of that, many people have come to know their right and are hardly influenced by parents or spouses. He argued that because most women now know their rights through education and so on, they are easily able to get out of the marriage when the man begins misbehaving in the marriage and they cannot stand it any longer. According to him, it is the dilution of the culture that is causing failure in marriages and not the culture itself.⁸⁶

He also argued that what is happening in cross-cultural marriages is also creating problems. Because unlike earlier times where families know their sons and daughters who have entered into marriages, it is not the same anymore.

When asked whether or not he thinks the premium placed on child birth in marriages within the Akan culture is also contributing to divorce, the man of God argued that only a few people will throw in their marriages because their mother said they don't have kids. According to him, by the grace of God, the recent development in technology has provided us with alternative means for one to have his or her baby if that person cannot deliver naturally. He was of the view that couples who are facing such difficulty in marriage can opt for assisted reproductive technologies to help them have their own children. He argues that couples opting for divorce is "no more workable because if your eggs are frozen you can have an IV, if the man's sperms are very low he can go and do a

⁸⁵ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸⁶ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

boost. And so right now it is very difficult for someone to say the marriages are fallen apart because you don't have kids.”⁸⁷ According to him, as a result of such assisted reproductive technologies any couple who gets married stand 92% chance of having a child. He is of the opinion that that side of culture is not affecting marriages so much. According to him “knowledge is out therefore people know their right. A few people will get their mothers and fathers into their marriages now because knowledge is on the ascendency. People are knowledgeable, people are learning, people are knowing more than they used to know then.”⁸⁸

3.7 Measures the Church can adopt to reduce Divorce and Re-marriage in the Church

As part of the study, the researcher also sought from the Pastors the measures the church can put in place to ensure that divorce cases in the church are reduced. In a response, Kusi Boateng argued that some of the things the church can put in place to ensure that the divorce rate in the church is reduced is strong pre-marital counselling and post-marital counselling.⁸⁹ According to him, the church is very good at pre-marital counselling but not at post-marital counselling. He is of the view that an effective post-marital counselling will help reduce the rate of troubles in marriage and help further reduce the rate of divorce in the church.⁹⁰

In citing his own case as an example, Kusi Boateng indicated during the interview that he was from “a very poor and very broke family” and also, was a school dropout. According

⁸⁷ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸⁸ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁸⁹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹⁰ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

to him, he was brought up by his grandparents who liked a lot of pepper.⁹¹ However, unfortunately, he got married to a woman who was a graduate and from a very good home. The father had stomach problems so they didn't eat pepper. According to him, even though he went through pre-marital counseling, if he had no one to help them through their post-marital counselling by telling them and exposing to them as a couple to the basic things they needed, "the issue of pepper and the issue of lack of education and the issue of putting food on the table would have mess their marriage from the very beginning."⁹²

Again, he argues that the church needs to address prospective couples with the right perception into marriage. The scripture says "and this therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to the wife." He was of the view that the problem we are having is that when someone turns 30 or 40 years of age then we assume that the person is ripe for marriage. However, according to him, the Bible never said "that and therefore shall an aged person, but the bible said that a man." He is of the view that, man in the context of this scripture stands for maturity. And to be able to become a man, one have to go through the process of maturity. He argued that, "there is a difference between a child (a son) who is just born without being parceled, without being nurtured, without being grown. One have to grow from being a child into becoming a son whereby you go through all the processes and then you qualify to be packaged, you qualify to be presented as a parcel."⁹³

⁹¹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹² Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹³ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

In his view, in recent times, “too many boys and too many girls are getting into marriage and when boys and girls get into marriage, we should expect divorce.”⁹⁴ In his view, boys in this context “is not by reason of age but by reason of maturity.” He asserts the fact that there could be a 22 years old boy in terms of age who could be matured more than a 50 year old man. So according to him “the fact that a congregation is full of young men in terms of age does not mean the congregation is full of amateurs.”⁹⁵

To him, there is the need to allow ourselves to be nurtured by the Holy Spirit as Christians in order for us to grow in the Lord. He argued that as charismatic Christians;

The Holy Ghost energizes them. The Holy Ghost inspires them but one needs to nurture the Holy Ghost, and grow the Holy Ghost. And so the fact that the Holy Ghost descended on someone does not automatically mean that by virtue of the presence of the Holy Ghost that person can have a successful marriage. It takes a man to groom the Holy Ghost so that he or she can go through the process of maturity.⁹⁶

This view was also shared by Archbishop Addai who also indicated in the interview that one factor that is contributing to divorce and re-marriage in the charismatic churches is the fact that too many of the young ones are getting married with inexperience and that is creating a lot of problems in marriages.⁹⁷ According to him, there is the need for the youth to go through a well-planned and counseling process in order for them to be successful in their marriages.⁹⁸

Kusi Boateng was of the opinion that what is causing the failure of Pentecostal and Charismatics is not about the Spirit they “carry” but is the containers and the structures

⁹⁴ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹⁵ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹⁶ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹⁷ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

⁹⁸ Interview with Archbishop R. S. Addae, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

that contains the Spirit which he thinks is failing.⁹⁹ It's all about excitement and inspiration but there is not much of an impact because the problem is not with the inspiration and the excitement but the problem is with the tenacity, the containers, the formation, the maturity, the process of maturity that we should go through but the Spirit is not the problem. So I think that the Charismatic churches and Pentecostal churches should come to that place of taking their people through the process, building them with pattern, building them with a mentality of structures; and I believe once the church's get to that stage, there wouldn't be much problem.¹⁰⁰

Again, Archbishop Addai and Kusi Boateng expressed a similar opinion that prospective couples who wishes to enter into marriage should consider God as their ultimate source upon which they will build their marriages and draw their motivation from. According to them, if the marriage does not begin with God, then it is bound to fail. They argued that anything that does not begin with God means that such a thing already failed before it started. And so for prospective couples especially the young ones to have a successful marriages, God should be their ultimate. The drive should be God, the focus should be God, the inspiration and everything should be God. They believe that once God becomes the driving force there is no way a man can fail. Rev. Osei Kofi of the Shiloh United Church further intimated that “but unfortunately money becomes the motivation, beauty becomes the motivation, a kind of a class he or she belongs to become the motivation, education becomes the motivation. But God should be the foundation. The Bible says that

⁹⁹ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

if the foundation is destroyed what can the righteous do. If the foundation becomes God, it will become very difficult for divorce to occur.”¹⁰¹

Furthermore, Kusi Boateng also mentioned that individuals who wish to marry should learn to study each other well before entering into marriage. According to him, Solomon said something peculiar that one need to take into consideration. Solomon said ‘my friend my lover’. This to him, means that “this whole thing of getting into marriage because I had a revelation should be scrapped.”¹⁰² Explaining his point within the context of what Solomon said, Kusi Boateng argued that before one can become one’s lover, there need to be a friendship. According to him, Solomon said “let’s be friends first before we sleep, before we court. But unfortunately, a lot of boys and girls the moment they see themselves, they start sleeping together (having sex). That is where they fail. It means they failed before they started.”¹⁰³ According to him, they didn’t measure themselves in terms of friendship before getting into the covenant which explains Solomon’s assertion that “my friend my lover.”¹⁰⁴ So one need to strike that friendship alliance and see to it that “it is a relationship worth keeping, or a relationship that can thrive, it is a relationship that can stand the test of time.” So after one has been able to develop such a friendship and realized that it can stand a test of time, then they can take such a friendship to another level of becoming a lovers and consequently, marriage couples. Being a lover means you are in covenant because Paul said that “he that is joined to a harlot is one body with the harlot. So the moment you sleep together, you are no more friends, you are lovers.”¹⁰⁵ So anyone who skips the boundary of friendship, is likely to fail in his or her marriage.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Rev. Osei Kofi, Senior Pastor of Shiloh United Church, on 19th March, 2016, Kumasi.

¹⁰² Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

¹⁰³ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

According to him, the church needs to “rather start teaching the congregation and the young people how to strike friendship, manage friendship, walk in friendship and then when they think that they have gone pass the era of friendship then they can think of marriage. A relationship that has gone through the test of friendship can never fail in relationship and in covenant.”¹⁰⁶

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the views of the head pastors of the two selected churches for this study. The chapter has basically presented the views of the pastors based on the questions that were posed to them during the interviews. These questions asked were based on the issues that confronted the researcher in this study. These responses of the pastors will serve as a point of departure in analyzing the issues that confront the researcher in this study in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Kusi Boateng, on 20th April, 2016, Kumasi.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EXAMINATION OF THE VIEWS ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN THE CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

4.1 Introduction

It has been argued that the Bible views marriage as a sacred and permanent covenant, witnessed and guaranteed by God Himself. This chapter examines the views of the pastors on divorce and remarriage in the charismatic churches. The chapter attempt to analyze the views of the pastors in the light of the scripture. In examining their views, the researcher also discuss draws implications from some of the views expressed and how best the church can handled such views.

4.2 Divorce and Remarriage in the Charismatic Churches: An Analysis of the View Points

Divorce as pointed out in the previous chapter by the two pastors interviewed, is something that the church does not take a delight in. For instance, as indicated in the previous chapter during the interview Archbishop R.S Addae argued that for him, he will never counsel any couple who are having issues in their marriage to opt for divorce because it is against God's word and plan concerning the institution of marriage. Expressing a different but similar opinion, Rev. Kusi Boateng also argued that though the bible gives a justification for divorce and for that matter he cannot stop any couple who are seeking for divorce in marriage because of unsurmountable problems, he will also not, counsel any couple openly to opt for divorce. In looking at the views of the two pastors interviewed, the researcher can argue that their views on not to counsel a couple

who are having issues in their marriage to opt for divorce is certainly influenced by their leadership role as pastors. As pastors, they are expected to offer counsel and build up broken relationships and good family in the church other than to create chaos and discomfort among family. It is believed that the unity of the family can sustain and build relationship in the church.

However, in looking at the focus of this study, the researcher would like to examine from a biblical point of view whether or not divorce can be allowed in the church. As argued by Benyah, the question of divorce has generated a lot of debate over the ages among theologians right from the Bible times to our day.¹⁰⁷ In the Old Testament, the Lord declared through the Prophet Malachi that He hates divorce. According to David Kirkwood, Two fundamental questions are the basis of this debate: one is, when, if ever, divorce is permissible in God's eyes? And two, When, if ever is remarriage permissible in God's eyes.¹⁰⁸ But as the focus of this study demands, much attention is paid to whether or not divorce should be allowed.

Divorce comes from the Greek verb ἀπολυω (apolu), meaning “to loose from, let go free, as used by the Lord Jesus Christ in Mathew 5:32, Mathew 19:3,7-9; Mark 10:2,4,11 and Luke 16:18. Also the Greek noun ἀποστασιον (apostasion) is translated divorce in the New Testament in Mathew 5:31 (a writing or bill of divorcement), Mark 10:4. The word means primarily “a defection”, literally a “standing off”.¹⁰⁹ Divorce means the dissolution of the marital covenant, a kitting of it.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 124.

¹⁰⁸ David S. Kirkwood, *The Disciple Making Minister: Biblical Principles for Fruitfulness and Multiplication*, (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Ethnos press, 2005), 191.

¹⁰⁹ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 179.

¹¹⁰Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 124.

Generally, one would argue that divorce was never part of God's plan at the time He instituted marriage and that divorce is a result of the fall of humanity. God instituted marriage for humankind in the beginning of creation as an exclusive relationship, the total unity of persons – physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.¹¹¹ Thus, marriage relegates other human ties to a secondary role. Spiritual and emotional satisfaction formerly drawn from the parental relationship, the marriage partners are now to find in one another. When we talk about divorce, we are talking about the severing of such a strong tie.¹¹²

In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 24:1–4 regulates divorce in ancient Israel.

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

In Jesus' day, rabbinic schools lined up behind two major interpretations of this passage. The conservative school of Shammai allowed for divorce in cases of immodest behavior or sexual immorality. The more moderate school of Hillel allowed divorce in any instance where a wife had done something displeasing to her husband. It appears that this more permissive interpretation held sway among most of Jesus' contemporaries (see Matthew 19:3).¹¹³

Each wanted to justify his position by referring to this man who to them, was claiming to be an authority, or seen to be so. In the immediate context, Jesus referred them to the Old

¹¹¹Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 124.

¹¹²Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 124.

¹¹³Guy Duty, *Divorce and Remarriage: A Christian View*, (Minneapolis, Bethany House, 1983), 63.

Testament lawgiver, Moses. They answered, quoting from Deuteronomy chapter 24. The question they asked according to Mark, was “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” or to put away his wife”.¹¹⁴

It is significant that Christ answered the Pharisees’ question as to whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife by affirming the permanence of the God-ordained marriage union. Such an answer, however, provoked another question on the part of the Pharisees: “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” (Matt 19:7). According to Benyah, “by this question the Pharisees apparently intended to challenge the position Christ had just enunciated by assuming that Moses did command divorce.”¹¹⁵ According to him “the argument of the Pharisees could be paraphrased as follows: if according to its original institution, marriage is a permanent union that cannot be dissolved by human authority, why then did Moses command divorce? Is not Your teaching contradicted by Moses’ commandment?”¹¹⁶ In the view of Benyah, Jesus’s answer is of fundamental importance because it clarifies the whole question of the Old Testament Mosaic provision. “He said to them, ‘Because your hearts were hard Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so’ (Mark 10:5-6; cf. Matt 19:8).

Benyah identifies two important features of Jesus’ responses which needs to be mention here. First, the phrase “for the hardness of your hearts” implies that the Mosaic permission was occasioned by the insubordination and stubbornness of the Israelites. The latter did not invalidate the original institution of marriage as a permanent union. The bill

¹¹⁴Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 125.

¹¹⁵Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 124.

¹¹⁶Benyah, “Because Your Hearts were Hard”, 125.

of divorce was intended to regulate a perverse situation and not to abrogate the divine institution of marriage.¹¹⁷

A second significant element of Jesus' reply is the distinction between the verb He used to describe Moses' provision and the verb used by the Pharisees. Jesus said that Moses "allowed" divorce while the Pharisees said that Moses "commanded" divorce.¹¹⁸ The verb Jesus used implies sufferance or tolerance of divorce but not a sanction of its practice. In the Mosaic economy, divorce was permitted because of the hardheartedness of the Israelites, but from the beginning there was no such permission.¹¹⁹ In a broader perspective to this analogy, Mathew's account includes what has now become known as the "Exception clause", putting the question thus "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason" (Mathew 19:3).

Again, a closer look at Deuteronomy 24:1-4 from where the Pharisees answered Jesus shows that divorce was not mandatory in the indecency referred to in verse 1. Verses 1 to 3 forms the protasis and verse 4 the apodosis.¹²⁰ The passage also does not approve of divorce in the circumstances mentioned in verse 1. It simply provides that, if a man puts away his wife and she marries another, the former husband cannot under any conditions take her again to be his wife. That the basis for this Mosaic concession was not adultery or fornication is clearly seen in the provision of the penalty of death for such an act in Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-27.

¹¹⁷ William A. Heth and Gordon J. Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce* (London, 1984), 106-110.

¹¹⁸ Heth and Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce*, 106-110.

¹¹⁹ Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 125.

¹²⁰ *Wycliffe's Dictionary of Theology*, 379.

On his commentary in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* to Mark 10: 5-6, Walter Wessel argued that Jesus did not question the law. He continues to say that, Moses' permission to divorce was an accommodation to human weakness and that it was an attempt to bring some sort of order in a society that disregard God's standards.¹²¹ But however, he argues that that is not what God intended in marriage. His design in creating man and woman was that marriage should be an unbroken lifelong union.¹²² According to Wessel, Cranfield has pointed out that a distinction must be made between what is the absolute will of God and what the provisions are that take into account the sinfulness of man are intended to limit and control its effects. Moses' bill of divorcement falls into the second category. The rabbis mistook God's gracious provision in allowing divorce as his approval of it.¹²³

Paul, likewise, extolled the virtues of marriage (see especially Ephesians 5:21–33), calling on husbands to love their wives and on wives to submit to their husbands and to treat them with respect. The only legitimate divorce allowed by Paul is what has been called the “Pauline privilege.” This refers to cases where in an unbelieving couple one of the spouses comes to faith in Christ and the other partner refuses to continue the marriage. Addressing this kind of situation, Paul stipulates, “But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace” (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Thus there are only two (or possibly three) biblically sanctioned instances of divorce: (1) sexual marital unfaithfulness (that is adultery); and (2) the unbelieving spouse's refusal to

¹²¹ Walter W. Wessel, “Mark” in Frank E. Gabelein (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 1984), 711.

¹²² Wessel, “Mark”, 711.

¹²³ Wessel, “Mark”, 711.

continue the marriage after the conversion of the other partner. In addition, marital separation (though not necessarily divorce) may be needed in cases of persistent physical spousal abuse.

4.2.1 Cases where Divorce can be Allowed

In this study, one of the things the researcher is grappling with, is whether or not divorce can be allowed and if yes, in what context or situation. Clearly, even though the bible makes it clear that divorce was never part of God's plan for marriage, the nature of human character as a result of the fall of man sometimes necessitate certain actions that needs to be re-considered by the church when such matters arises. During the interview, the pastors indicated that divorce is not an ideal plan of God concerning marriage. However, they indicated that in certain circumstances a couple can consider a divorce when his or life is threatened.

For instance, Archbishop Addae indicated during the interview that a pastor beat the wife to the extent that one of her eyes got swollen. Not only that, the researcher's own experience as a member of the counselling team of her church has come across many instances whereby some men assault their wives. In Ghana, both unreported and reported cases in the media suggest that, day in and day out spouses are assaulted in marriages. Some of these assault ranges from beating, physically inflicting pains and wounds with knife and sometimes pouring of substance such as acid. These and other treatment meted out to spouses mostly the wives sometimes lead to the victims sustaining various degrees of injuries and in some situations death. These and many other things from the

researcher's own opinion fit very well into what the bible refers to as the "hardness of man's heart" which allowed Moses to grant divorce in ancient Israel.

In the earlier discussion on divorce, it was mentioned that God allowed Moses to grant divorce because of the hardness of man's heart. Our Lord Jesus Christ in His answer to the questions of the Pharisees re-echoed the Mosaic concession of divorce on the basis of the hardness of man's (man is not use in a generic sense, it may refer to both sexes) heart. The argument the researcher want to make here is that, even though Jesus was speaking before the dispensation of grace, the hardness of man's hard had continue till today and the manifestation of the hardness of man's heart include but not limited to the beatings and/or physical assault meted to partners in marriage.

From the researcher's own opinion hardness of man's heart is what really captures the underlying reason some ought for divorce. This is because, as Benyah argues there are certain time two people (spouse) can come to a position where either of them does not want to badge into each other's life. When they build such strong tension between them, it makes it impossible for the principles of marriage (male-female to cleave to become one flesh) to work.¹²⁴

On the basis of this, the researcher argues that in situations where life is threatened in marriage due to physical assault and the other partner wants to quit the marriage to avert any future death consequences the church needs to consider such situations and grant the individual a divorce when evidence is proven beyond doubt that such atrocities are meted out to the individual. Both the church and the pastors need to recognize the fact that the bible of also value the dignity of the human life because we are created in the image and likeness of God.

¹²⁴Benyah, "Because Your Hearts were Hard", 126.

4.3 Cultural views and beliefs as a contributing factor to divorce cases among Christians in Ghana

During the interview, the researcher sought from the respondents whether or not childlessness is contributing to divorce rate in Ghana. In response, Rev. Kusi Boateng indicated that this situation used to happen earlier, but now, as a result of improvement in modern technologies, people can have various methods of getting their own babies if the natural means of getting babies fails. On the other hand, Archbishop Addae argued that childlessness as a cultural issue is somehow contributing to divorce cases in the church and in Ghana even though it is not overtly seen because issues are usually used to overshadow it.

There is no doubt that the Bible emphasizes on the importance of having children. It is a fact that childbearing include the package of blessings God has for married couples. Some biblical text clearly indicates the importance of having children. For example Deut 7: 14 says that “None of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young” (see also Exo 23:26). The Scriptures also describes children as the crown of old age (Prov 17:6). Sons in particular are described as being “like olive shoots round your table” (Ps 128:3) – an image that implies that they are the new growth that brings promise of future crops and plenty in days ahead. Children are also described as being “like arrows in the hands of a warrior...blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them” (Ps 127:3-5). These children will defend and provide for their parents in their old age.¹²⁵

On the basis of the above scriptures and others, Africans mostly insist that “Procreation is the purpose of cohabitation and the primary object of marriage. Of him who fear the Lord it is said: “Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine...” (Ps 128:3). Only as mother of the

¹²⁵ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 196.

sons whom she has presented to the family does a woman enjoy a certain consideration in society. It is this which makes her “fruitful” or not”.¹²⁶ According to Kunhiyop, African Christians, however, argue that the command to be “fruitful and increase in number” (Gen. 1:28) applies to all marriages.

But my question is, is this particular text of the bible applicable to the context of the marriage ordinance established by God in the book of Genesis 2:24? Generally, this biblical text (Gen. 2:24) has become the basis upon which Christians believe as the first time God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden, and hence the text has become the biblical basis of the marriage ordinance among Christians today. As indicated earlier, many bible scholars see Genesis 2:24 as the basis for the meaning the Bible gives for marriage and that the definition of marriage is embodied in this text, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh”.¹²⁷ It is believed this is the first time in scripture that marriage was established by God. The Lord Jesus Christ himself quoted this when He was asked about permissible grounds for divorce. (Matthew 19:4-5). In the researchers own view, this first description of the nature of marriage in the Bible, as consisting of leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh, reveals the Biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant relationship and does not include children. Children in my own view were not the ultimate reason why God instituted marriage but are part of the blessings God gave to marriage. This is, however, not to say that children are not important. The argument is that they are only a gift and a blessing to marriage and failure to give birth as a couple should not be a basis for divorce or the practice of polygamy as we find among some Christians today in the church. The

¹²⁶ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 196.

¹²⁷ Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, John Rea (eds), *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (Peabody :Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 258.

researcher is of the view that the text as we find in Genesis 1:28 was a general reference to mankind after creation and not strictly part of the marriage ordinance instituted by God.

However, in a critical examination, there seem to be some indigenous views and practices that is also influencing the divorce rate in Ghana. Notably, the traditional understanding of marriage among Africans has taken central grip on the views of Christians and is drastically shaping their thought about what is concluded as a complete marriage. This world view is built on African traditional conception that sees marriage as incomplete without children. One's inability to bring forth a child leaves a void in the marriage union. In Africa, "the chief purpose of marriage is to provide opportunity for the unborn members of the family to spring forth. The person who fails, for various reasons, to have children, is one of the most miserable members of society, since he will be despised and regarded as the cul-de-sac of his family."¹²⁸ Touching on the effect of one's inability to give birth in a more detail manner, Mbiti states that;

It is a religious obligation by means of which the individual contributes the seeds of life towards man's struggle against the loss of original immortality. Biologically both husband and wife are reproduced in their children, thus perpetuating the chain of humanity.....A person who, therefore, has no descendants in effect quenches the fire of life, and becomes forever dead since his line of physical continuation is blocked if he does not get married and bear children. This is a sacred understanding and obligation which must neither be abused nor despised.¹²⁹

To press down Mbiti's argument further, it presupposes that one cannot even qualify to become an ancestor in an African society if he or she refuses to give birth. In traditional

¹²⁸ John Mbiti, "African Concepts of Human Relations", *Ministry* 9 (1969), 160.

¹²⁹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1980), 133.

Africa societies, one of the qualities for one to be qualified as ancestor is for the person to have left behind children.

The concept of the ancestor differs from one society to another, but among the Akans of Ghana, one of the qualities is that “a person must be an adult. Apart from strictly exceptional cases, one who dies as a baby or an infant and who has not yet married and preferably had children is not remembered as an ancestor”.¹³⁰ Africans places much premium on the value of child birth far more than other aspects of marriage such as love, companionship and sexual pleasure. Infertility is seen as a negation of life, the destruction of the individual and the community.¹³¹

Traditionally in Ghana, not being able to give birth after some years of marriage is seen as an abomination in many societies. People are sometimes insulted with it and called all manner of names. Traditionally, giving birth is seen as an obligation in marriage and not a blessing or gift to marriage as the Christian faith teaches. This traditional mind-set has had a dominant grip on people whether they are Christians or not. Gaskiyane rightly observes that, childless couples are usually harassed by relations or the community to produce children. Women are normally at the mercy of friends and relatives who are anxious about their offspring.¹³²

The researcher is of the opinion that this traditional view is also, to some extent, affecting a lot of Christian marriages today in Ghana. Rather than to endure the ridicule that sometimes come with infertility, some men engage themselves in extra-marital

¹³⁰ Peter K. Sarpong, *Peoples Differ: An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelization* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002), 98.

¹³¹ Samuel W. Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers, 2008), 195.

¹³² I. Gaskiyane, *Polygamy-a Cultural and Biblical Perspective* (London: Piquant Press, 2000), 2- 9.

relationships as a result of pressure from family members and friends which sometimes end up jeopardizing their marriages.

Again, the view raised by Rev. Kusi Boateng about the fact that couples who are having problems in giving birth can consider the other alternative of assisted reproductive technologies is somewhat problematic on two reasons. One, the adoption of assisted reproductive technologies can be very expensive and not every individual in the church can afford it. Again, some pastors in the charismatic churches are also against such means of delivery and always prevent their members from adopting such practices. This is because, according to them, the adoption of assisted reproductive technologies is a deviation from the scripture concerning the promises made by God to his children. To them, one need to trust and pray to God for the fruit of the womb rather to adopt such means of delivery which limit the power of God and his miracles in the life of the believer.

4.4 Re-Marriage in the Church

During the interview, the researcher sought to find out from the respondent how they deal with the issue of marriage in their churches. The views expressed by the pastors as indicated in chapter 3 shows that they will allow re-marriage in their churches when the need arises. The researcher is of the opinion that re-marriage in the churches shouldn't be a stumbling block to prevent individuals who have suffered divorce and would like to re-marry. However, measures should be put in place by the churches to ensure that it does not become a practice or an avenue to encourage divorce among members knowing very well after they are divorced; an opportunity awaits them to remarry again. Any incidence

of re-marriage in the church needs to be considered and examined well in order not to create an avenue where individuals will use it as an advantage.

There is the need to understand that marriage is a covenant union and cannot just be broken at a will and be reconstituted per human desires and tastes. Today, marriage and the family are regularly viewed as social conventions that can be entered into and severed by the marital partners at will. As long as a given marriage relationship meets the needs of both individuals involved and is considered advantageous by both sides, the marriage is worth sustaining. If one or both partners decide that they will be better off by breaking up the marriage and entering into a new, better marital union, nothing can legitimately keep them from pursuing their self-interest, self-realization, and self-fulfillment.

By contrast, the Bible makes it clear that, at the root, marriage and the family are not human conventions based merely on a temporary consensus and time-honored tradition. Instead, Scripture teaches that family was God's idea and that marriage is a divine, not merely human, institution. The implication of this truth is significant indeed, for this means that humans are not free to renegotiate or redefine marriage and the family in any way they choose but that they are called to preserve and respect what has been divinely instituted. This is in keeping with Jesus' words, uttered when his contemporaries asked him about the permissibility of divorce: "What therefore God has joined together let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6). For this reason, marriage is far more than a human social contract; it is a divinely instituted covenant.

In essence, a covenant is a contract between two parties that is established before God as a witness, a contract whose permanence is ultimately safeguarded by none other than God himself. In this sense, marriage is a covenant: it is entered into by the husband and the

wife before God as a witness. Because it is ultimately God who has joined the marriage partners together, the husband and the wife vow to each other abiding loyalty and fidelity “till death do us part.” Rightly understood, therefore, a marriage entered into before God involves three persons: a husband, a wife, and God. For this reason, it is not self-interest, human advantage, or an unfettered commitment to personal freedom that governs the marriage relationship, but the husband and wife’s joint commitment to conduct their marriage based on God’s design and sovereign plan.

4.5 Factors to consider to ensure successful marriage

Following the views expressed by the men of God interviewed, the following factors seems to emerge as concrete ways that some of the problems encountered in marriages could be minimized.

4.5.1 The Role of Counselling in Dealing with Divorce and Remarriage

Marriage can never be problem free. However, in order to ensure that marital relationships are peaceful and sustainable, prospective couples should be taken through sessions of both premarital and post- marital counselling. This is because premarital and post-marital counselling provides both prospective and married couples with the requisite skills on how to enhance marital relationships, prevent problems and as well address challenges that might threaten their marital relationships. They must be introduced to the traditional concept of marriage and its expectations and how they can deal with some of the challenges if they arise even though this might not be easy.

A review of the problems confronting marriages today suggest that there is the need for Christian counselors, pastors etc. to find ways to deal with the unprecedented pain and frustrations experienced by people in their marriages especially due to the modern-day complexities of life.

It is important to note that most of the materials used by counselors to counsel prospective couples are mostly foreign-based and may lack some of the specific peculiarities confronting the Ghanaian Christian. Thus, in designing a premarital program, issues associated with our traditional worldview of marriage have to be taken into consideration.

4.5.2 Christ

In reality, I should not mention Christ among the list of platforms that constitute the foundation of anything. The reason is simple! Jesus Christ Himself is the foundation of our faith (1 Corinthians 3:11), and we can do nothing successfully without him; including marriage. However, I am doing so for the mere reason that we should not take our Christian commitment for granted. Having considered the meaning of marriage, it is evident that a Christian marriage is a commitment to the will and the call of God. What will keep you committed to your spouse during the bad times as well as the good times, and through troubles and disagreements, is the fact that you are submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Christ Himself, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can empower you to continue in your commitment to your spouse regardless of the circumstances. Without him, we will only be able to rely on our own energy to remain committed, which is very much

influenced by the circumstances around us. It is important therefore to begin the marriage with him. Be careful not to ever respond to a proposal unless you are sure of the person's standing with Christ.

4.5.3 Comprehension

A couple must understand what marriage is and what it involves. They should know that is a life-long union involving a lot of effort. There is nothing like testing phase, where people live for a while with the understanding that if things work out they continue, but if things don't work out they go their separate ways.

A couple should also understand that a marriage should not be based on superficial things such as looks, sex, and the desire for children. Marriage is a union entered into because the two are committed to each other for the rest of their lives regardless of circumstances. Marriage is entered into because the two are devoted to each other and desire to fulfil the call of God for their lives.

4.5.4 Love/Commitment

During the interview, the men of God disclosed that many people especially the young adults of today go into marriages as result of the material things they will get but not on the basis of love and commitment. Lack of such value among couples is to be seen in the number of divorce cases today. Marriage is a relationship of free self-giving of one human being to another (Ephesians 5:25–30). The marriage partners are to be first and foremost concerned about the wellbeing of the other person and to be committed to each

other in steadfast love and devotion. This involves the need for forgiveness and restoration of the relationship in the case of sin.

At its core, love is a decision to be committed to another person. It is far more than a fleeting emotion as portrayed on television, the big screen, and romance novels. Feelings come and go, but a true decision to be committed lasts forever – and that is what defines true love. It is a decision to be committed through the ups and the downs, the good and the bad. When things are going well, commitment is easy. But true love is displayed by remaining committed even through the trials of life.

4.5.5 Humility

We all have weaknesses and relationships always reveal these faults quicker than anything else on earth. An essential building block of a healthy marriage is the ability to admit that you are not perfect, that you will make mistakes, and that you will need forgiveness. Holding an attitude of superiority over your partner will bring about resentment and will prevent your relationship from moving forward.

4.5.6 Patience/Forgiveness

Because no one is perfect, patience and forgiveness will always be required in a marriage relationship. Successful marriage partners learn to show unending patience and forgiveness to their partner. They humbly admit their own faults and do not expect perfection from their partner. They do not bring up past errors in an effort to hold their partner hostage. And they do not seek to make amends or get revenge when mistakes

occur. If you are holding onto a past hurt from your partner, forgive him or her. It will set your heart and relationship free.

4.5.7 Honesty and Trust

Honesty and trust become the foundation for everything healthy in a marriage. But unlike most of the other essentials on this list, trust takes time. You can become selfless, committed, or patient in a moment, but trust always takes time. Trust is only built after weeks, months, and years of being who you say you are and doing what you say you'll do. It takes time, so start now... and if you need to rebuild trust in your relationship, you'll need to work even harder.

4.5.8 Communication

Successful marriage partners communicate as much as possible. They certainly discuss kids' schedules, grocery lists, and utility bills. But they don't stop there. They also communicate hopes, dreams, fears, and anxieties. They don't just discuss the changes that are taking place in the kid's life, they also discuss the changes that are taking place in their own hearts and souls. This essential key cannot be overlooked because honest, forthright communication becomes the foundation for so many other things on this list: commitment, patience, and trust... just to name a few.

4.5.9 Selflessness

Although it will never show up on any survey, more marriages are broken up by selfishness than any other reason. Surveys blame it on finances, lack of commitment,

infidelity, or incompatibility, but the root cause for most of these reasons is selfishness. A selfish person is committed only to himself or herself, shows little patience, and never learns how to be a successful spouse. Give your hopes, dreams, and life to your partner. And begin to live life together.

4.6 Conclusion

In all, this chapter has look at some of the ways in which the issue of divorce and remarriage can be handled in the church. In examining the views of the pastors alongside the bible, the researcher has argued in this chapter that the church in some instances can consider divorce for a spouse whose live becomes threatened in marriage as a result of physical abuse. This, however, does not mean that the researcher supports the idea of divorce. However, the need to protect the life of individuals as a church is very important because the bible also affirms the dignity of the human life. It will somewhat be an indictment and ungodly for the church to sit down aloof for someone to lose his or her life because the church doesn't support the idea of divorce. Again, the chapter has also hinted that the church needs to examine the issue of remarriage in the church in order not create an environment whereby individuals will take an advantage and jeopardize their marriages.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study has basically looked at divorce and remarriage in the charismatic churches. It examined the views of Archbishop Addai and Rev. Kusi Boateng of the Shiloh United Church and Power Chapel respectively on the subject that has become more or less a canker in both the church and society today. The study was conducted by employing a phenomenological method approach as research methodology. It also used both the primary and secondary sources as a method of data collection for the study. The first part of this study looked at the background issues which included research question, aims and objectives, methodology and related literature of the subject under study.

The study presented a brief historical background of the two selected churches and their leaders in the Kumasi metropolis. Thus, the Shiloh United Church and the Power Chapel Worldwide. It presented the views of the pastors on the major issues that confronted the researcher in this study. The work discussed the concept of Christian marriage from a biblical perspective and dwelt more on the basic component that describe the nature of marriage as found in the book of Genesis 2:24. The study also discussed and analyzed whether or not divorce can be allowed in the church. This study has also presented a constructive analysis on the issue of divorce from a biblical perspective and provided suggestions and avenues through which it can be handled within the church. The study again highlighted how the church can also consider the decisions of remarriage in the church. In all, this study present to the church an overview of how divorce and

remarriage can be handled in the church to help better transform the lives of members through guidance and counselling on divorce and remarriage.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has examined the views of some pastors of the charismatic churches in the Kumasi metropolis on divorce and remarriage. The study examined their views in the light of the scripture and suggested situations in which the issue of divorce can be considered by the church. Most importantly, the study emphasized the idea that marriage, according to God, is supposed to be a monogamous pair thus, between a man and a woman. Again, the study emphasized that marriage was divinely instituted by God and humankind cannot always dissolve it at will. The permanence of marriage is clearly depicted in scripture and mankind must strive to keep the institution with honesty and the holiness it deserve.

In this study, it has been found out that divorce and remarriage in the charismatic churches seems to be increasing as a result of the fact that many of the young ones who are getting married in the church are without any experience hence, they are not properly able to handle issues that confront them in their marriages when they arise. This situation come about due to the churches inability to constitute a post-marital counselling team that seeks to maintain and counsel couples on issues they face in their marriages. The study also found out that African worldview of marriage has to some extent, influenced many Christians view of marriage as childbearing machinery, rather than as a permanent covenant, witnessed and guaranteed by God Himself. This is also accounting for a number of divorces in Ghana especially in cases where childlessness becomes an issue.

There is the need for Christians to know that children are essential to a marriage but a childless marriage can still be full of love, companionship and sexual fulfilment.

This study has also emphasized that although the bible is against divorce and the church should not entertain such acts, there are however circumstances in which the church can consider divorce. This study has highlighted that in situations where a spouse is tortured and/ or brutalized to the point of death, the church can consider for a divorce if one of the party choose to leave the marriage as a result of such behaviour emanating from one of the spouse. This is because human life must be protected against all odds.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion and findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations;

- The church must give an adequate time and concern to the issues of marriage as it does for all other activities in order to teach members to understand God's plan concerning the institution of marriage and what He (God) expects from every individual who enters into marriage.
- The church needs to spend time and teach the young adults in the church about what marriage is all about. This will prevent them from having some unrealistic motives about marriages. A proper understanding of marriage by the youth in the church will prevent and reduce the divorces cases. The purpose of the church is to tell people about God's purpose for the world and for individual lives and to introduce Jesus as the one who can give true meaning to life and marriage. In addition, Christian mission is meant to teach people not to separate

the practice of their faith from other aspects of their lives, in other words, to encourage Christians to make their faith and believe inform their practice. There is the need to discard all traditional views on marriage that are vain beliefs and opposed to God's ideal plan of marriage.

- The church needs to properly examine all divorces within their own merits and offer possible solutions to the problems as it may deem fit.
- The charismatic churches needs to establish a strong post-marital counselling teams. These post-marital counselling teams should constitute individuals with expertise in marriage counselling and should also include those who have spent some years in marriage to offer counselling and advice to couples who face issues in their marriages.

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