

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry  
Emphasis in Marriage and Family

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: A STRATEGY TO MINIMIZE MARITAL INFIDELITY AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS IN THE GWERU URBAN TERRITORY, ZIMBABWE**

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Date Completed: February 2017

The talk about marital infidelity among members of God's church, the unhappiness that infidelity causes in the families and the damage that infidelity causes to the reputation and credibility of the church calls for a study of unfaithfulness in marriage as a way of trying to minimize its occurrence in the church. The study was meant to establish the prevalence, causes and impact of marital infidelity in the church and to design and implement a program that would work to minimize infidelity among members of the church.

The method that was used in carrying out the research was the mixed method approach that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative aspect of the research utilized focus group discussions and the quantitative aspect used questionnaires as the means to collect data.

Three churches were selected for the research. The churches belonged to the same church district with the same pastor. Focus groups were established in each of the three churches and each group had nine members. A total of 75 questionnaires were distributed in the three churches with each church getting 25 sets.

The two instruments used showed that infidelity was indeed taking place among church members. A program was designed and implemented to minimize infidelity among members of the church. After the implementation of the program, focus group discussions were held and a questionnaire was distributed in the three selected churches to determine whether the program had helped in curbing infidelity. Indications from the instruments were that some positive outcomes were realized.

The conclusions made from the study were that infidelity was taking place in the churches. It was also established that the designed and implemented program was able to help some members to change their attitude towards infidelity and to re-commit themselves to marital fidelity. It is to be realized that working to minimize infidelity should be ongoing rather than it to be an event in the church.

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A STRATEGY TO MINIMIZE MARITAL INFIDELITY  
AMONG SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH  
MEMBERS IN THE GWERU URBAN  
TERRITORY, ZIMBABWE

A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Jotham Manyakara

February 2017

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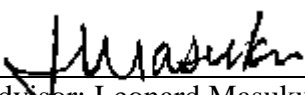
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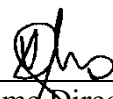
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Dedicated to all the pastors, churches and entities  
under the Central Zimbabwe Conference.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>CZC</b>	Central Zimbabwe Conference
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
<b>SDA</b>	Seventh-day Adventist
<b>SID</b>	Southern African Indian Ocean Division
<b>ED</b>	Erectile Dysfunction
<b>ZUC</b>	Zimbabwe Union Conference

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Description of the Ministry Context**

Central Zimbabwe Conference, hereinafter referred to as CZC, whose offices are in the city of Gweru, is one of the six Conferences that are under the Zimbabwe Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Zimbabwe Union Conference is one of the Unions that fall under the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division (SID) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Zimbabwe Union Conference covers the whole country of Zimbabwe.

CZC was organized in December 2014. At its inception, the Conference had a membership of 128,235. From the beginning of 2015 to June 2016, 12,137 new church members were added to the church through baptisms. The conference has 28 districts and the average membership that each pastor is responsible for is 5,098. Each pastor has an average of 15 churches under his jurisdiction. CZC has three boarding high schools, seventeen day primary and secondary Schools and two clinics.

#### **The Country of Zimbabwe**

It is important to appreciate the environment in which the church is located. As mentioned earlier, Central Zimbabwe Conference is in the country of Zimbabwe. The country is landlocked and has a population of fourteen and half million (2013) people. It is a country that has numerous religions and religious freedom is one of the

basic human rights enshrined in the country's constitution.<sup>1</sup> People of different religious persuasions co-exist without any problem. Every individual enjoys the freedom to worship whatever he/she may want to worship according to the dictates of his/her heart. The religions include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and African traditional religions. Among the Christian denominations are the independent churches that are home grown and are doing well, judging from the number of people they attract. The other religions may be small in terms of their membership but their presence is unmistakable.

### **Socioeconomic Climate**

The main drivers of the economy are agriculture and mining. Before and after the historical land reform program, agriculture continues to occupy a prominent position in the economy. Farmers occupy communal farming areas as well as the major commercial farms. The other economic activity is mining. Many people are concentrated in mining towns where they are either working or are looking for employment. The economy is not performing well, now, with many people out of employment; moving from place to place in search of work.

This migration of people from place to place appears to be affecting families in a negative manner. As they move away from their homes, they normally leave their families behind. This may be an impediment to family cohesion and may be responsible for a myriad of family woes. The proliferation of immorality, divorce cases and HIV/AIDS are likely to be a result of these movements and other economic challenges. The settlements in the farming and mining areas expose many people to

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution of Zimbabwe, "Freedom of Conscience," section 60, accessed 21 May 2015, [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Zimbabwe\\_2013.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Zimbabwe_2013.pdf)Government of Zimbabwe.

risky behaviors. These risky behaviors include and are not limited to infidelity, unprotected sex, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and criminal activities.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is very high in the country. This directly militates against the institution of marriage and family. In 2013, Zimbabwe had the fifth highest prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the sub-Saharan Africa, with a total of 1.4 million people living with the virus, 64,000 deaths, 69,000 new infections and 51% of adults on antiretroviral drugs.<sup>2</sup> It stands to reason, then, that infidelity can be a real challenge, even in the church. The greater numbers of those that get infected get it through sex.<sup>3</sup> It is known, though, that there are other ways through which people can get infected. Innocent spouses may get infected when they have sex with their spouses who may have had sex with infected individuals.

### **Immorality Cases**

The church in the Central Zimbabwe Conference is winning many new members every year. The statistical information cited earlier is a testimony to the effect that many new members are won annually. This is as a result of the numerous outreach programs that are engaged in trying to win new members. These programs include the conventional two or three week evangelistic campaigns, witnessing programs, special seminars targeting thought leaders and professionals, and “Zunde”<sup>4</sup> programs.

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<sup>2</sup>“HIV AND AIDS IN ZIMBABWE,” accessed 15 March 2015, [www.Avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/zimbabwe](http://www.Avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/zimbabwe).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Zunde is a lay-driven evangelistic program. Laypeople meet at a given place for a week to evangelize moving in twos or threes from house to house.



Community needs are identified and met, wherever possible, as a way of reaching people with the gospel. Zunde, which is a lay driven outreach endeavor, where the laity go to a specific area for a full week to do door to door witnessing, is one method that has proved to be a very successful method of evangelism. At the end of each Zunde program, baptisms are realized.

These and other evangelistic endeavors bring into the church people from all kinds of backgrounds. As the church grows, some challenges come into the church, disturbing the life and mission of the church. As many people join the church, some of them coming from backgrounds where infidelity is not regarded as so much of a vice, it becomes necessary for the church to conscientiously nurture the new members. It has been observed that the issue of infidelity occupies a prominent place on the agendas of most church boards. The church board is the governing authority of each local congregation. From time to time churches have to deal with these cases. Counseling members who are affected by this scourge is a common feature in a pastor's life. It is sad to note that sometimes it is the pastors who may require this counseling. They, too, may be found being perpetrators of infidelity.

Having served as a district pastor for eleven years, as a departmental director in different departments for another eleven years and as Conference President for fourteen years, the researcher got involved in counseling both laity and clergy and some of these sessions left indelible memories that are unpleasant to recount. Some of the experiences were unimaginable. Marriages were seen breaking up due to cases of infidelity.

Of these memories, one had to do with a married woman whose third child was sired by her husband's closest friend. The husband would never have suspected his wife to commit adultery with his best friend. The woman's conscience would not

stop bothering her. She wanted to confess the heinous sin to her husband but she was afraid of the consequences. She felt she needed to clear her conscience by revealing the secret to her husband. Chances are there could be many persons in the church that have similar situations as this member, but they cannot talk about it.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that many married men and women suspect and accuse one another of infidelity in the SDA Churches in Chigume (pseudonym) district. Some members of the church actually confess that they cheated on their spouses while others are caught in the act of infidelity. There is talk of infidelity from within the church and from without, accusing church members of unfaithfulness. This is evidenced by unhappiness in the families, separation and divorce in some cases. This negatively impacts the ministry and mission of the church. The families suffer, including innocent children, who have to bear with the aggression that goes on in the families because of infidelity. The church's image is tarnished and this affects the mission of the church.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation was to develop, implement, and evaluate a program designed to minimize marital infidelity among the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Gweru Urban territory.

### **Justification**

This dissertation was intended to help the church in minimizing infidelity and to help those who have already suffered infidelity in their relationships to cope. It will help the members to avoid situations that predispose them to infidelity. Couples will be able to establish the avenues through which infidelity usually gets into

unsuspecting relationships, causing untold suffering. It will help in bringing about healing in the affected families and minimize the chances of infidelity in the families. The spread of HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases will be minimized. The dissertation may the church in its ministry and mission so that the negative publicity that the church suffers because of infidelity would become minimal, making the church a more credible witness to the dying world.

### **Delimitations**

The situation with regards to infidelity may be a common feature in different societies around the country of Zimbabwe. It may be common among many Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) churches in the whole of the Central Zimbabwe Conference, but this dissertation focused on the Gweru urban territory. This was done because of the time required to develop, implement and evaluate the program. To provide a thorough research on the whole conference would be unmanageable. The research targeted married couples of all ages. The Bible version that will be used is the New International Version, unless otherwise stated.

### **Methodology and Procedures**

Chapter one introduces the topic of marital infidelity in the church. The assumption that marital infidelity is rife in the church calls for a formal investigation into the matter to establish whether the assumption is correct. A brief ministry context is given in this chapter. Following the ministry context is the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The justification, delimitations, methodology, expectations and definition of terms form the last part of chapter one.

Chapter two deals with the biblical foundations of marriage based on the Old Testament and the New Testament. It also focuses on the divine plan for marriage.

Deviations from the divine plan for marriage are cited. The New Testament is also studied to establish its teachings on marriage. Departures from the divine design are cited. Ellen White's writings are examined to establish her views on marriage. Finally, hope and healing forms the last part of chapter two. The family that goes through marital unfaithful goes through untold anguish, they need hope and they need healing. The Bible provides the basis for healing from traumatic experiences.

The third chapter reviews contemporary literature that deals with marriage, infidelity, same-sex unions and divorce. The prevalence, possible causes and impact of infidelity are examined. Types of infidelity are examined. This section covers the religious, cultural and biblical models of marriage as reflected in SDA literature. Related literature on marriage and infidelity is examined also.

The fourth chapter deals with the ministry context, methodology and focus group discussions and questionnaires. Findings from the focus group discussions and questionnaires are analyzed in order to develop and implement a program. The ministry context begins by dealing with the macro context. This refers to the larger picture, which is the country of Zimbabwe. This is followed by the micro context that deals with the local situation where the research will take place. After the micro context, the research design comes next. The research method is the mixed method approach that combines both the qualitative and quantitative methods. This method is chosen because it puts together the advantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Focus group discussions and questionnaires are the instruments for the research. After collecting and analyzing the data a program is designed and implemented. The two instruments are used to establish whether the program changed the attitudes and behavior of the participants.

Three churches are selected from within the city of Gweru. The churches to be selected include one from the city center whose membership is mainly young families and a little affluent. The other two churches are from the high-density suburbs. One church is chosen from a high-density suburb in the early settlement and the last church is from one of the newly established suburbs.

After collecting the data through the group discussions and questionnaires, the data is analyzed. The data informs the kind of intervention that is required. The intervention strategy is designed and implemented in the churches. After the implementation of the program, focus group discussions are carried out to determine the effectiveness of the intervention strategy.

The fifth chapter begins by describing the process of the implementation of the intervention. The mixed method approach is used to evaluate the intervention. A concise narrative of the final evaluation is given in this chapter. The final chapter (chapter six) gives a concise recap of all the conclusions drawn through each of the chapters. A list of recommendations is then made in this chapter. Further actions that may need to be taken in the form of researches are also enumerated. The responses from the seminars form the basis for implementation in the families. The couples were encouraged to implement the various concepts learned in the seminar.

### **Expectations**

It is expected that the dissertation would help the church community by helping them to know the avenues through which infidelity may find its way into the families. The dissertation would help to heal hurting relationships affected by infidelity. It is also expected that the study would help to minimize marital infidelity in the families.

The life and mission of the church would be impacted positively in that the negative publicity affecting the church would be minimized. Evangelism would become more meaningful when the credibility of the church is enhanced.

The researcher will benefit from the breakthrough that the research will make in the infidelity challenge. The researcher's counseling skills will be sharpened. Colleagues in ministry will also benefit in their understanding of the infidelity challenge. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS, with its untold suffering will be minimized in the churches, and communities, leaving the members free to carry forward the mission and ministry of the church.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Adultery:** Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband.

**Couple:** two persons married or living as husband and wife.

**Culture:** the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

**Divorce:** the action or an instance of legally dissolving a marriage.

**Incest:** sexual intercourse between persons so closely related that they are forbidden by the law to marry.

**Incompatible:** incapable of association or harmonious coexistence.

**Infidelity:** marital unfaithfulness or an instance of it, or unfaithfulness to a moral obligation

**Marriage:** the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual, contractual and covenantal relationship recognized by God and the law.

**Ministry:** a person or thing through which something is accomplished. The word includes the concept of service to humanity.

**Mission:** the church's sole reason for existence, the propagation of the gospel.

**Sex act:** an act performed with another person for sexual gratification.

**Sexual assault:** illegal sexual contact that usually involves force upon a person without consent or is inflicted upon a person who is incapable of giving consent (as because of age or physical or mental incapacity).

**Sin:** a transgression of the law of God

**Small House:** the term is used in the Zimbabwean context to describe a situation where a married man maintains an adulterous relationship with a woman other than his wife outside his home where he goes to spend days and nights.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

The question of infidelity is best answered from the word of God. The Bible forms the basis upon which humanity can be able to distinguish what is right from what is wrong. Marriage is best understood by checking with its designer, and the designer is God Himself. The Bible forms the foundation upon which all knowledge can be derived.

The focus of this chapter, therefore, is to study the biblical and theological perspectives on marriage and infidelity, starting from creation in the Old Testament to the New Testament. The Bible forms the basis for understanding the marriage institution. Dealing with the issue of infidelity calls for a proper understanding of the marriage institution from the word of God first. Thus, the theological foundations of marriage will be explored. The writings of Ellen White will also be studied to find what prophetic writings have to say on marriage and infidelity.

#### **Biblical Concepts on Marriage**

God is the author of marriage (Gen 2:18-25). The Bible presents a picture of how God designed the marriage institution. A look at the Old Testament, especially the Genesis account is necessary, as a starting point.

#### **Marriage in the Old Testament**

Genesis one mentions that God created man in His own image. The record says that He created them (the first pair) male and female (Gen 1:27). The narrative



goes further to say that God blessed them and commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth (Gen 1:28). Man as a creature was to be different from all the other creatures that preceded him. Man, is God's special creation in that he was created in God's image. Matthew Henry says, "God's image upon man consists in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness."<sup>1</sup> All other creatures were not endowed with the above-mentioned special faculties.

The record is clear to say that both male and female were created in the image of God. The command to be fruitful and to replenish the earth implies a marital relationship. Commenting on the fact that God created them (Adam and Eve) male and female, the SDA Bible commentary says "only in man does the duality of sex find its expression in the institution of wedlock. The verse (Gen 1:27) prepares us for the revelation concerning God's plan for the creation of the family that is presented in (Gen) chapter 2."<sup>2</sup> Though animals were endowed with the ability to procreate, no mention of wedlock is seen with regards to animals. Animals were created in groups while man was alone."<sup>3</sup> God did not design that man should be a solitary individual. He says, "It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a suitable helper." (Gen 2:18) Man needed a companion and God provided a companion in the person of Eve.

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary in one Volume* (Scotland, UK: Hendrickson, 2008), 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978), 216.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 224.

## **God is the Author of Marriage**

White, a Christian author says that God designed marriage and gave it as a special gift to mankind.<sup>4</sup> The original design had one man and one woman (Adam and Eve) who were to be joined in a relationship that was permanent and happy. God's original design for marriage was that one man and one woman spend their life together as one flesh. The biblical narrative gives the picture of a single man and a single woman being joined together in holy matrimony (Gen 2:18, 21-24).

The creation narrative, as it appears in the book of Genesis gives the basis for a Christian marriage. William Barclay says, "The Jewish term for marriage was *Kiddushin*. Kiddushin meant sanctification or consecration. It was used to describe something which was dedicated to God as His exclusive and peculiar possession. Anything totally surrendered to God was kiddushin."<sup>5</sup> Marriage is God's peculiar possession. The idea of holiness can rightfully be ascribed to marriage. God takes a special interest in the institution of marriage.

## **Monogamy as God's Design**

Monogamy, which is the practice of having one marriage partner at a time, per the Genesis narrative appears to be God's design for marriage. The fact that He (God) created one female partner for Adam, suggest that monogamy was His idea for marriage. Genesis 1:27 says that God created them, "male and female" the narrative goes further to say that God commanded the two and said "Be fruitful and increase in number" (Gen1:28). Implied in the foregoing statement is a marital relationship.

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<sup>4</sup>Ellen White, *Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1952), 25, 26.

<sup>5</sup>William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1975), 202.

The Bible says that God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him” (Gen 2:18). The word ‘helper’ does not denote subordination. Jeffrey and Pattiejean Brown say, “The biblical understanding of a ‘helper’ is not an assistant, a supporter, or someone merely occupying a secondary position. The Hebrew word for ‘helper’ is used overwhelmingly in the Old Testament to describe God Himself. Hence it is a term that cannot be used to signify subordinate female roles.”<sup>6</sup> The idea of subordination of wives to their husbands is not in keeping with God’s design for marriage. The Browns say that having to exercise rulership (Gen 3:16) over one’s wife is as a result of sin.<sup>7</sup> Autocratic headship may not find support from the scriptures. This is one of the consequences of the fall. Furthermore, the Browns say, “Genesis 3:16 becomes God’s description, not His prescription.”<sup>8</sup> The statement that says he (husband) will rule over you (wife) is a description of the situation after the fall. It is not prescribing what ought to be, it is not the divine design.

God is seen taking the initiative in the narrative. The decision to create a companion for Adam was made by God. It was not man who made the decision to create Eve. God is the author of marriage, according to the Genesis account.

Marriage, according to the Genesis narrative, involved a divine dimension. God instituted marriage and He is keenly interested in the institution. Du Preez says, “The repeated use of singular nouns and pronouns in this passage (Gen 2:21-24) is noteworthy: God decides to make “a helper” for “the man”; He selects “one rib” from

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<sup>6</sup>Jeffrey and Pattiejean Brown, *The Total Marriage* (Grantham, England: Autumn House, 1999), 15.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 15.

“the man” and “the man” says that “she shall be called woman” thus “a man” leaves his parents to be joined to “his wife” In this distinct way the original marital form can be seen to be monogamous.”<sup>9</sup> The idea of monogamy appears to be the most logical conclusion to arrive at when the nouns and pronouns in the passage are closely analyzed.

Commenting on God’s design for marriage Alan Cole says, “It is clear nevertheless that monogamy was God’s purpose for man at creation.”<sup>10</sup> Any departure, therefore from this design may not be what God intended for marriage. Conceptually, the initial biblical narrative pictures marriage as a monogamous institution.

### **Eve Given as a Helper Suitable for Adam**

Genesis 2:18 says that God said it was not good that man should be alone and God said, “I will make a helper suitable for him.”<sup>11</sup> God gave Adam someone who was to be a helper fit for him. One writer says, “The point of the narrative is that there was no helper who corresponded to man among the animals. A special act of creation of the woman was necessary.”<sup>12</sup> So God created Eve to meet Adam’s need for companionship. Wade says, “Marriage was created by God as an antidote to alone-

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<sup>9</sup>Ronald A. G. du Preez, *Polygamy in the Bible* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological, 1993), 44.

<sup>10</sup>R. Alan Cole, *Exodus, An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 160.

<sup>11</sup>All scripture references will be from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise stated.

<sup>12</sup>Frank E Gaebelein et al., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 1990), 46.

ness, marriage is the highest form of human-to-human inter-connectedness.”<sup>13</sup> Adam was all by himself before the creation of Eve. Eve came in to be Adam’s life companion. In His great wisdom, God created Eve to be there by his side.

The biblical record says that Adam was given a helper, and not helpers, meaning that in this one individual, Eve, he was to find fulfillment and satisfaction. The idea of polygamy appears to have been foreign to God’s design for marriage. One Bible commentary says, “All that Adam’s nature demanded for its completion, physically, intellectually, socially, was to be included in this **altera ego** (the other) who was soon to stand by his side. Thus, in man’s need, and woman’s power to satisfy that need, is laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage, which was afterwards prescribed not for the first pair alone, but for all their posterity.”<sup>14</sup> Adam needed Eve and Eve needed Adam for emotional, psychological and physical support. As stated earlier, the marriage institution was not meant for Adam and Eve only, but for humanity.

### **A Covenant Relationship**

Marriage, according to God’s design, was to be a covenant and not a contract between two people. There is a difference between a contract and a covenant. Jeffrey and Pattiejean Brown say, “While the nature of a contract is something for something, the nature of a covenant is unconditional commitment...Covenant marriage happens when two people have made a commitment to Jesus Christ and to each other.”<sup>15</sup> A

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<sup>13</sup>Loron Wade, “Marriage and Covenant: Reflections on the Theology of Marriage,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, vol. 13, number 2 (Autumn 2002), 73.

<sup>14</sup>“Genesis 2:18,” accessed 3 March 2015, [biblehub.com/commentaries/pulp.it/genesis/2.html](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulp.it/genesis/2.html).

<sup>15</sup>Jeffrey and Pattiejean Brown, 17.

contract is premised on a something for something platform, while a covenant is based on total and unconditional commitment to Christ and one another.

God formed Eve from one of Adam's ribs. The record says, "So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man" (Gen 2:21,22). It is a significant matter to realize that Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs. God could have formed more than one wife for Adam if He intended polygamy for marriage. He could have formed another man if He intended to have gay (same-sex) marriages.

### **Leaving, Cleaving and Becoming One Flesh**

The Bible says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). The relationship that was to exist between a man and his wife was to be close, they were not to be separated. Leaving of father and mother was more than a geographical movement, it had more to do with the emotional, the mental/psychological attitude. Discussing the question of leaving Chimezie A. Omeonu says, "This is an essential aspect of marriage relationship. It means all former primary relationships are to be left behind and considered secondary. The marriage relationship even supersedes that of the parent and child."<sup>16</sup> Some may go a continent away but remain so attached to their parents to a degree that their own marriage becomes dysfunctional. It is not about the distance from the parents, but it is a change that must take place in terms of attitude.

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<sup>16</sup>Chimezie A. Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2004), 4.

Parents, and other people can still control the marriages of their children despite the distance.

Cleaving means to be attached very closely. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines cleaving as “to adhere firmly and closely or loyally and unwaveringly”<sup>17</sup> This suggests that in marriage the parties are glued together, any attempt to separate them is not without disastrous consequences. If separation becomes so easy, it may be that the marriage was ailing. Anything that disturbs this union is to be regarded as an enemy to the institution of marriage. Cleaving denotes inseparability. The parties to the marriage are not to be separated.

The aspect of becoming one flesh meant that they were to be in perfect unity, emotionally, physically and psychologically. On becoming one flesh, one author says, “The language points to a unity of persons, and not simply to a conjunction of bodies, or a community of interests, or even a reciprocity of affections.”<sup>18</sup> The bond that is to exist between a husband and his wife is to be more than a physical bond, it goes beyond the physical to the emotional and spiritual. The bible says that both the man and his wife were naked but they felt no shame (Gen 2:25). This is talking about the closeness that must exist between a husband and his wife.

### **Sin Disturbed the Marriage Institution**

Sin disturbed this picture and brought shame into marriages. Adam and Eve found themselves having to sew fig leaves in order to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7). Nakedness may also refer to openness and transparency in their interactions as

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<sup>17</sup>Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “Definition of Cleave,” accessed 24 May 2015, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cleave>.

<sup>18</sup>“Genesis 2:25,” accessed 3 March 2015, [biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/genesis/2.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/genesis/2.htm).

husband and wife. Matthew Henry, commending on the absence of shame on the part of Adam and Eve says, “Those that had no sin in their conscience might well have no shame in their faces, though they had no clothes to their backs.”<sup>19</sup> They felt no shame because God’s holiness was their apparel.

### **Sex in Marriage**

Sex has been a subject of long debates in the past. There is a feeling among some people that human sexuality is inherently and essentially evil. The debates have only managed to warp the understanding of human sexuality. The Bible says that a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Gen 2:24). Becoming one flesh may also imply the sexual union. Human sexuality was God’s design, it is not to be viewed with shame. Kubo affirms that humanity’s understanding of sexuality has been warped and says, “Throughout the centuries Christianity has suffered from an unhealthy and anti-biblical view of sex. Its effects still linger. Many today still regard the legitimate sexual act with a certain uneasiness-if not with convulsion as a kind of necessary evil.”<sup>20</sup> Sexual intercourse is enjoined in the scriptures. The Song of Solomon is a book in the Bible that talks about sexual pleasure in marriage (Song of Songs 1:1-4; 5:2-4). It is clear from this book that God intended sex in marriage to be a pleasurable experience. Proverbs 5:18-19 has this to say, “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A lovely doe, a graceful deer-May her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.” This romantic language in the Bible is testimony

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<sup>19</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Zondervan Classic Reference Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961), 7.

<sup>20</sup>Sakae Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 10.



to the fact that God designed sex. One marriage counselor, Peter Ndakwe has this to say about sex, “God loves sex, it’s the waste of sex outside marriage that causes Him grief.”<sup>21</sup> Feelings of pleasure during sexual intercourse, and, sexual longings were created of God.

Likewise, Clifford and Joyce Penner have this to say about sex, “We are convinced that Christians can affirm the body, including its sexuality, as a God-given gift to be enjoyed as it is used responsibly. Our sexuality is part of our total being-not merely a physical, fleshly, or “evil” part of us. It is a combination of our spiritual, physical and emotional being.”<sup>22</sup> Feelings of shame and guilty over sexual encounters in marriage is an indication of failure to understand God’s intention for marriage. Ndakwe, again says, “The Bible is far more daring and explicit than our sermons on sex, making clear that all sexual union outside marriage is wrong”<sup>23</sup> God, through His word is explicit about human sexuality. Sexuality is not a human invention, it part of God’s design for marriage.

### **Old Testament Deviations from God’s Plan for Marriage**

The institution of marriage, as designed by God, was affected by sin and some deviations have since marred the original design. Following are some of these deviations. The Old Testament says that God is the originator of marriage. He created Adam and took a rib from him to form Eve for him. Eve was a helper suitable for

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<sup>21</sup>Peter Ndakwe, *Let’s Honestly Talk about Sex* (Nairobi: King’s Script, 2003), 130.

<sup>22</sup>Clifford and Joyce Penner, *The Gift of Sex* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1981), 35.

<sup>23</sup>Ndakwe, 131.

Adam. She was to meet the emotional, social and physical needs of her husband, Adam. God designed marriage to be a happy union between a male and a female human being.

Marriage was made a holy institution. Sex was created of God for both pleasure and procreation. Sin came in and distorted marriage. Deviations from God's design for marriage came in to confuse God's plan. Adultery, same-sex unions, polygamy, incest, rape and divorce are some of the deviations from the divine design. All the different deviations from God's plan came as a result of sin.

### **Intermarriages**

Among the many things that we find in the Old Testament on marriage is the prohibition of marriages with ungodly nations. Though intermarriages between God's people and the heathens around them were a common practice during Old Testament times, God did not place His blessing upon its practice.

The Bible, in the book of Nehemiah says,

Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: 'You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage. Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him, he was loved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. Must we hear now that you too are doing this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women? (Neh13:23-28).

Intermarriages were prohibited. Marriage between an Israelite and someone from the pagan nations around Israel was considered a transgression of God's precepts. Commenting on intermarriages Longman and Garland say, "Marrying those who did not belong to Yahweh was infidelity for the people of Israel, who were

considered to be the bride of Yahweh.”<sup>24</sup> It was regarded as a terrible sin. It was regarded as infidelity on the part of Israel. The purity of Israel was going to be compromised by these intermarriages. As indicated in the above texts, half of the children born of the foreign women could not speak the Language of Judah. They spoke the languages of the nations from which their mothers came. Israel was to remain a peculiar people. Intermarriages diminished their peculiarity. The book of Ezra articulates the same thought. The children of God were not to marry outside their own nation, for to do so was to depart from God’s intent for marriage. (Ezra 9:1,2; Ezra 10:1,2).

Intermarriages were responsible for the erosion of the knowledge of God among the Israelites. Cultural transference through intermarriages was responsible for Israel’s backsliding. God wanted to protect His people from the corrupting influences of the heathens.

### **Same Sex Unions**

Same-sex unions are to be regarded as a departure from the divine pattern of marriage. The Old Testament outlaws same sex unions. Mueller says, “The Old Testament has not only clear prohibitions against homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13) but also relates instances in which homosexuality occurred. For a man to lie with another man as with a woman was considered an abomination before God. Homosexuality is an abomination and will be punished.”<sup>25</sup> Same-sex unions may not get support from the biblical record. They may emanate from man’s depravity as

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<sup>24</sup>Tremper Longman III, David E. Garland, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 449.

<sup>25</sup>Ekkehardt Mueller, “Homosexuality in History,” accessed 13 July 2016, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Homosexuality%20in%20History.pdf>.

pointed out in the reference above. According to texts cited above, homosexual practices are a direct challenge to God’s plan for marriage and family.

### **Adultery**

Adultery is a departure from God’s design for marriage. The Old Testament consistently takes adultery as an abomination. Commenting on adultery, Hawthorne Martin and Reid say, “Quite contrary to the modern ideas and practice, adultery in the OT was not considered to be grounds for divorce. Rather, death—usually by stoning, but also by burning. (Lev 20:10; Gen 38:24)—was the consequence for such infidelity for the adulterous wife and her paramour (Deut 22:22-24).”<sup>26</sup> The death penalty was the due punishment for infidelity.

The Ten Commandments include a commandment, which specifically outlaws adultery. The seventh of the Ten Commandments says, “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14). God’s pronouncements are meant to protect humanity from all kinds of ills. Bruckner has this to say on adultery, “The promise to bless the nations of the world through Israel could be fulfilled only if the people sustained the integrity of their marriages, families and thus the community of faith over the millennia.”<sup>27</sup> The promise was only going to be fulfilled when Israel shunned infidelity. Their peculiarity as a nation was going to show if they maintained marital fidelity.

Adultery was one of the devil’s first attacks on marriage. The law of God was clear and it was meant to enhance His people’s happiness. It is important at this point

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<sup>26</sup>Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, ed., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 595.

<sup>27</sup>James K. Bruckner, *The New International Biblical Commentary, Exodus*, vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008) 189.

to mention that sexuality is a God given gift that may not be misused. Manuel Rodriguez says, “Sexuality is not our exclusive property: in a sense, it belongs to the human race, and its misuse damages all of us in one way or another.”<sup>28</sup> Sexuality is not a human invention, it is, a divine design. Its abuse will not go unchallenged by its giver. The abuse and misuse of God’s gift of sexuality to humanity, as seen in the commission of adultery is responsible for many family woes.

From creation God intended married couples to cleave to one another and to become one flesh (Gen 2:24). Cleaving to one another was to be committed to each other faithfully for life. They were to enjoy one another for life, there was not to be any sex outside marriage. In the Old Testament God declared adultery to be a sin punishable by death. “If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife-with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death” (Lev 20:10). The death penalty was assigned to people who committed the sin of adultery. The death penalty for those who engaged in adultery was a clear testimony to God’s deep abhorrence of the sin of adultery.

Adultery was loathsome in God’s sight. Rodriguez says, “Adultery was not simply a private affair, but one that could potentially damage God’s people, making it necessary to remove it out of them.”<sup>29</sup> God did not tolerate the sin of adultery. Anyone who engaged in this kind of sin knew for sure that death was inevitable. “If a man is found sleeping with another man’s wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel” (Deut. 22:22). The ultimate price for infidelity, death, is mentioned repeatedly in the O T. The significance of this

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<sup>28</sup>Manuel Rodriguez, “Sex Seriously,” accessed 12 May 2016, [www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/ot-texts-ethics/Sex seriously](http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/ot-texts-ethics/Sex%20seriously).

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

may be profound. The Bible records some incidences of adultery, a review of some of the incidences is necessary at this point.

**Reuben's adulterous encounter with Bilhah.** Other cases of adultery as recorded in the Old Testament include Reuben's adultery with Bilhah (Gen 35:22; 49:3-4). Reuben slept with his father's wife. Reuben committed two sins; he committed adultery and he also committed the sin of incest. God took offense at this. When Jacob called his sons to bless them towards the end of his life, he had this to say about his first son, Reuben, "Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and you defiled it" (Gen 49:4).

Reuben's sin stole away his preeminence. Talking about Reuben, one Bible commentary says, "He will not excel, because he disgracefully lay with Bilhah, his father's wife."<sup>30</sup> Being Jacob's first born, he was supposed to be the chief heir of his father's blessings but unfortunately, he lost it because of adultery. By this act of infidelity, Reuben forfeited his birthright, and all entitlement to temporal and spiritual leadership of the family. He lost it all because of infidelity. Another commentary says, "Reuben's sin was sensuality, lust, by which he was carried away; and because of this dominating propensity he would never excel."<sup>31</sup> Reuben was dominated by sensuality and lust. He was not able to restrain or control himself.

He lost his pre-eminence on account of adultery. This particular loss would have far reaching effects on his whole tribe. The SDA Bible commentary has this to say on Reuben, "By the withdrawal of the rights of the first born, Reuben lost the

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<sup>30</sup>Leander E. Keck, ed. et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 665.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, n.d.) 557.

leadership of Israel. His tribe never attained a position of influence in the nation.”<sup>32</sup> In a moment, Reuben lost what mattered most, not just for him, but for the whole of his tribe. What he lost, he was never going to regain. That is what infidelity can do, it has the capacity to ruin and wreck a person’s whole existence. Posterity may remain to bear the brand and scars of one person’s carelessness.

**Phinehas’s reaction to adultery in the camp of Israel.** The children of Israel went and camped at Shittim. The Bible says that at this place the Israelites began to commit adultery with the daughters of Moab. It was this act of adultery and the worship of foreign deities at this place that provoked the Lord’s anger.

The Bible records an incident in the book of Numbers chapter 25 in the life of Israel when the Israelites went and committed adultery with foreign women. The Lord’s great anger was aroused because of this. Many people died. Mention is made of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, who followed one Israelite who had brought a foreign woman into his tent to commit adultery. Phinehas took a javelin, went into the tent and thrust both the man and woman through, causing the two of them to die (Num 25:6-9). The Lord’s anger was turned away from Israel because of what Phinehas did. As observed earlier, the sin of adultery was and is a terrible sin before God. The sins of adultery and idolatry attracted God’s harshest rebukes.

Engaging in the sin of adultery called for the death of both the man and the woman who were involved in the sin. God did not take the sin of adultery lightly, the death penalty that was assigned to it, as mentioned earlier, is indicative of God’s abhorrence of the sin. The ultimate price that a person was to pay for infidelity was death. This penalty was meant to communicate God’s displeasure over the sin of

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<sup>32</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, ed. Francis Nichol et al. (Review and Herald, Washington, DC: 1953), 480.

adultery. Talking about the seriousness of the sin of adultery Rodriguez says, “In the Bible it is considered a serious sin against God, against the spouse, and against society. Through capital punishment people were to “put away (ba’ar , exterminate, remove) the evil from Israel.”<sup>33</sup> Each time Israel witnessed the killing of a perpetrator, they were reminded of the sinfulness of adultery. This served as a deterrent to would be sinners.

For a man to have intercourse with another man’s wife was considered as a heinous sin against God (Gen 39:9). Wilkins has this to say on infidelity; “The Old Testament strongly denounces all extramarital sexual relationships, condemning the male offender even more strongly than the female”<sup>34</sup> The sin of infidelity appears to be a terrible abomination before God. The condemnation assigned to perpetrators was a clear demonstration of God’s abhorrence of adultery or infidelity. God regarded this sin with extreme repugnance. It was loathsome in His sight.

**King David’s adulterous relationship with Bathsheba.** Kostenberger points out that, “Sin brought distortions on God’s design for marriage and one of these distortions is adultery.”<sup>35</sup> David’s involvement with Bathsheba is one such incidence, where David Committed adultery with Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba (2 Sam 11). David lustfully looked at Bathsheba as she was taking a bath in the evening. David went on to commit another sin by spearheading the death of the man whose wife he had sexually violated. He called Uriah back from the battlefield and bade him “go down to

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<sup>33</sup>Rodriguez, “Sex Seriously,” accessed 12 May 2016, [www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org /materials/ot-texts-ethics/Sex seriously](http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/ot-texts-ethics/Sex_seriously).

<sup>34</sup>Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary (Matthew)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 244.

<sup>35</sup>Andreas J. Kostenberger, David W. Jones, *God, Marriage and Family; Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 31.



your house and wash your feet” (2 Sam 11:8). The phrase ‘wash your feet’ meant more than what the words suggest. Joe O Lewis says, “the phrase (wash his feet) may contain a sexual nuance, too; the term “feet” is a substitute, at times, for the genital organs.”<sup>36</sup> In essence, David was instructing Uriah to go and have sex with his wife as a way of concealing his (David) sin with Bathsheba. He wanted it to appear as Uriah had made his wife pregnant. This was a concealment strategy.

God was not happy with this act 2 Sam 11:27 says, “After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord” God’s displeasure is clearly enunciated in the passage. God was not happy with what David did. This act of infidelity that David and Bathsheba did was an abomination before God. Some of David’s woes later in his life were as a result of this sin. These woes included the death of the child from the adulterous encounter (2 Sam 12:14; 16-18).

Commenting on David’s sin and its consequences, The Pulpit Commentary says, “From that day his own house was the scene of horrible crimes, feuds, scandals, and miseries of every kind.”<sup>37</sup> The child born out of this adulterous union fell ill and died. David prayed and fasted for healing for his afflicted son but the Lord did not grant David’s request. One other Bible commentary has this to say, “David uses royal power abusively to satisfy his own personal desires. Moreover, the violence he had earlier avoided spirals out of control in his own personal life. Adultery and deceit lead

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<sup>36</sup>Joe O. Lewis, *Layman’s Bible Book Commentary*, vol. 5 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1980), 96.

<sup>37</sup>H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. M. Eerdmans, 1962), 4:266.

to murder, and the violence that stains David's hands will spread to his own family."<sup>38</sup>

By the death of this child, God was registering His displeasure over infidelity. The terrible consequences of this sin remained in David's house for years to come.

David's sin with Uriah's wife led him to commit further sins. He tried to conceal his heinous sin by calling back Uriah from the battlefield so he could go into Bathsheba, his wife but Uriah would not do such when the ark of the Lord was out in the battlefield. When David realized that Uriah could not go down to his house, he finally planned the death of Uriah to conceal his sin. David, who knew better about the Lord's requirements stooped so low to the extent that Uriah, the Hittite appeared to know better. Even in his drunken stupor, Uriah refused to enjoy himself with his wife when the ark of God was in the battlefield.

**Hosea's adulterous wife.** Gomer was unfaithful to her husband (Hos 3:1). Gomer's account is another story that is found in the scriptures in which adultery is mentioned. John L Mackay says, "Because the bond between the Lord and his people could also be compared to the marriage bond between husband and wife, adultery was often used to depict the way in which Israel turned away from Yahweh to worship other gods."<sup>39</sup> The book of Hosea depicts adultery in its spiritual sense, where Israel goes out to commit adultery with other gods, to worship foreign gods leaving their God. All these incidences testify to the fact that God's ideal for marriage, fidelity was not always upheld. God took offense in this. His ideal for marriage was strict fidelity or faithfulness to the marriage covenant.

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<sup>38</sup>Leander E. Keck, ed. et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 11 (Nashville: TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 1283.

<sup>39</sup>John L. Mackay, *Exodus: A Mentor Commentary* (Rose-Shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2001), 353.

**Adultery in the book of Proverbs.** The book of Proverbs classifies adultery as both “foolish and dangerous”<sup>40</sup> (Prov 2:16-19). The author says that wisdom will keep someone from the adulteress, the wayward woman. The author goes on to say that no one who goes to her returns or attains the paths of life. The adulteress has power to destroy those who fall prey to her seductive strategies. The author of the book of Proverbs continues on to say, “for the lips of an adulterous drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil but in the end, she is bitter than gall” (Prov 5:3, 4). The message is that adultery is dangerous. The adulteress women are skilled in the art of seduction but the end of it all is death.

The book of Proverbs goes on to say, “But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so, destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will not be wiped away” (Prov 6:32-33). Engaging in infidelity is to lack judgment. It is self-destruction. The impact of infidelity on the one who does it is overwhelming. The book of Proverbs continues to say, “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife” (Prov 6:27-29). The path of an individual who is an adulterer leaves untold wounds and scars. Scooping fire into one’s lap will definitely cause one to be burnt seriously. Adultery is here being equated with scooping fire into one’s lap. Anyone who does that will surely reap his due reward.

The author of Proverbs says that no one can walk on hot calls without his feet getting scorched. Engaging in adultery is like walking barefooted on hot coals. Whoever does this will definitely reap what he sows. Many people are caused to

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<sup>40</sup>H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans, 1962), 4:35.

suffer because of this sin. In the case of King David, the wounds and scars included the death of innocent Uriah and the death of the innocent child born out of the sinful relationship between David and Bathsheba.

As mentioned already, infidelity is one of the many ways in which the design of God for marriage was derailed by sin. Further, Balswick and Balswick say that adultery is contrary to God's will.<sup>41</sup> The Bible restricts sexual intercourse to the marital relationship. Any such relationship outside the confines of marriage is therefore, an abomination before God. It falls short of God's ideal for marriage. Unfortunately, the ideal position is becoming more and more elusive, as seen from the prevalence of infidelity in the society today.

### **Polygamy**

Polygamy is difficult to substantiate from the biblical record. Though there are individuals in the Bible who married more than one wife, there appears to be no justification for their actions from the bible. The story of the creation of the first two human beings reveals monogamous marriage as the expression of the will of God. There are a few individuals who practiced polygamy in the Bible. Commenting on polygamy, Omeonu says, "But God never said to them, (Those who married more than one wife) 'Well done faithful servants.' The polygamous marriages were sources of cruelty, shame and emotional harassment for those men from time to time."<sup>42</sup> God does not seem to have approved polygamy. "Polygamy first appeared in the reprobate

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<sup>41</sup>Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 225.

<sup>42</sup>Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 18.

line of Cain, when Lamech took two wives.”<sup>43</sup> Though Lamech chose polygamy, the Bible seems not to say that he did what was right before God.

### **Divorce**

The Old Testament does not seem to have anything that favors divorce. God says He hates divorce. (Mal 2:16) Hate is a strong word. God feels very strongly against divorce. Omeonu has this to say on divorce, “It is the legal dissolution of a marriage covenant.”<sup>44</sup> Divorce is therefore an act of destroying the covenant. The one flesh aspect that is mentioned in the book of Genesis is indicative of a oneness that cannot be split. Divorce destroys the oneness that marriage brings about.

### **Incest**

Incest was regarded as an abomination before God (Lev 18:8-18; 20:11-21). Amnon’s incestuous rape case did not get approval from God (1 Kings 13:1-2). Amnon’s encounter with his sister, Tamar was a case of both incest and rape. He violated and humiliated his sister. His act was also a testimony to man’s depravity. God did not intend for such to happen among His people.

## **The New Testament Concepts on Marriage**

The New Testament scriptures present marriage as a sacred institution. Jesus Christ and the Pauline writings give insights into the marriage institution that are important to the understanding of marriage.

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<sup>43</sup>Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1975) 93.

<sup>44</sup>Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 24.

## **Christ's View of Marriage**

The New Testament teaching on marriage is profound. Jesus affirms marriage in the New Testament. He quotes the Old Testament teachings about marriage. He refers to the OT record by saying that He who created them (man and woman) made them male and female. Christ quotes Genesis 2:24 directly which says, “a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Matt 19:4-6).

In this short passage, Christ gives the origin of marriage, the relationship that must exist between the parties to the marriage. The indissolubility of marriage is a key element in the teachings of Christ. The leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh denote permanence and indissolubility of marriage. Christ says, “So they are no longer two, but one. Christ says, “What God has joined together let man not separate” (Matt 19:6). Christ’s statement means that marriage may not be dissolved. The reason for the non-dissolubility of marriage is that God is the author of marriage.

Commenting on the permanence of marriage as stated by Christ, Wilkins says, “In our day Christians must hold up the permanence of marriage as the intended design by God and not consider divorce as a morally neutral option.”<sup>45</sup> Jesus affirms the OT position on marriage. Marriage is supposed to be permanent. Any departure from the ideal of permanence may not have any support from Christ’s statements. Considering the divorce option will not remain morally neutral. This is so because divorce in itself is a moral failure.

Christ says that marriage originated from the creator. Marriage was designed of God. He goes on to say that marriage is between a man and woman (Matt 19:5). By

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<sup>45</sup>Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 657.

saying that a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh, Christ is saying that marriage is between a man and a woman. All other patterns outside this one framework may be foreign to scriptures. Jesus says that the two become one. The relationship between the two is meant to be very close, the two become one and are indivisible. Oneness denotes inseparability and indivisibility. Thus, Jesus affirmed the marriage relationship as a permanent institution, which must not be dissolved, again, affirming the Old Testament position on marriage.

On the question of divorce, Jesus has this to say, “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery” (Matt 19:9) Divorce was not intended for marriage, it is a thing that the enemy planted, unfortunately. As Jesus puts it, except in the event of unfaithfulness or infidelity. Divorce was not part of God’s original plan for marriage. The marriage union is God’s doing, no man is to separate that which God has put together. In a world where divorce has become so common, Jesus’ pronouncements are regarded as hard sayings. Christ’s disciples, upon hearing that marriage was not to be dissolved, said, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry” (Matt 19:10). This was after Christ mentioned the fact that marriage is never to be absolved.

### **The Apostle Paul’s Concept of Marriage**

The Apostle Paul gives important insights on marriage. He talks about how husbands and wives should relate to one another. The husband is given as the head of his wife just as Christ is the head of His bride or His church. Wives are admonished to submit to their own husbands as they do to the Lord (Eph 5:22). The same reference

says that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church (Eph5:23).

The headship of the husband is one of love and not lording it over himself. The husband is not to be a bully over his wife. This headship over his wife is not license to abuse and harass one's wife. The husband takes his headship after Christ who lovingly laid down His life for the sake of His bride, the Church. This submission is like unto the Lord. As the church submits to Christ, so must the wives submit to their own husbands. The submission of the Church to Jesus Christ is out of love and not coercion or force. It is a response to the love that was displayed on Calvary. In the same way, wives are to submit to their husbands out of love.

Husbands are admonished to love their wives. The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph 5:25-27)." Husbands ought to love their wives unconditionally. Christ loved the church not because it was clean or pure. He loved it despite its condition in order to make it clean. Husbands must love their wives, so that by being loved (wives), they may respond by submitting to their husbands.

The apostle Paul continues to call upon husbands to love their wives (Eph 5:28; 5:29; 5:33). All the references cited above repeat the message that husbands ought to love their wives. God's ideal for marriage was for the husbands to love their wives and the wives to submit to their husbands. A loveless marriage is a testimony to the fall of men from what God intended for marriage.



## **Conjugal Privileges**

The Bible says “Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1Cor 7:5).

## **Deviations from God’s Design in the New Testament**

The divine plan for marriage, as an ideal has not always been adhered to. Some of the deviations cited in the Old Testament have some parallels in the New Testament. Following are some of them. The New Testament affirms the Old Testament’s position on marriage. Marriage is between two adults. It is between a male and a female human being. Same-sex marriages or unions are not classified as marriages. Divorce is not sanctioned. Husbands are to love their wives while the wives are to submit to their husbands. Any departure from the pattern established in Eden is a departure from God’s ideal for marriage. A marriage relationship that is void of love is a testimony to the fall of man.

## **Same Sex Marriages**

The New Testament also prohibits same sex unions. Man’s disregard for God and His law brought with it unprecedented depravity on mankind. The Bible says,

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion (Rom 1:26-27).

The disappearance of the knowledge of God among men is responsible for all kinds of sinful inventions. Homosexual practices are an abomination before God. They work against God’s design for marriage.

## **Divorce**

It was God's design that marriages would not be terminated. Unfortunately, the ideal has been tempered with. Hate is a very strong word. This expresses God's abhorrence of divorce. Marriages cannot be dissolved without calling for God's displeasure. Christ says, "What God has put together, let no man put asunder" (Matt 19:6).

## **Other Causes of Family Distress**

Apart from the deviations from the divine design that have been cited above, there are other situations that cause some distress in the family. Barrenness is one of them. In both the Old and New Testaments there are cases of infertility that brought about tension in the families.

## **Adultery in the New Testament**

Having looked at the sin of adultery in the Old Testament, a look at the New Testament with regards to infidelity is necessary. The New Testament takes an uncompromising view of adultery, and regards all acts of immorality as offenses against God and against one's neighbor.<sup>46</sup> Blomberg says that adultery, usually referred to sexual relations by a married person with a partner other than his or her spouse is sin.<sup>47</sup> Jesus says, "But I tell you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt 5:28).

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<sup>46</sup>"All About the Bible," accessed 10 September 2014, [www.thebible.net/daily-life/adulteryinthebible](http://www.thebible.net/daily-life/adulteryinthebible).

<sup>47</sup>Graig L. Blomberg, *The New American Commentary*, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: B. and H., 1992), 108.

Hawthorne has this to say on Christ's position on adultery,

Jesus stood with the law against adultery, fully supporting the ancient command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" but he went beyond it in two significant ways: (1) Jesus said that the man who looks at a woman for the express purpose of lusting for her has already committed adultery with her (Matt 5:27-28). Thus, for him such a culpable act as adultery can be committed in the mind as well as in the bed. (2) Jesus also said that any man who divorces his wife and marries another wife commits adultery, or any woman who divorces her husband and marries another man commits adultery.<sup>48</sup>

Jesus affirmed the OT teachings on adultery. Jesus talks about adultery without sexual intercourse, looking at a woman or a man lustfully is viewed as adultery despite the absence of the actual act. Jesus' statement pointed to the spirituality of the law. The then leaders only worried about outward show. The most unfortunate thing may be that some individuals who may be playing significant roles in the church could be those individuals who threw away their spouses to marry outside the stipulations of Christ. This is considered as adultery.

The Bible says, "with eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed- an accursed brood!" (2 Pet 2:14). Such people are addicted to immorality. They do not stop sinning. The idea of adultery without sexual intercourse is also found in the book of John. It says, "For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does- comes not from the father but from the world" (1 John 2:16). The lust of the eyes is what Jesus condemned as adultery when he said whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. This, therefore, can be referred to as adultery without sexual intercourse.

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<sup>48</sup>Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, ed., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 595-596.

Jesus raises the question of adultery a step higher by mentioning that the sin of infidelity is much deeper than the actual act of infidelity. It has to do with what goes on in the heart. Jesus does not contradict what was said but brings it into sharper ethical focus. Anna Galeniece says it is “a radical intensification of the demands of the law.”<sup>49</sup> This is indicative of how Jesus abhorred infidelity. This resonates with the great commandment that says you shall not commit adultery (Exod. 20:14).

The Apostle Paul affirms Jesus’ position by saying that Christians must not associate with those who are sexually immoral (1 Cor. 5:9). Here the Apostle goes beyond the act of infidelity to association with those who practice sexual immorality. Associating with immoral individuals is known to be corrosive. A good number of well-meaning Christians ended up entangled in immorality because they associated with the wrong people. Bad company may corrupt good behavior.

The book of Galatians spells it even more clearly by saying ‘do not gratify the desires of the flesh. One Bible Commentary has this to say on works of the flesh, “the deeds that result from the unrestricted operation of human passions, feelings, and desires.”<sup>50</sup> Sexual immorality is included in the list of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). On the list of the desires of the flesh, items of sexual immorality are listed first, highlighting their seriousness.<sup>51</sup> Immorality was denounced in the OT, it is also denounced in the NT. Some want to suggest that Jesus’ encounter with the woman

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<sup>49</sup>Anna Galeniece, “A Concept of Sexual Immorality and Its Consequences in the Bible,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 15/2 (Autumn 2004), 128-141.

<sup>50</sup>*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 981.

<sup>51</sup>Anna Galeniece, “A Concept of Sexual Immorality and its Consequences in the Bible,” *A Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 15/2 (Autumn 2004), 128-141.

caught in adultery was the turning point in the way the sin of adultery was to be viewed, they say Jesus diminished the sinfulness of the act by the way He treated the woman. They say that Jesus was supposed to kill this woman or order her assailants to stone her for the sin. It was Jesus who said whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already sinned with her in the heart (Matt 5:28). Jesus could not have lowered the standard. The difference is that Jesus loves the sinner. He loves the sinner but not sin.

The sin of infidelity was strongly condemned in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament. Galeniece says, "Marriage as a faithful unity is a principle that shelters the couple from outside attacks, and from frivolity, capriciousness, and unfaithfulness within the marriage (Exod. 20:14). The Christian enters this covenant with total devotion, pledging his or her utmost to love and cherish, in sickness and in health."<sup>52</sup> Practicing infidelity is a serious sin before God. Moral purity is what God designed for marriage. Infidelity in marriage is a negation of the commitment to love and cherish one's mate in sickness and in health. It is actually an act of dishonesty to the marriage covenant.

### **Infidelity and Salvation**

The Bible says, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9, 10). The Bible makes it clear that those who practice immorality will not inherit the kingdom. If infidelity were a minor problem, the Bible would not have mentioned

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<sup>52</sup> Anna Galeniece, "A Concept of Sexual Immorality and its Consequences in the Bible," *A Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 15/2 (Autumn 2004), 128-141.

it as one of the sins that will cause people not to enter the kingdom. The exclusion from the Kingdom of the immoral speaks to the sinfulness of infidelity. 1 Corinthians 10:8 says, “We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did- and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.” The number of those who perished in one day is awesome. The Lord’s anger was turned against Israel because of sexual immorality. Wherever God’s people committed the sin of immorality, God did not remain silent, He reprimanded them heavily.

The Apostle Paul says that no sexual immorality and all impurity must be named among you (Eph. 5:5). The apostle Paul says that adultery is a sin that will stop mankind from inheriting the kingdom of heaven. Heaven, therefore, will not be a place for the immoral. The book of James mentions the fact that adulterous people need to know that friendship with the world is enmity with God (Jas 4:4). Adultery or immorality marks those who identify with this sinful world. Those who are involved in this sinful practice are friends of this sinful world and such are enemies of God. Adulterers will not be saved.

The book of Hebrews says marriage is honorable in all, and the marriage bed must not be defiled, for God shall judge the sexually immoral and adulterous (Heb. 13:4). Purity in marriage relationships is what the writer of the book of Hebrews is advocating. Commenting on the same text Guthrie has this to say, “The bed becomes a mini-church in which the two covenant members sacrificially and ecstatically meet one another’s needs and offer their bodies as living sacrifices in worship before God.”<sup>53</sup> The marital relationship, especially as it relates to the physical union between

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<sup>53</sup>George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 1998), 437.

a man and his wife, becomes, in a sense, an act of worship. Those who cannot uphold this standard will face judgment.

John the revelator says that the portion of evildoers, including the sexually immoral will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death. Guthrie says, “For those so involved in dishonoring marriage and defiling the marriage bed, the judgment of God awaits”<sup>54</sup> (Rev 21:8). The list of those who will be cast into the burning fire includes the sexually immoral. The final destruction that John the revelator talks about will be the final portion of those who defile themselves by committing adultery.

### **Biblical Views on Getting Freedom from Adultery**

The Bible consistently labels adultery as a sinful practice. As mentioned earlier, those who committed the sin were liable to death according to the OT. In the NT the sin is not condoned. The Bible says that those who commit the crime will not be part of those who will inherit the coming kingdom. As seen earlier, the final destruction will include those who embraced the sin of adultery.

### **The Sin Problem and Healing**

As expressed earlier, infidelity is sin. Like any other sinner those who failed on account of infidelity have hope of forgiveness. Dobson says, “I am also thankful that no sin is beyond the forgiveness of God. Even the most selfish, evil sinner on the face of the earth can obtain total cleansing at the cross.”<sup>55</sup> Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The Bible teaches that all manner of sin can be forgiven except

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<sup>54</sup> George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan, 1998), 437.

<sup>55</sup> James Dobson, *Love Must Be Tough* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1983), 145.

blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:31). 1 John 1:9 says that He is faithful and just to forgive sins that are confessed and forsaken. There are records in the bible where sinners were absolved from sin. These include King David and the woman caught in the act of adultery.

The story of David that has been covered quite extensively before has a beautiful ending. His sins included his adultery with Bathsheba, the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah and taking Bathsheba to be his wife. When confronted by the prophet Nathan concerning his sins, he was quick to realize the sinfulness of his actions. He was sorry for his sin and, after confessing his sin, he was forgiven (Ps 51). Even those who may find themselves committing adultery, turning to God to confess their sin will bring healing (Isa 1:18).

The woman caught in the act of adultery had a good ending. She was absolved. Those who were accusing her walked away in shame (John 8:3-11). The most beautiful part of the story is that she walked away a forgiven person. It was not a secret that she committed sin, but Jesus forgave her and bade her not to commit sin anymore. The penitent sinner can trust God for forgiveness.

## **Summary**

All the references cited above speak against immorality. Those who will constitute the redeemed, who will make it to the kingdom will be free from immorality in all its forms. The New Testament concurs with the Old Testament on the sinfulness of infidelity. In the Old Testament, infidelity was a sin that was punishable by death. God destroyed so many of them who practiced immorality. The New Testament talks about the destruction that is coming to put to an end all those who defile the body temple by committing immorality. The bible clearly states that infidelity, cheating in marriage and adultery are abominations that are obnoxious in the sight of God.



The whole Bible upholds the sinfulness of adultery. The teaching that runs through the whole Bible is consistent, the message is, “you shall not commit adultery.” Any attempt to justify infidelity may not get support from the scriptures. Throughout the scriptures, there is nowhere where God justifies infidelity. There are recorded in the Scriptures numerous accounts of infidelity or near infidelity. “These accounts communicate the fact that God’s ideal of fidelity within marriage was often not upheld”<sup>56</sup> The power of sin often caused many to stumble on the way but God approved not any form of infidelity.

The case of David and Bathsheba is a wonderful case of God’s grace. When David finally acknowledged his fall, and confessed his sin, God forgave him. (Psalm 51) There is hope for those who are found on the wrong side of the law of God if they repent and forsake their sin. The same grace of God is evident in the New Testament. The woman caught in the act of adultery is an example of the grace of God (John 8:10, 11). Jesus declared, “neither do I condemn You” Jesus did not justify the sin but He did not condemn the sinner. The penitent will He forgive, even the vilest of sinners.

God frequently used the analogy of physical adultery to depict His displeasure over the spiritual adultery of Israel when they departed from Him, their first love, in order to pursue other gods.<sup>57</sup> The story of Hosea and Gomer serves as an illustration of Israel’s spiritual waywardness, spiritual infidelity or adultery. The going after foreign gods was taken as spiritual adultery, this was detestable in the sight of God. Just as going after foreign gods was I serious sin, so was infidelity in marriage.

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<sup>56</sup>Andreas J. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage and Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 35.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

## Ellen White's View of Marriage

Ellen White says, "The institution (marriage) has its originator the Creator of the universe" God originated the marriage institution. She goes on to say, "it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing: it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature"<sup>58</sup> This writer affirms the position of both the Old and New testaments. Her position, which is the biblical position, is that God originated the institution of marriage. Marriage becomes a blessing when divine principles that govern the institution are followed.

Talking about the first marriage, the marriage between Adam and Eve, Ellen White says, "This first marriage is an example of what all marriages should be. God gave the man one wife. Had He deemed it best for man to have more than one wife, He could as easily have given him two; but He sanctioned no such thing."<sup>59</sup> Ellen White affirms monogamy as God's ideal for marriage.

Marriage is supposed to be a blessing to mankind. It provides for man's different needs and uplifts man's physical, intellectual moral nature. According to this writer, the depravity and the degeneracy that is evident in man today may be the result of disobeying the principles of marriage as designed by the creator. Commenting on the position that Eve was to occupy Ellen White Says,

Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part

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<sup>58</sup>Ellen White, *Adventist Home*, 26.

<sup>59</sup>Ellen White, "Marriages, Wise and Unwise," *The Youth's Instructor*, 10 August 1899, 437.

of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relationship.<sup>60</sup>

The bond that is to exist between a man and his wife, according to this writer is very strong. Adam was not to look down upon his wife, and Eve was not to be the head of the household but she was to be by his side as an equal. Having been taken from Adam's rib, Eve was to be a part of Adam. God designed marriage to be a happy and holy union between a man and a woman. Adam was not given dominion over Eve, his wife. Exercising lordship or dominion over one's spouse was not God's intention for marriage. Dominion was to be over all nature and not his wife. Marriage was made a symbol of the union between Christ and His church.<sup>61</sup> The relationship that exists between Christ and His church is one of love. Christ loved the church that was not perfect in order to perfect it through love. His love attracted many to Him, He did not need to force, coerce or bully people into submission. Submission was due to the matchless love that Christ lavished upon His church. Submission that comes out of love is wholesome and pure, anything that comes out of force and intimidation is shot-lived and is not of God.

### **What Ellen White Says on Infidelity**

Ellen White speaks out against infidelity. Addressing the sin of immorality among the Corinthians Ellen White says their immorality had become conspicuous, even among the heathens.<sup>62</sup> The situation had become so bad that even the heathens

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<sup>60</sup> Ellen White, "Marriages, Wise and Unwise," *The Youth's Instructor*, 10 August 1899, 25.

<sup>61</sup> Ellen White, *Adventist Home*, 26.

<sup>62</sup> Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 243.3.

wondered as to what was going on. She goes on to say, "Purity is demanded not only in the outward life, but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart. Christ, who taught the far-reaching obligation of the law of God, declared the evil thought or look to be as truly sin as is the unlawful deed."<sup>63</sup> She was commenting on Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:28. Just the thought of immorality is considered to be just as sinful as the actual sinful act.

### **Ellen White's Comments on King David's Sin**

David's sin with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife destroyed his character. Commenting on this incident Ellen White says, "He who should have been a terror to evildoers, by his own act strengthened their hands."<sup>64</sup> David's position in the Kingdom demanded strict integrity. He was expected to be a good example to his subjects. His failure and fall strengthened those who were weak. The weak took refuge in David's fall, his heinous act was viewed by many as license to sin.

After David committed sin with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, caused his death, and craftily worked to conceal his sins, God sent His prophet, Nathan to David. God's displeasure over this sin led to the sending of Nathan to cause David to appreciate the sinfulness of his behavior.<sup>65</sup>

She says that Satan has substituted every good thing that God established with something bad. For the sanctity of married love, he brought premarital sex and

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<sup>63</sup>Ellen White, *From Eternity Past* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1983), 213:6.

<sup>68</sup>White, *From Eternity Past*, 520.

<sup>65</sup>White, *From Eternity Past*, 520, 523, 524.

adultery.<sup>66</sup> Adultery is a vice that the devil brought to mar the beauty that is supposed to be in marriage. Ellen White condemns the practice of infidelity by those who profess to keep the commandments of God.<sup>67</sup> The statement she makes is an indication that even those who profess to be Christians can be guilty of infidelity.

One way the devil works to destroy marriages is to cause some to believe that adultery condemned in the law of God is not a heinous sin after all. Some sensible women believe it not offensive to God for them to be untrue to their marriage vows.<sup>68</sup> She goes on to say, “Satan rejoices to have sinners enter the church as professed Sabbath-keepers while they allow him (Satan) to control their minds and affections, using them to deceive and corrupt others.”<sup>69</sup> This writer is saying that the devil uses certain individuals to deceive and corrupt others. Immorality is contagious. Satan would rather mislead as many people into infidelity as a way of destroying marriages.

### **Adultery as More Than a Physical Act**

Commenting on the seventh commandment Ellen White says the Ten Commandments “forbid not only acts of impurity, but sensual thoughts and desires, or any practice that tends to excite them. Purity is demanded not only on the outward life

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<sup>66</sup>Ellen White, *Mind, Character and Personality* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1977), 2: 220.

<sup>67</sup>Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1871), 2:352.

<sup>68</sup>Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1889), 5:140.

<sup>69</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1889), 5:140.

but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart.”<sup>70</sup> The sin of adultery, according to this writer is not just physical, it is mental and emotional. It is indeed a spiritual problem. Many may not have committed the sin physically but are just as sinful by the entertainment of evil thoughts. The demand for purity in the secret intents and emotions of the heart, as Ellen White puts it is a serious matter. This goes beyond the act to what goes on in the secret chambers of the heart.

Ellen White says that Christ’s followers are to rebuke kings and everyone for their iniquity just like John rebuked the adultery of Herod. John’s life was exposed to danger when he chose to rebuke the king but he was faithful to duty. Christians are to be just as faithful today as was John the Baptist.<sup>71</sup> Infidelity in high places has become so common today. It is the responsibility of Christ’s followers to rebuke such. Ellen White relates a vision she was shown, of a certain man who occupied a responsible position who was intimate with another man’s wife. This man was seen with the woman sitting on his lap, kissing one another.<sup>72</sup> The picture given here is ugly, where infidelity was taking place by a man who occupied a very responsible position in the work of God. Ellen White expressed feelings of anger upon seeing this vision. The practice of infidelity remains an abomination.

### **God’s People to be Patterns of Holiness**

God’s people should be “patterns of piety, holy in heart and in conversation. The people whom God has chosen as His peculiar treasure, he requires to be elevated,

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<sup>70</sup>Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890), 308.

<sup>71</sup>Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 2:151.

<sup>72</sup>Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 3:44.

refined, sanctified-partakers of His divine nature.”<sup>73</sup> Unfaithfulness on the part of God’s people brings reproach to God’s church, it gives the enemies of God an occasion to reproach His church and His people. It weakens the Church’s witness to the world. The book of Romans says, “For it is written, ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you’ (Rom. 2:24). At stake, here, is the name of God and His church. Acts of immorality by God’s children put God’s credibility at stake. The mission of the Church here on earth is compromised.

Adultery, along with sensuality and licentiousness are given as sins that are committed by those who bear the message.<sup>74</sup> Ellen White repeats this sad scenario again and again. This is in view of the fact that members look to leadership for examples, if leadership fails in this regard then the work of God is hampered. Purity is the greatest argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, especially on the part of those who bear the message of salvation. Ellen White says that professed Christians do commit adultery also. She says “many who profess to be ministers of Christ are like the sons of Eli who ministered in the sacred office, and took advantage of their office to engage in crime and commit adultery”<sup>75</sup> The judgment that is to come shall bring such to justice if they do not repent.

White admits that, “Adultery is one of the terrible sins of the age. This sin exists among professed Christians of every class: but is found to exist to the greatest extent among those who war against the law of Jehovah.”<sup>76</sup> White says. The sin exists

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<sup>73</sup>Ellen White, *A Solemn Appeal* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist, 1870), 143.

<sup>74</sup>Ellen White, *Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View CA: Pacific Press, 1923), 526.

<sup>75</sup>Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1870, par. 5.

<sup>76</sup>Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1870, par 7.

to a greater extent among those who do not regard the law of God. Both Christian and non-Christian alike commit this sin. God's people are expected to be different and they need to be a separate people, not partaking of the sins of the world. The Christians should by precept and example show the world a "better and nobler way"<sup>77</sup> A life of purity is the greatest argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity.

Commenting on the effects of alcoholic drinks Ellen White says, "licentiousness, adultery, and vices of almost every type, are committed as the result of indulging the appetite for wine and cider"<sup>78</sup> When an individual is no longer in control of himself, the sin of adultery may easily be committed.

Ellen White speaks about professed believers who engage in the sin of adultery. She says, "Some who profess to keep all the commandments of God are guilty of the sin of adultery"<sup>79</sup> She is greatly troubled by this behavior on the part of God's people. This abomination is just as prevalent in the church as it is outside the church. This must be a sad and an unfortunate situation that prevails in God's church.

### **Summary**

The Bible's position on infidelity is very consistent, infidelity is a sin that is so abhorrent before God. Wherever the sin was committed God never took it lightly. Many people who got involved in the sin were condemned to death. God destroyed more than two thousand in one day on account of infidelity. The law given at Mt Sinai

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<sup>77</sup>White, *Adventist Home*, 329.

<sup>78</sup>Ellen White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 433.

<sup>79</sup>Ellen White, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923) 621.



clearly forbade committing adultery. The sin of adultery, just like any other sin, can be forgiven. David's sin with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, was forgiven.

The prohibition of infidelity was affirmed in the New Testament in different ways. Jesus expressed the indissolubility of the marriage covenant. He condemned infidelity in the strongest of terms, saying that whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Jesus, in dealing with the case of a certain woman who was caught in the act of adultery, showed His compassion for the poor woman by forgiving her of her sin but told her not to sin again.

Ellen White maintains the same position with the Bible. Unfaithfulness or adultery is a sin for which those who are involved in it will not inherit the kingdom of God. She speaks much on the prevalence of the sin among those who occupy responsible positions in the propagation of the gospel. She laments the evilness of such practices, especially in view of the fact that such practices tarnish the image of God and that of His Church.

## CHAPTER 3

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Having looked at what the Bible and Ellen White say on infidelity the research now turns to other writers. The chapter is going to proceed as follows: the institution of marriage comes first, followed by the following; the prevalence of infidelity, possible causes of infidelity, impact of infidelity on families, children, communities and churches and healing in instances of infidelity.

#### **The Marriage Institution**

Marriage was instituted of God. It is not a man-made institution. John O Macharia says, “Though marriage is a legal agreement between two people, it is also a spiritual union...it is an act of God that unites the two together physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. God Himself legalizes the marriage in heaven.”<sup>1</sup> To view marriage as an institution that has nothing to do with God is responsible for the distortions that are prevailing in the world today.

Macharia goes on to say, “Of all the covenant relationships entered into on earth, marriage has attached to it a stern warning that no human being should try to break the two apart.”<sup>2</sup> The ideas that come through from the foregoing quotation are that marriage is a covenant and that marriage is indissoluble.

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<sup>1</sup>John O. Macharia, *Beyond the Vows* (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive 2004), 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 15.

A covenant differs from a contract in that when a contract is breached, the contract falls apart while a covenant is permanent. God designed marriage to last.

Talking about the difference between marriage as a contract or a covenant Omeonu has this to say, “The difference between contract and covenant are explicit: Contracts engage the services of people while covenants engage individuals. Contracts are for stipulated periods of time while covenants are forever. Contracts are witnessed by people with the State as Guarantor while covenants are witnessed by God with God as the Guarantor.”<sup>3</sup> Trivializing the institution of marriage may be, in a way, trivializing the author of marriage.

Omeonu describes marriage as, “An institution ordained by God which started in Eden (Gen. 2:20), involving the sacred covenant joining a man and woman in holy matrimony for the sake of companionship and procreation till death do they part from each other.”<sup>4</sup> Emphasis is not to be on procreation because marriage is complete even in the absence of children.

### **The Challenge of Infidelity**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church sees infidelity as a departure from God’s ideal for marriage. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual says that violation of the seventh commandment of the law of God as it relates to the marriage institution and biblical standards of moral conduct is an offense for which discipline is

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<sup>3</sup>Omeonu, *Marrying for a True Marriage*, 3.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

necessary.<sup>5</sup> This position is in keeping with what the Bible says. The Bible articulates the same position. Whoever fails in this regard is liable for church discipline.

The seventh commandment of the law of God prohibits adultery. “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14). The SDA Church’s position is further articulated in the book; *Adventists Believe* as follows, “The seventh commandment remains in effect and unchanged: Thou shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14). No qualifiers or disqualifiers are mentioned here. This commandment is a principle that jealously guards the marriage relationship”<sup>6</sup> This position is affirming the teachings of both the Old and New Testaments. It is in keeping with the writings of Ellen White. Not to commit adultery is to guard the sanctity of the marriage institution. Dobson affirms the Adventist position on adultery. He says, “Sexual promiscuity is forbidden by God and is destructive to marriages.”<sup>7</sup> The prohibition is meant to protect the institution of marriage as God designed it to be.

James Dobson goes on to say, “The full import of the biblical view of fornication and adultery stands in direct contrast to today’s tolerance of such activities by ‘consenting adults’ Many passages in both the Old and New Testament condemn such practices”<sup>8</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s position on infidelity is that infidelity is sin. “Adventists believe sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital

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<sup>5</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh day Adventist Church Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1990), 62.

<sup>6</sup>Seventh-day Adventists Believe, A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines (Washington DC: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1988), 301.

<sup>7</sup>James Dobson, *Love Must Be Tough* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1983), 145.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

relationship of a man and a woman, as designed by God during creation.”<sup>9</sup> The Bible condemns adultery in no uncertain terms. It is necessary now to turn to other writers who wrote on the topic.

### **The Prevalence of Infidelity**

The Bible regards infidelity and other forms of sexual immorality as sin. The Spirit of Prophecy says that infidelity or adultery is sin. Despite the fact that the Bible calls adultery sin, its prevalence provides shocking statistics. Traditionally, the African Continent had a limited number of infidelity cases. This was due to the fact that chastity was considered a virtue. G. M. Mwikamba says, “In Kenya, different ethnic groups considered sexual purity an honor of the family, virginity the glory of a young woman and community, and faithfulness the crown of a married woman or man to the whole clan.”<sup>10</sup> The traditional African communities had deterrents to the temptation to infidelity built within their beliefs. The disintegration of the communities has opened floodgates to allow infidelity. Chastity was held in high regard. This may not be the case anymore. In some communities, infidelity is actually celebrated.

Writing on the prevalence of infidelity, Rebecca Lake says that 21% of men and 15% of women would cheat at some point. She says 74% of men and 68% of women would cheat if there was no chance of them getting caught.<sup>11</sup> Fear of being

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<sup>9</sup>Seventh-day Perspective on Abuse and Domestic Violence, “Sexual Behavior,” accessed 7 March 2015, <http://www.adventist.org.au/domestic-violence-seventh-day-adventist-perspective>.

<sup>10</sup>G. M. Mwikamba, “Changing Morals in Africa,” in *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi and A. Nasimiyu-Wasike (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton, 2003), 93.

<sup>11</sup>Rebecca Lake, “23 Eye-opening Truths,” accessed 14 June 2014, [www.creditdonkey.com/infidelity-statistics-htm](http://www.creditdonkey.com/infidelity-statistics-htm).

caught or discovered may be what may stop some from engaging in the sin of infidelity. The fear of God and the realization of the sinfulness of infidelity may be the best reason not to commit infidelity and not the fear of being caught. Kathleen Winsor says, “Adultery is not a crime, it is an amusement.”<sup>12</sup> The feeling that infidelity is an amusement may be the reason why the prevalence of infidelity may be on the rise every day.

In her book; *Extramarital Affairs: Hope for Recovery*, Peggy Vaughan says, “Conservative estimates are that 60 percent of men and 40 percent of women will have an extramarital affair.”<sup>13</sup> This may mean that the situation with regards to infidelity may be going to levels where it may not be regarded as a vice today.

What makes infidelity difficult to understand is that when people are just getting married, they promise to be faithful to one another until death. Within the first seven years something happens to the relationship that leaves the parties to the marriage union going out to commit adultery. One writer says, “Statistics show infidelity is one of the leading causes of marital disruption and divorce; one in every three marriages end in divorce. Affairs have become common today more than ever and slowly rising are online affairs which are equally harmful.”<sup>14</sup> Marriages may not be happy as a result of adultery.

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<sup>12</sup>Kathleen Winsor, “Kathleen Winsor Quotes,” accessed 15 July 2014, [www.azquotes.com/quote/836048](http://www.azquotes.com/quote/836048).

<sup>13</sup>Peggy Vaughan, “*Extramarital Affairs: Hope for Recovery*,” accessed 22 March 2015, <http://www.2-in-2-1.co.uk/marriageclinic/infidelity/Extramarital/index4.html>.

<sup>14</sup> “Essay about Infidelity,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.123helpme.com/prevalence-of-infidelity-in-marriage-preview](http://www.123helpme.com/prevalence-of-infidelity-in-marriage-preview).

In the past, those who did not regard God and His word believed that infidelity was a vice. It seems that the belief has been eroded because infidelity has become so commonplace even among those who claim to believe in God and His word.

There is a growing notion that infidelity is not wrong after all. Writing on adultery, one writer says,

Throughout the world and in most religions, the act of adultery has been considered a crime punishable even by death. The Romans, the Jews, the Hindus, and many other cultures demanded that adulterers be executed. Yet, because religious leaders have failed to explain why adultery is such a grave act, humanity has gradually arrived to a stage where few people consider adultery a wrong action. In our modern “advanced” age, adultery is celebrated, enjoyed, and even encouraged by some so called ‘experts’<sup>15</sup>

The rightness or wrongness of adultery is not to be determined by man. Humanity, if left to determine whether it is good or bad to commit adultery, some would say it is not a problem. Whether or not some people would pronounce adultery sinless, God continues to call it sin. Rodriguez says,

When dealing with questions of sexual morality, we have to ask: who determines what is morally right or good? Is it the legal system of a secular society or the permissiveness that characterize it? For the Christian, the answer is clear: God has revealed His will in the scriptures. When legal systems betray Christian morality, we must obey God.<sup>16</sup>

The sinfulness of infidelity is not left to man to judge, God says it is sin.

Discussing this topic with a learned (lawyer) friend one day, the researcher was shocked to hear him say that writing against infidelity was a useless exercise. He was in effect saying that there was nothing wrong with infidelity. In his opinion, infidelity was not an issue to worry about. This way of thinking has become more widespread

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<sup>15</sup>“What is Adultery?” accessed 18 March 2015, [gnosticteachings.org/faqs/sex/1661-what-is-adultery.html](http://gnosticteachings.org/faqs/sex/1661-what-is-adultery.html)?

<sup>16</sup>Manuel Rodriguez, “Sex Seriously,” accessed 12 May 2016, [www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/ot-texts-ethics/Sex seriously](http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/ot-texts-ethics/Sex%20seriously).

across cultures, an unfortunate development however. Tracey Clark has this to say, “The best educated guess, according to researchers at the University of Texas at Austin, is that an affair takes place within 40 to 76 percent of marriages”<sup>17</sup> If this is to be taken as fact, then we have every reason to believe that infidelity has reached alarming proportions. It may then be feared that it will get worse with time. While the figures given above may be correct in some parts of the world it is to be hoped that such places are few, the rest of the world may not be that bad.

Noel Bidderman has been known to say, “No one can show me a culture on the planet where infidelity doesn’t happen”<sup>18</sup> This writer is in effect saying infidelity is so common in every culture. He sees infidelity as a common occurrence in every culture on the planet. In other words, infidelity cannot be confined to one particular culture. Infidelity is a universal vice that is slowly becoming accepted as a normal practice, unfortunately. Wilson Wanyoike says, “Adultery is not just physical sex. It is a sin of the body, mind and the heart,”<sup>19</sup> limiting adultery to the physical union is a serious understatement of the facts about it. Even in the absence of a physical encounter, adultery can take place.

In the country of Zimbabwe, the financial Gazette of June 12, 2014 reported that infidelity cases were on the rise. The report went on to say that by popularizing the ‘small house’ phenomenon, the nation had accepted infidelity as part of the

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<sup>17</sup>Tracy Clark, “How Common is Infidelity Anyway?” accessed 3 March 2015, [www.salon.com/2011/06/12/infidelity\\_3/](http://www.salon.com/2011/06/12/infidelity_3/).

<sup>18</sup>Noel Bidderman, “Online Adultery Booming as Cheating Sites Surge,” accessed 19 March 2015, <http://www.news24.com/Technology/News/Online-adultery-booming-as-cheating-sites-surge-20140212>.

<sup>19</sup>Wanyoike, *Understanding Youth and Family Issues from a Christian Perspective* (Makuyu, Kenya: Don Bosco, 2003), 102.



society.<sup>20</sup> The ‘small house’ phenomenon has become so popular in the country of Zimbabwe. John Chimunhu, in an article entitled “Adultery Rocks Zimbabwean Marriages” says, “Though there are no official statistics or reliable survey results to show the extent of adultery in Zimbabwe, the number of high profile adultery related divorce and maintenance cases that are brought to the courts, indicate that the problem is huge and growing, threatening the very foundations of ordered society.”<sup>21</sup> The foregoing statement is indicative of a problem that has far-reaching implications. The country faces a pandemic that threatens the very foundations of a descent society.

Itai Mazire refers to adultery in Zimbabwe as Zimbabwe’s dark secret.<sup>22</sup> He says that the rise in maintenance cases is an indication of the rise in infidelity cases.

### **Types of Extramarital Affairs**

There are many different types of infidelity. Some types are more destructive than the others. Each type of infidelity inflicts some form of impact on the marriage relationship. The impress on the marital relationship differs from type to type. “In recent years, cheating has been reclassified to include not only the physical affair but, also the emotional affair.”<sup>23</sup> The above mentions the emotional affair as a type of

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<sup>20</sup>The Financial Gazette, “Costs of Infidelity,” accessed 12 June 2014, <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/costs-of-infidelity/>.

<sup>21</sup>John Chimunhu, “Adultery Rocks Zimbabwean Marriages,” accessed 12 June 2015, <http://newsofthesouth.com/adultery-rocks-zimbabwean-marriages/>.

<sup>22</sup>Itai Mazire, “Adultery: Zimbabwe’s Dark Secret,” accessed 4 June 2015, <https://www.google.co.zw/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=bulawayo24.com%20Findex-id-opinion-sc-columnist-byo-14476html>.

<sup>23</sup>Cathy Meyer, “What is the Difference between an Emotional and Physical affair?” accessed 21 March 2015, <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/emotionalaffairs/f/emotianlaffair.html>.

infidelity other than the physical affairs. It is important to know that there are a lot more types of affairs other than the two mentioned above.

### **Physical Affair**

The physical affair is the most common of all the types of infidelity. It is also the oldest known type of infidelity. Laurence has this to say about the physical affair, “Simply put, physical cheating is the act of being intimate with someone other than your spouse or significant other, it is one of the most common forms of cheating.”<sup>24</sup> This is the kind of infidelity where a man or a woman gets physically sexually involved with someone other than his or her marital partner. In the past, this was the only known type of infidelity. Little did people know that there are many other types of infidelity that are just as destructive and as dangerous. Physical contact is normally the most prominent feature of physical affairs. Physical affairs are known to be common in every culture.

### **Emotional Affair**

This is a kind of infidelity that does not include physical involvement. Psychology Today magazine defines this kind of infidelity as follows, “emotional infidelity refers to behavior that one partner engages in that fosters emotional intimacy in the here-and-now with someone else, and sometimes promotes the possibility of sexual intimacy in the future.”<sup>25</sup> Emotional affairs are normally very secretive, making it difficult to tell whether your spouse is involved in this kind of

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<sup>24</sup>Bridget Michelle Laurence, “Different Forms of Cheating in a Relationship,” accessed 21 March 2015, <http://datingtips.match.com/different-forms-cheating-relationship-13197019.html>.

<sup>25</sup>Seth Meyers, “How to Define Emotional Infidelity,” accessed 19 March 2015, [www.psychologytoday.com/blog/insight-is--2020/201106/how-define-emotional-infidelity](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/insight-is--2020/201106/how-define-emotional-infidelity).

cheating. Writing on emotional affairs Meyers says, “Because the connection is not sexually based, there are fewer opportunities to detect the infidelity. For example, when there’s no need for a hotel room, it’s difficult for anyone to find proof of the betrayal upon review of a credit card bill tossed in the trash.”<sup>26</sup> Emotional infidelity may be completely hidden to the other spouse’s view, making it very difficult to detect. Mary DeGenova says, “For some people, extra marital affairs represent an effort to fulfill emotional needs.”<sup>27</sup> Emotional relationships may occur because there may be a desire to satisfy one’s emotional needs. Birch says, “Becoming emotionally invested in another person means you have checked out of your marriage.”<sup>28</sup> People may continue to share the same house as husband and wife while one has checked out already. Emotional affairs can be so subtle, and so damaging that it can rob the relationship of what matters most.

Similarly, Debbie Cherry says,

Most affairs begin as an innocent connection between two people. You may be brought together through work, church or school. But if your guard isn’t up and your boundaries aren’t well-established, a newly developing connection can quickly become entangled. As you spend time together, either face-to-face, through the computer or phone, you may find yourself emotionally and physically sucked into an emotional affair that can rip a marriage to shreds even though the relationship never becomes physical.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Seth Meyers, “How to Define Emotional Infidelity,” accessed 19 March 2015, [www.psychologytoday.com/blog/insight-is--2020/201106/how-define-emotional-infidelity](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/insight-is--2020/201106/how-define-emotional-infidelity).

<sup>27</sup>Mary Kay DeGenova, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2008) 382.

<sup>28</sup>Jenna Birch, “12 Surprising Facts about Infidelity,” accessed 19 July 2015, [www.womansday.com/dating-marriage/advice/a6716/infidelity-marriage/](http://www.womansday.com/dating-marriage/advice/a6716/infidelity-marriage/).

<sup>29</sup>Debbie Cherry, “Emotional Affairs,” accessed 19 March 2015, <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/divorce-and-infidelity/affairs-and-adultery/emotional-affairs>.

The relationship is regarded as an affair in the sense that the existing marriage relationship gets affected and may begin to suffer. If a partner in a marriage relationship gets involved in an emotional affair his/her availability to his/her partner is reduced drastically as he/she spends more time relating to the emotional partner.

An emotional affair drives a wedge between committed partners. The couple's otherwise good relationship suffers when emotional infidelity sets in. Binder and Shield say, "emotional infidelity is defined when one partner goes outside the primary relationship to get his or her emotional needs met- and it is more common and more damaging than you might imagine"<sup>30</sup> Many people argue that this emotional attachment is not infidelity if there is no physical contact. The above writers say that it is the most damaging. It has a way of robbing the marriage relationship of the intimacy it deserves.

### **Flings**

A fling affair is defined as "a deliberately short-term sexual relationship between two people. Longer than a one-night stand, not as serious-sounding "affair", more frankly physical than the discreet or twee 'dalliance', the word has the association of a much-needed sexual relief from stress, worry or hang-ups. No deep personal involvement required, just the sex and a bit of attention"<sup>31</sup> This kind of affair has no commitment to one another at all. It is normally about sex, and there is nothing deeper in fling relationships

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<sup>30</sup> Lisa Shield, "Emotional Infidelity," accessed 19 March 2015, [www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/28/emotional-infidelity](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/28/emotional-infidelity).

<sup>31</sup> Kofi Flings, "Top Definition," accessed 19 March 2015, [www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=fling](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=fling).

## **Cyber Affair**

The Free Dictionary defines a cyber affair “as an online relationship with another person via e-mail, chat room or virtual reality community such as Second Life. Cyber affairs run the gamut from casual conversations to divulging intimate emotions and desires”<sup>32</sup> It is possible for individuals to spend long hours on the internet, chatting with friends. Some of these conversations become so intimate to constitute emotional affairs. Joan D Atwood and Limor Schwartz say that cyber-sex is one of the most difficult types of extra-marital affairs to define.<sup>33</sup>

The American Psychological Association says, “Several studies suggest that even when there is no in-person contact, online affairs can be just as devastating as the real-world variety, triggering feelings of insecurity, anger and jealousy. Women usually feel more threatened by the emotional betrayal of a partner’s online affair, while men are more concerned about physical encounters.”<sup>34</sup> Cyber affairs are just as bad as physical affairs. They exert such a toll on the relationship. Jenna Birch says, “Online cheating-without any physical contact is the most damaging type of infidelity.”<sup>35</sup> The author cited above concurs to the fact that cyber affairs destroy

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<sup>32</sup>“Cyber Affair Definition,” accessed 19 March 2015, Encyclopedia2 .thefreedictionary.com /cyber+affair.

<sup>33</sup>Joan D. Atwood and Limor Schwartz, “Cyber-Sex: The New Affair Treatment Considerations, *Journal of Family Therapy: Innovations in Clinical and Educational Interventions*,” accessed 21 October 2015 1:3, 37-56, DOI: 10.1300 /J398v01n03\_03, 2008.

<sup>34</sup>Brendan L. Smith, “Are Internet Affairs Different?” accessed 22 March 2015, vol. 42 no 3 Pg 48, accessed 22 March 2015, [www.apa.org/monitor/2011/03](http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/03).

<sup>35</sup>Jenna Birch, “12 Surprising Facts about Infidelity”, accessed 19 July 2015, [www.womansday.com/dating-marriage/advice/a6716/infidelity-in-marriage/](http://www.womansday.com/dating-marriage/advice/a6716/infidelity-in-marriage/) May 4, 2015.

marriages. The damage that is wrought by this type of an affair cannot be downplayed.

Like the other types of infidelity, this can wreck the marriage also. Smith says, “While there is no universally accepted definition, an internet affair frequently involves intimate chat sessions and sexually stimulating conversation or cybersex, which may include filming mutual masturbation with a web camera.”<sup>36</sup> There may be no actual physical union but the effect of cybersex on marital relationship may not differ from the actual physical union.

Online affairs can lead to fights, stress, bitterness, anger and divorce. These affairs do subject children to untold suffering as they watch their parents fight in the home. Some children may drop out of school on account of the disturbances caused by cyber affairs. Worst of all, the partner whose spouse is involved in this kind of cheating may end up making a decision to cheat also.

### **Serial Affair**

Willard Harley defines a serial cheater as “a married person who willfully and deliberately has had more than one extramarital romantic relationship.”<sup>37</sup> This is the type of an affair where cheating takes place repeatedly. Similarly, Linda Hatch defines serial cheating as “A pattern of repeated infidelity over time.”<sup>38</sup> An individual who does this is also known as chronic adulterer. E M Gichinga says serial adulterers

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<sup>36</sup>Jenna Birch, “12 Surprising Facts about Infidelity” accessed 19 July 2015, [www.womansday.com/dating-marriage/advice/a6716/infidelity-in-marriage/](http://www.womansday.com/dating-marriage/advice/a6716/infidelity-in-marriage/) May 4, 2015.

<sup>37</sup>Willard Harley, “Marriage Builders,” accessed 21 March 2015, [http://marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi8122\\_serial.html](http://marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi8122_serial.html).

<sup>38</sup>Linda Hatch, “The Impact of Addiction,” accessed 1 May 2015, <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/sex-addiction/2014/12/can-serial-cheaters-change/>.

“keep moving from one partner to another at different times of their lives and it becomes the story of their lives.”<sup>39</sup> This kind of cheating is the kind that an individual repeats again and again, moving from one partner to another. It is a kind of adultery that some married couples have to face repeatedly. Mark White, writing on serial adultery has this to say, “Serial adultery is an issue of character.”<sup>40</sup> It becomes an issue of character on the individual who engages in serial cheating. Just cheating once exerts such pressure on the cheated spouse, it is difficult to imagine how much pain the spouse who is to be cheated again and again goes through.

Researchers say that this kind of cheating is done not because there is something missing or something going wrong in the marital relationship, they just do it. Some authors say, “Serial cheaters are not filling up voids in their relationships, but are actually addicted to the thrill, danger, and overall excitement of infidelity. This makes serial infidelity more of a pathological issue, which is therefore more difficult to address.”<sup>41</sup> A marital relationship that has to go through this type of infidelity is the most to be sympathized with. The one cheating may be doing it due to pathological reasons and this may be difficult to correct.

Other affairs are done in order to make up for some lack in marriage. Serial affairs are done as the cheaters view affairs as exciting conquests. Married.answers.com says, “Married couples have been able to survive ordinary cases of infidelity, but serial infidelity is a different issue, and the repeated dismantling of

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<sup>39</sup>Emmy M. Gichinga, *Marriage Counseling* (Nairobi, Kenya: GEM Counseling, 2005), 73.

<sup>40</sup>Mark D. White, “Serial Adultery: Is it Chance or Character,” accessed 5 May 2015, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/maybe-its-just-me/201004/serial-adultery-is-it-chance-or-character>.

<sup>41</sup>“Serial Infidelity: What it is,” accessed 21 March 2015, [Married.answers.com/marriage-rights/serial-infidelity-what-is-itand-can-your-marriage-survive](http://Married.answers.com/marriage-rights/serial-infidelity-what-is-itand-can-your-marriage-survive).

trust in the relationship becomes more difficult to rebuild after each cheating incident.”<sup>42</sup> As indicated above, only a few relationships can survive this type of infidelity. The rest of the relationships that have to go through this kind of cheating experience chronic unhappiness or end up in divorce.

### **Obligatory Affair**

Victoria Wilson defines an obligatory affair as “getting involved with someone else out of a sense of obligation. It often occurs in a career advancement type situation as well, where you feel if you do not get involved with your boss, you would get fired.”<sup>43</sup> This is the kind of infidelity where someone who is committed to his/her spouse end up giving in to sexual advances by their bosses at work in order to keep their jobs.

It also happens in situations where, because of poverty, a widow, especially in Zimbabwe fails to turn down sexual advances from her late husband’s brothers for fear that should she choose to turn them down, her own children will not get the resources to go to school or get food.

### **Opportunistic Affair**

Victoria Wilson says that opportunistic affairs are situations where individuals get involved in infidelity with someone else because it presents an opportunity for advancement of some sort. Sometimes an individual may get sexually involved with his or her boss as a way of buying favors to be considered for career advancement, promotion or financial favors. Opportunistic affairs may begin as a way of trying to

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<sup>42</sup>“Serial Infidelity: What it is,” accessed 21 March 2015, [Married.answers.com/marriage-rights/serial-infidelity-what-is-itand-can-your-marriage-survive](http://Married.answers.com/marriage-rights/serial-infidelity-what-is-itand-can-your-marriage-survive).

<sup>43</sup>Victoria Wilson, “What is Obligatory Infidelity,” accessed 21 March 2015, <http://www.howcast.com/videos/513114-what-is-obligatory-infidelity-jealousy-affairs/>.



advance in some way, but they may end up becoming long lasting affairs. Some may leave their normal relationships (divorce) because of this kind of an affair.<sup>44</sup> This kind of an affair appears to be common among young couples that are looking for opportunities to advance in their careers.

### **An Exit Affair**

Katy Weitz says, “The purpose of an exit affair is to try to force the non-straying partner into ending the relationship. It is a way of saying ‘It’s over’ because open and honest communication has not been happening for a long time.”<sup>45</sup> The exit affair as mentioned above is an attempt to end the relationship. This is done because the relationship is perceived to be meaningless.

### **The Split in Two Affair**

The split in two affair is a type of marital infidelity. Weitz has this to say about this type of an affair, “This is when the straying partner wants it all. He (and usually it is he) wants his wife and family but he wants a mistress as well.”<sup>46</sup> This is the kind of a person who would want to keep his family intact while at the same time maintain an adulterous relationship with a mistress. He is happy to keep both. What he may not want to admit is the fact that he cannot love his wife and the mistress at the same time.

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<sup>44</sup>Victoria Wilson, “Opportunistic Infidelity,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.howcast.com /videos/513113-what-is-opportunistic-infidelity](http://www.howcast.com/videos/513113-what-is-opportunistic-infidelity).

<sup>45</sup>Katy Weitz, “The Exit Affair,” accessed 21 May 2014, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/lifestyle/sex-relationships/relationships/people-affairs-6-main-types-1538967>.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

## Possible Causes of Infidelity

Marital infidelity is a complex phenomenon. It comes in different shapes and sizes. It is not confined to any one geographical area or particular communities or societies. It is not limited to a particular age group. It transcends all human classifications and all religions in the world. There cannot be an exhaustive list of the causes of infidelity. Attempting to provide answers as to why and how all infidelity encounters have come by may be an exercise in futility.

Wilson Wanyoike says, “Changing sex roles as women have asserted their right to sexuality and sexual pleasure may be attributed to increased adultery.”<sup>47</sup> He goes on to say, “the use of contraceptives may also be responsible for the upsurge adultery among women.”<sup>48</sup> In the African context, infidelity would almost and always result in pregnancies. Contraceptives have changed this, hence the proliferation of infidelity cases among women. Tsapelas says that it is generally known that infidelity gets more approval among those who were unfaithful at some point in their lives.<sup>49</sup> There are some generally observed reasons why marital infidelity strikes in marital relationships.

### Psychological Factors

There are some psychological reasons that affect the sexual life of individuals. Omeonu “stated that there are many psychological factors that cause sexual

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<sup>47</sup>Wilson Wanyoike, *Understanding Youth and Family Issues from a Christian Perspective* (Makuyu, Kenya: Don Bosco, 2003), 100.

<sup>48</sup>Wanyoike, 101.

<sup>49</sup>Irene Tsapelas, Helen E. Fisher, and Arthur Aron, “Infidelity: When, Where, Why,” *The Dark Side of Close Relationships II* (2011): 175–195.

dysfunction; developmental factors include negative family attitudes towards sex and sexuality; personal factors include learned and adopted fears—fear of poor performance, pregnancy, pain, venereal disease or fear of sexual failure.”<sup>50</sup> Some of these psychological factors may not be realistic but they have a way of affecting a person’s sex life. Fisher and Aron have this to say, “A prominent psychological factor associated with infidelity is the degree of satisfaction in one’s primary, committed relationship.”<sup>51</sup> When the sex life of a spouse in a marriage relationship is affected, chances of infidelity may be increased.

### **Religious Factors**

Religious factors may also affect sexual performance in a marriage. Omeonu says, “Religious factors have to do with the belief system and the value of sexuality in one’s religious considerations.”<sup>52</sup> Religion is known to regulate one’s behavior in almost everything. If a person was immersed in the belief that sex is a sinful act, that individual will always look at sex as a sinful encounter, something that is loathsome in God’s sight. This mentality will cause a person not to look at sex positively. The partner of such a person will be deprived of sex in the relationship. The deprived spouse will end up getting involved in infidelity.

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<sup>50</sup> Chimezie A. Omeonu, *After You Say “I Do:” The Making of a Successful Marriage and Family Life* (Nigeria: Unique Impressions, 2007), 56.

<sup>51</sup> Irene Tsapelas, Helen E. Fisher, and Arthur Aron, “Infidelity: When, Where, Why,” 6.

<sup>52</sup> Omeonu, *After You Say “I Do,”* 56.

## Physical Conditions

Omeonu says, “There is no human activity that is without problems. Sex is equally not excluded.”<sup>53</sup> Just like what happens in all human activities, sex experiences some periods when it may not function properly. It is believed that when the sex life of a couple is not as it should be, or has ceased to exist in a relationship, this may predispose partners to infidelity. There are some physical factors or conditions that may precipitate unfortunate situations in a marriage. Such factors may be beyond the couple’s capacity to change or correct. Such physical factors include things such as;

**Vaginismus.** Vaginismus is described as “Painful, involuntary spasm of the muscles surrounding the entrance to the vagina. Vaginismus interferes with sexual intercourse.”<sup>54</sup> If the couple can no longer enjoy conjugal rights in their relationship, chances are the man may go out to find relief from outside the confines of his own marriage. Clifford and Joyce Penner have this to say, “This inability to have sexual intercourse can also be caused by vaginismus, that is, an involuntary closing of the vagina.”<sup>55</sup> This interference with sexual intercourse may cause the husband to engage in marital infidelity.

The same authors go on to say, “It can tighten to such a degree that it is impossible to insert even a small finger, let alone the penis.”<sup>56</sup> When failure to have sexual intercourse in a marital relationship is protracted, temptation to infidelity may

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<sup>53</sup>Chimezie A. Omeonu, *After You Say “I Do,”* 54.

<sup>54</sup>The Family Medical Encyclopedia, ed., Michael Peters (London, United Kingdom: Dorlin Kindersley, 2008), 781.

<sup>55</sup>Clifford and Joyce Penner, *A Gift for All Ages* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 32.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 179.

come in. While it may be clear in the mind of a marriage partner that infidelity is not right, He/she will, however go ahead anyway. Satisfying oneself by indulging in infidelity remains an abomination before God. It is necessary for the couple concerned to discuss their challenge and seek medical attention if necessary.

**Erectile dysfunction.** Erectile Dysfunction (ED) is a condition where the man (husband) is not able to get or sustain an erection to have sex with his wife. The Family Medical Encyclopedia describes the condition as “The inability to achieve or maintain an erection.”<sup>57</sup> The erection may not be hard enough for penetration to take place. When there is this kind of a challenge in a marital relationship, the woman (wife) feels so deprived at times that she ends up going out to meet this need.

Normally for ED to take place, there is sometimes an underlying health factor that may be responsible for it. Cunningham has this to say about ED, “Anything that limits blood flow to the penis can cause ED. The most common conditions that limit blood flow include cigarette smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure and normal aging.”<sup>58</sup> If the underlying health cause is identified and treated, the problem may disappear. ED is responsible for pushing women out of their relationships in order to find sexual pleasure. The Sunday news of July 24, 2016 carried a story in which a long-standing impotence (ED) issue ended with the husband killing his wife before killing himself after discovering that his wife was having a nice time with someone

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<sup>57</sup>The Family Medical Encyclopedia, ed, Michael Peters (London, United Kingdom: Dorlin Kindersley, 2008), 280.

<sup>58</sup>Glenn R. Cunningham, “Beyond the Basics,” accessed 9 May 2016, <http://www.uptodate.com /contents/sexual-problems-in-men-beyond-the-basics>.

else as a way of getting what her husband was no longer able to provide.<sup>59</sup> Such cases are on the increase.

Infidelity may find its way into marital relationships that may appear to be doing well. If the husband is shy to go to the Doctor for help, the problem may persist. It is important for the husband to share his condition with his wife so that she gets to know and to appreciate why the husband may not be performing as is to be expected. It may also be necessary for couples to approach psychologists for help.

**Vaginal fusions.** Vaginal fusions refer to a condition in women where the ‘lips’ of the vagina get fused together. Vaginal fusions are also known as labial adhesions. Amanda Oakley says, “Labial adhesions mean that the labia minora are stuck together (“fused”).”<sup>60</sup> Labial adhesions may lead to painful sex. The pain may be so pronounced that it may mean that the woman may want to avoid sex by all means to avoid the pain. When a woman decides to avoid sex on account of the pain caused by labial adhesions, the man (husband) becomes vulnerable. If the husband is unable to get sexual fulfillment at home, he may end up looking for satisfaction outside the home. Infidelity may come in as a result of lack of sexual intercourse at home.

**Arousal disorders.** Psychology today defines an arousal disorder as “an aberration during any stage of the sexual response cycle (desire, arousal, orgasm, and resolution) that prevents the experience of satisfaction through sexual activity. A person with this disorder may be interested in sexual intercourse but has difficulty

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<sup>59</sup>Staff Reporter, The Sunday News, July 24, 2016, [www.man%20pumps%2011%20bullets%20on%20wife,%20turns%20gun%20on%20sel](http://www.man%20pumps%2011%20bullets%20on%20wife,%20turns%20gun%20on%20sel).

<sup>60</sup>Amanda Oakley, “Labial Adhesions,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.dermnetnz.org/site-age-apefic/labial-adhesions-adult.html](http://www.dermnetnz.org/site-age-apefic/labial-adhesions-adult.html).

becoming stimulated enough to go through with it.”<sup>61</sup> The condition may militate against having and sustaining an erection for meaningful sexual intercourse, while in women there may be an inability to lubricate the vagina enough for sexual activity to proceed normally.

Arousal disorders may lead to infidelity on the part of the spouse who does not have this condition but is living with a spouse who has the condition. If, say, the husband is the one who has the abovementioned condition and the wife is functioning normally, protracted deprivation may lead some women to try infidelity. Although there is no justification whatsoever for infidelity in the word of God, some relationships may experience infidelity on account of arousal disorders.

**Dyspareunia.** Dyspareunia is a condition that is known to interfere with normal sexual intercourse. Mayo Clinic Staff define it as, “Persistent or recurrent genital pain that occurs just before or after intercourse.”<sup>62</sup> Painful intercourse may be endured for a moment but soon the decision to abandon sex altogether may become inevitable. When a partner in a marriage decides to abandon sexual intercourse completely for fear of pain, the other partner may end up looking for sex outside the confines of their marriage. Thus, dyspareunia may cause lead to infidelity.

### **Medical Conditions**

Certain medical conditions predispose individuals to situations that may precipitate infidelity in marital relationships. Some chronic illness may affect the nervous system, the circulatory system, the endocrine system and other systems of the

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<sup>61</sup>“Sexual Desire Disorder,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.psychologytoday.com/conditions /sexual-arousal-disorder](http://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions /sexual-arousal-disorder).

<sup>62</sup>“Painful Intercourse,” accessed 22 March 2015, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/painful-intercourse/basics/definition/con-20033293>.

body. Nusbaum has this to say, “Chronic illness and its treatment can have a negative impact on sexual functioning. The mechanism of interference may be neurologic, vascular, endocrinologic, musculoskeletal or psychologic.”<sup>63</sup> When these systems are affected, they in turn affect the normal sexual performance in the human body, leading to the unaffected partner looking elsewhere for sexual fulfillment. An erectile disorder may be as a result of a poorly functioning circulatory or nervous system. The most common conditions that affect normal sexual activity between married couples include high blood pressure and diabetes.

### **Relational Causes**

A sound marital relationship is known to fireproof marriages against infidelity. Where the relationship is not doing well, chances of infidelity are high. Leman has this to say, “The extra-marital affair is the most tragic result of unmet needs in marriage.”<sup>64</sup> When there is fighting, endless disputes and harassment of one another in a marital relationship, infidelity may set in as partners seek solace in relationships outside the home. Similarly, Samuel W Kunhiyop says that infidelity may happen as “compensation for an unsatisfactory sexual relationship with a wife or husband”<sup>65</sup> A relationship that has lost the first love may find itself having to deal with issues of infidelity. It must be the business of every couple to cultivate a good marital relationship as a way of countering temptations to infidelity.

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<sup>63</sup>Margaret Nusbaum, “Chronic Illness and Sexual Functioning,” accessed 21 December 2016, <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2003/0115/p347.html>.

<sup>64</sup>Kevin Leman, *Keeping Your Family Together When the World is Falling Apart* (Colorado Springs, CO: Focus On the Family, 1993), 141.

<sup>65</sup>Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive, 2008), 285.



If one spouse feels neglected in a relationship infidelity may want to take advantage of this to set its ugly head into the relationship. In her book, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families*, DeGenova says, “Marital disaffection involves the gradual loss of emotional attachment, a decline in caring, emotional estrangement, and an increasing sense of apathy, and indifference.”<sup>66</sup> When a partner feels that he or she is no longer number one to his or her partner, infidelity may come in.

When a partner begins to pay more attention to career, children, social life relatives or even civic responsibilities, the other spouse feels neglected. Leman says, “In many marriages, when the intimacy connection goes, an affair takes its place” he goes on to say, “It seems someone is always waiting in the wings or at the office water cooler, who is more than willing to fill the void.”<sup>67</sup> A neglected spouse may find what he or she is missing at home through an affair. It is important to keep the intimacy connection alive all the time. It is this connection, according to Leman, that works as a hedge to protect the marriages from infidelity.

The same author discusses the possibility of a marital relationship getting to be malnourished. He says, “And one day intimacy dies, not in angry battle, but of malnutrition.”<sup>68</sup> Like any living organism, marriage needs proper nourishment. Failure to get proper nourishment, the marriage may suffer. Leman talks of a love bank that can be overdrawn until there is no more love left.<sup>69</sup> A relationship whose

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<sup>66</sup>Mary K. DeGenova, *Intimate Relationships, Marriages and Families* (New York, NY: Mcgraw Hill, 2008), 409.

<sup>67</sup>Leman, 144.

<sup>68</sup>Leman, 144.

<sup>69</sup>Leman, 145.

love has been eroded completely has the potential of predisposing the partners concerned to infidelity.

Lack of appreciation makes someone to feel less wanted. It is important to learn to appreciate one another as husband and wife. When there is no appreciation the feeling of being unwanted sets in and temptations to infidelity may be difficult to resist. Relationships where partners harass one another may also lead to infidelity. The ‘deficit model’ may be responsible for marital unhappiness in many marital relationships. The deficit model represents a relationship that has lost its meaning and has become devoid of its soundness and taste in many respects. Such relationships become breeding grounds for the temptation to infidelity.

### **Family Scripts**

Marital scripts are expectations based on values or the way things are expected to be even among the future generations of a given family. Families may establish sets of rules or ways certain things are to be dealt with so that future generations will be required to follow the same ways of doing things. Hall says, “Family scripts provide ready guidance for action ... many of the cooperative roles are performed in the family with little thought and without the need for repeated negotiation.”<sup>70</sup> Some scripts may enforce the observance of certain practices which in themselves are against marriage as it should be in Christ.

Such practices may include things like; to ask a person to have intercourse with a brother’s wife to help her conceive if the husband is thought to be barren. This practice is still common in Zimbabwe. Another practice that is known to expose

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<sup>70</sup>John Bying-Hall, “The Family Script: A Useful Bridge between Theory and Practice,” accessed 2 May 2016, <https://www.google.co.zw/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=john%20bying%20hall%20family%20scripts>.

married individuals to infidelity is having some family member take over a deceased brother's wife even if the brother that is to take over is married. Practices like the few mentioned above are infidelity cases but some cultures may not consider them as such. They remain to be cases of infidelity in that God forbids sexual relationships outside one's marriage.

### **Barrenness**

Barrenness is one other factor that is known to predispose couples to infidelity. Specialists define infertility as, "Failure to become pregnant after a year of regular, unprotected intercourse."<sup>71</sup> In her article; *Infertility Social Impact*, Sally Robertson says, "Infertility represents a major crisis for most couples, with both partners experiencing loss in many ways that affect them as individuals, as family members and as members of society as a whole"<sup>72</sup> When a woman is not able to conceive, this is normally not taken lightly by the families involved. Omeonu says, "In many parts of the world, especially in Africa, barrenness is a major cause of polygamy and divorce. Cultural requirements have made barrenness a grievous problem; and a couple without a child of their own are left to eat the food of mockery and made to taste social hostility to its fullest."<sup>73</sup> Barren women have to endure the brunt of serious stigmatization.

This pressure that is directed at the 'barren' woman is capable of driving both the wife and the husband out of the confines of their relationship to commit adultery.

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<sup>71</sup>The Family Encyclopedia of Complimentary Health, ed., Nikki Bradford (London: Reed International Books, 1996), 214.

<sup>72</sup>Sally Robertson, "Infertility Social Impact," accessed 21 August 2016, <http://www.news-medical.net/health/Infertility-Social-Impact.aspx>.

<sup>73</sup>Omeonu, *After You Say "I Do,"* 177.

A lot of pressure is exerted on the 'barren' woman to the extent that she ends up going out to commit adultery to prove she is not barren. The excessive pressure, usually on the wife, comes from all members of the husband's family. The pressure sometimes becomes unbearable. In most cases, it is believed that if a couple stays for a long time without a child, it is because the woman is barren.

Little is said about a man's barrenness. Kunhiyop says, "It is important to refute the traditional belief that infertility was always the woman's fault. This belief led to much abuse of barren women."<sup>74</sup> Abusing barren women is being insensitive to their problems. It is important to realize that marriage is complete even if there are no children. Kunhiyop goes on to say, "Marriage is not defined by procreation but by the loving, permanent, committed and trusting union of a man and a woman."<sup>75</sup> The Bible says that children are a gift from God. Family support is necessary rather than faultfinding.

### **Social Media**

There is no doubt that social media has revolutionized the way people manage their work, family and relationships by the click of a button. A Zimbabwean Newspaper, the Herald of February 4, 2014 ran a story on Infidelity and the Social media revolution. In the story, it emerged that those couples with the propensity to cheat are finding it easier to cheat with the help of internet and social networking, especially with the smartphones.<sup>76</sup> The internet and social networking provide platforms for cheating.

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<sup>74</sup>Kunhiyop, 198.

<sup>75</sup>Kunhiyop, 202.

<sup>76</sup>Ruth Bataumocho, "Infidelity and the Social Media Revolution," accessed 22 March 2015, [www.herald.co.zw/infidelity-and-the-social-media-revolution/](http://www.herald.co.zw/infidelity-and-the-social-media-revolution/).

The paper reported that married people who were interviewed on whether they would feel comfortable if their marital partners accessed their smartphones and went through all that the phone contained. The disturbing result was that most of the couples said that they would not want that kind of a thing, citing their right to privacy. This is indicative of a growing culture of infidelity.<sup>77</sup>

Another Zimbabwean newspaper, The Standard, of December 13, 2013 carried a story entitled ‘Social Media Wreaks Havoc in Marriages’. The lady in the story pointed to social media as being responsible for destroying her marriage. She said, “It’s all because of this Facebook and WhatsApp that he (her husband) reunited with his lost lovers. I condemn it for real. It’s a disaster, a home-breaker...all the efforts that I have put in this marriage have been lost. I am grounded, it’s all because of this technology.”<sup>78</sup> Technology has made life easier in many ways, but it has caused a lot of suffering in marriages.

The American Academy of Matrimonial lawyers say, “one in every five divorce cases in the US now involves the use of social media”<sup>79</sup> Social media has become the pathway to infidelity. Actually, there is a growing loneliness in some marriage relationships because the partners are glued on their gadgets at the expense of their relationship.

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<sup>77</sup>Ruth Bataumocho, “Infidelity and the Social Media Revolution,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.herald.co.zw/infidelity-and-the-social-media-revolution/](http://www.herald.co.zw/infidelity-and-the-social-media-revolution/).

<sup>78</sup>Hazvinei Mwanaka, “Social Media Wreaks Havoc in Marriages,” accessed 23 March 2015, [www.thestandard.co.zw/2013/12/15/social-media-wreaks-havoc-marriages](http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2013/12/15/social-media-wreaks-havoc-marriages).

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

### **The ‘Small House’**

The small house is, “An informal, long-term, secret sexual relationship with another woman who is not a man’s legal wife, carried on in a house that is a smaller version of the man’s own house in another residential suburb.”<sup>80</sup> Usually the married male leaves his legal wife to go and be with a girlfriend for some days before he goes back to be with his wife and family. He provides for the needs of his girlfriend, usually more than he does to his wife and children. This type of infidelity is on the increase in Zimbabwe. Some men feel that it is a silent part of the marriage contract, or it has become a normal way of living. Relationships of this nature are purely about sex and nothing else. This phenomenon seems to be gaining acceptance every day. It is a clear case of infidelity.

### **Protracted Separations**

No amount of effort given in terms of justifying separations between a man and his wife can be able to yield positive results. The Chronicle Newspaper, one of the leading newspapers in Zimbabwe carried a story in which they reported a case of a woman whose husband left for South Africa and stayed there for years before coming back to be with his wife. Due to the protracted separation, the wife fell pregnant with another man.<sup>81</sup> Such cases are becoming more common.

Whatever the reasons for the separation, it remains an impediment to the marital relationship. God did not design that a man be separated from his wife or the wife from her husband. Life brings some situations where it becomes imperative for

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<sup>80</sup>Lois Chingandu, “The Small House,” accessed 23 March 2015, [http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/hivaid/safaids\\_small\\_houses\\_070612.pdf](http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/hivaid/safaids_small_houses_070612.pdf).

<sup>81</sup>Sukulwenkosi Dube, Cheating Wife Secretly Buries Baby. <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/cheating-wife-buries-baby/>.

husband and wife to separate for a while. Such separations are to be minimized. The desire for sex normally grows with the passing of days before one is able to be with his or her partner again. If the separation takes a long period, chances of infidelity grow also.

In some communities, there are ladies whose business is to monitor those homes where they see that the wife is absent from home. They do so in order to provide sexual services to the man, should they be required, for a fee. Some men get seduced and fail to overcome the temptation not to commit adultery.

### **Friendships at Work**

The work place may become a breeding ground for infidelity. For most people, more time is spent at the work place than at home with their spouses. Some people leave their homes before sunrise and come back after sunset. When they are at home they only have a few waking hours before they retire for the night. It is easy for friendships to develop at the workplace that may predispose individuals to infidelity.

Shirley Glass, an infidelity expert says, “46 percent of unfaithful wives and 62 percent of unfaithful husbands in her practice over the past two decades had affairs with someone at work.”<sup>82</sup> The work place has become a breeding ground for infidelity, it has become a danger zone. Gichima says that common extra-marital partners are colleagues at work.<sup>83</sup> In some workplaces one has to spend the whole working day confined to a single room (office) with someone who is not his or her marriage partner, and this can go on and on for years. Rebecca Lake says, “All the

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<sup>82</sup>Shirley Glass, “Dangerous Liaisons: Work Infidelities,” accessed 23 March 2015. [www.shirleyglass.com/dallas.html](http://www.shirleyglass.com/dallas.html).

<sup>83</sup>Emmy M. Gichima, 73.

people who are worried about their spouses cheating on the job may have good reasons to fret-research suggests that more than 60%of affairs begin at work.”<sup>84</sup>

It is important to watch these friendships well to avoid extremes that may be difficult to control in the end. Many unsuspecting couples ended up in situations of unfaithfulness that were difficulty to disentangle. A constant consciousness of what these friendships can do is key to managing the friendships.

### **Traditional Relationships (Sister-in-law, Niece)**

These are other Shona traditional relationships that if loosely guarded may end up leading people into infidelity. Great care is needed to keep these relationships in check. There are traditional relationships that are known to lead people into situations of infidelity. The relationships are not bad in themselves but they can be taken advantage of. In a country like Zimbabwe, a person’s wife’s sisters are traditionally supposed to be very close to their sister’s husband Dr. Nzenza has this to say,

It is common traditional knowledge that a niece-in-law or muramu has a responsibility to cook or wait upon her brother-in-law or babamukuru. The babamukuru (brother-in-law) has the responsibility to support his wife’s young sister. Traditionally, such responsibility includes providing sexual knowledge to the young girl and helping her to understand issues of marriage.<sup>85</sup>

The niece-in-law can go into her sister’s bedroom. They can put on their sister’s clothes and they can be so close to their sister’s husband more than what anyone else can do. This closeness has brought with it a lot of issues that have to do with infidelity.

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<sup>84</sup>Rebecca Lake, “Infidelity Statistics: 23 Eye-opening Truths,” accessed 10 March 2015, [www.creditdonkey.com/infidelity-statistics-html](http://www.creditdonkey.com/infidelity-statistics-html).

<sup>85</sup>Sekai Nzenza, “The Struggle to Maintain a Social Distance,” accessed 12 January 2016, <http://www.herald.co.zw/the-struggle-to-maintain-social-distance-from-muramu/>.



## **Pornography**

The use of pornography increases infidelity and divorce. Patrick Fagan, a psychologist and former Deputy Assistant Health and Human Services secretary calls pornography a “quiet family killer” and says it is time for citizens to buck the laissez-faire approach to porn.”<sup>86</sup>

Like high blood pressure, which is known as silent killer, pornography does the same to families.

Doctor Fagan lists the following as the effects of pornography on marriages;

Pornography use was correlated with an increase in infidelity of more than 300% (other factors may have also contributed to the infidelity, but it was a factor); 56% of divorce involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornography; Pornography use alters sexual attitudes and behavior; Pornography corrodes the conscience, promotes distrust between husbands and wives and debases untold thousands of young women; It is not harmless escapism but relational and emotional prison.<sup>87</sup>

It is important to note that pornography has serious negative side effects. It is addictive, it consumes a lot of precious time and it warps a person’s attitude towards sex. Ann Tolley says, “Pornography use has serious, negative side effects.”<sup>88</sup> The same author enumerates a number of problems that pornography presents. She says that pornography creates an emotional bond with an artificial and fake world, making it difficult for one to bond with real people. She goes on to say that pornography addict ends up feeling emotionally empty and disconnected from people around him/her. Pornography is time consuming. The precious time that is spent viewing

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<sup>86</sup>Patrick Fagan, “The Quiet Family Killer: Pornography and Marriage,” accessed 22 March 2015, <http://www.frc.org/issuebrief/the-effects-of-pornography-on-individuals-marriage-family-and-community>.

<sup>87</sup>Patrick Fagan, “Porn Use Increases Infidelity, Divorce,” accessed 22 March 2015, [Marriagegems.com/2010/04/02/porn-use-increases-infidelity/](http://Marriagegems.com/2010/04/02/porn-use-increases-infidelity/).

<sup>88</sup>Ann Tolley, “Toxic Side Effects of Pornography,” accessed 2 March 2017, <https://familyshare.com/394/10-toxic-side-effects-of-pornography-use>.

pornography robs the primary relationship of the quality time that the marital relationship requires. One of the unfortunate things that pornography does, according to Ann, is that sex ceases to be a wonderful source of connection between our deepest selves and a beloved partner. She also mentions that pornography can jeopardize work, relationships and interest in healthy pastimes.<sup>89</sup> Marital relationships suffer on account of pornography. It robs marriages of the intimacy that rightly belongs to them.

Madlen Davies says, “Regularly viewing pornography seemed to dull the response to sexual stimulation over time.”<sup>90</sup> Viewing pornography often tends to reduce sensitivity to sexual stimulation. This has a way of affecting marriages negatively. Intimacy in the marriage gets affected. Davies goes on to say, “After being exposed to so many lurid images in films, men have become desensitized and are increasingly unable to become excited by ordinary sexual encounters.”<sup>91</sup> In a relationship where the husband can no longer be stimulated naturally, the wife may end up being deprived of sexual fulfillment. Speaking on the effect of pornography on human sexuality, Sheila Wray Gregoire says, “Pornography will wreck the arousal process in your brain and end up wrecking your sex life in marriage.”<sup>92</sup> A wrecked

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<sup>89</sup>Ann Tolley, “Toxic Side Effects of Pornography,” accessed 2 March 2017, <https://familyshare.com/394/10-toxic-side-effects-of-pornography-use>.

<sup>90</sup>Madlen Davies, “Revealed...How Watching Porn Really Affects Your Brain,” accessed 20 March 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3196809/It-induces-addiction-makes-men-hopeless-bed-discover-porn-affect-BRAIN.html>.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Sheila Wray Gregoire, “Top 10 Effects of Porno on Your Brain, Your Marriage and Your Sex Life,” accessed 20 March 2017, <http://tolovehonorandvacuum.com/2014/03/effects-of-porn-on-your-marriage/>.

sex life may compromise the quality of the marital relationship, predisposing the parties to infidelity.

### **Multiple Sex Partners before Marriage**

What goes on in the lives of marriage partners before marriage may negatively affect their marriage after they get married. If the partners, or one of them had several sex partners before marriage, chances are that he or she will continue to enjoy sex with many partners even after marriage.

Timijo has this to say about the impact of multiple sex partners before marriage.

Sexual activity releases powerful hormones that help couples stay together and build trust, according to True Love Revolution, a Harvard College student organization. When people have numerous casual sex partners before marriage, and these relationships end, it causes a break in that natural bond. This can lead to a sense of loss, betrayal unwelcome memories and other problems. These can affect a marriage later on. Having multiple sex partners before marriage increases depression and higher rates of infidelity and divorce in future marriage.<sup>93</sup>

Some cases of infidelity that may leave communities startled may be a result of the marriage partners' lives before marriage. If the partners lived promiscuous life styles, the sure result of such life-styles is infidelity.

### **Search for a Son**

In some cultures, if a marriage fails to yield male children that marriage is considered to be childless. It can only be regarded as having a child if the child is a male child, A man who has this kind of a marriage will go out to commit adultery in order to get a male child. Gichima has this to says, "In a culture where male children

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<sup>93</sup>Timijo, "Causes Of Infidelity in Marriages," accessed 22 March 2015, [www.nairaland.com/1114056/causes-infidelity-marriages](http://www.nairaland.com/1114056/causes-infidelity-marriages).

are more valued than female children, a man might go out looking for a son”<sup>94</sup> It however, remains a fact that the biblical record does not give children as the purpose for marriage. Children are important but they do not form the basis for which marriage is established.

### **The Impact of Infidelity**

Infidelity is known to be responsible for leaving a trail of destruction that is unprecedented. The impact of infidelity is felt even beyond the particular individuals who were involved in the actual sin of adultery. It affects the marital relationship, the family, the community and the church. Innocent children are caused to suffer the consequences of the sin of infidelity, which they did not partake of. We are going to look at how infidelity impacts different people, starting from the people who are in a marital relationship.

Writing on adultery one author says, “Even though God will forgive adultery, the damage it causes often cannot be undone. It often leads to divorce and leaves the marriage partners embittered, disillusioned and financially poorer. It robs the children of the love and security of a healthy family and denies them a good role model for their future marriages”<sup>95</sup> Though forgiven of the sin of infidelity, the ugly consequences of the sin live on and on. The story of King David and Bathsheba, Uriah’s wife is a testimony to that effect. The child born out of the sinful relationship died. The impact of the sin was felt far and near, and it affected innocent people.

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<sup>94</sup>Gichima, 75.

<sup>95</sup>The Christian Bible Reference, accessed 3 March 2015, [www.christianbiblereference.org/faq\\_adultery.html](http://www.christianbiblereference.org/faq_adultery.html).

## **The Marital Relationship**

First to suffer the consequences of infidelity is the actual marital relationship that experiences the sin of infidelity. It is said that the vast majority of marriages that experience infidelity do not survive. Marriage Moment.org says, “about 65% of marriages in which infidelity is discovered eventually end in divorce ... for those marriages that manage to avoid divorce after infidelity, about 50% are reported to be destitute or under considerable distress. Unfortunately, these statistics barely begin to illustrate pain and suffering resulting from the aftermath of marital unfaithfulness.”<sup>96</sup> Statistics will show the figures but they will never be able to capture the trauma and the emotional pain that partners to a marriage go through due to infidelity.

Marital unfaithfulness is responsible for so many maladies in marriages today. It is almost impossible for a marital relationship that has gone through an infidelity challenge to get healed completely. Dobson has this to say on infidelity, “Infidelity and marital conflicts are cancers that gnaw on the soul of mankind, twisting and warping innocent family members who can only stand and watch.”<sup>97</sup> The biggest tragedy is that more people are affected by the sin apart from the parties to the marriage. Forgiveness may be verbalized but internal healing may remain highly illusive. The trauma caused by infidelity may result in physical ailments that will permanently affect the couple’s quality of life. Many have remained to nurse stomach ulcers and hypertension for life. Apart from the two ailments cited above, psychological and emotional problems may also take their toll, especially on the cheated spouse.

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<sup>96</sup>“Devastating Consequences of Infidelity,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.marriagemoment.org/2010/12/devastating-consequences-of-infidelity](http://www.marriagemoment.org/2010/12/devastating-consequences-of-infidelity).

<sup>97</sup>James Dobson, *Love Must Be Tough* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1983), 142.

Marriage Moment list a number of consequences of infidelity on the cheated spouse. These include such things as; injury to self-image, injury to self-confidence, injury to sexual confidence, loss of trust and belonging, loss of respect, feelings of helplessness and abandonment, feelings of depression, feelings of anxiety, feelings of humiliation, feelings of rage, feelings of shame, guilt and blameworthiness, feelings of undesirability and insecurity, and, feelings of hostility and vengeance.<sup>98</sup> Survival after the incidence of infidelity becomes a perpetual burden in most cases. Recovery from the pain is possible but not easy.

### **The Family**

The impact of infidelity is also felt in the family. When people who are married, and have children choose to commit the sin of adultery, they normally do not consider the gravity of their actions, especially what that would mean to the family. If they could begin with the end in mind, no one would dare to be unfaithful to his or her spouse. One incident of cheating does not affect just the couple involved, it affects the whole family, including innocent children. Buckner says,

The prohibition against adultery generally defends the integrity and emotional stability of the family for the sake of the children, wife and husband. It preserves the trust that is foundational to healthy familial relationships. The integrity of the family protects the most vulnerable in society, the children, whose emotional security is always at risk.<sup>99</sup>

Adult children can be paralyzed by the infidelity that takes place among their parents. They are partakers of the shame, the embarrassment and the guilt that goes with the whole problem. Like the innocent spouse, they begin to wonder what it is

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<sup>98</sup>“Devastating Consequences of Infidelity,” accessed 22 March 2015, [www.marriagemoment.org/2010/12/devastating-consequences-of-infidelity](http://www.marriagemoment.org/2010/12/devastating-consequences-of-infidelity).

<sup>99</sup>James K. Bruckner, *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 190.

that they did not do right, or what one of their parents failed to do right. Most of the feelings that the innocent spouse goes through are the same feelings that children are exposed to. Infidelity may leave indelible dents in the lives of the children.

The economic consequences that the family must suffer will impact heavily on the children. This is especially true when the offending parent must lose his job because of infidelity. For individuals who are employed by the church, infidelity is a dismissible offence. Children whose parents must lose their jobs because of adultery find it very difficult to survive because the parent no longer has money to support them through school. This embarrasses the children as well as the innocent spouse. It may be very difficult if not impossible for children who have to go through this to overcome the embarrassment.

Infidelity also affects families in that it attracts HIV/AIDS. Families suffer as members of the family get HIV and AIDS. Amy Conroy says that infidelity is a high risk factor for HIV/AIDS and intimate partner violence.<sup>100</sup> Sometimes it is the innocent spouse who has to nurse a guilty spouse until death. The resources, which must take care of the family, are channeled towards nursing the sick spouse, leaving the family to suffer.

More often than not, the innocent spouse ends up contracting the deadly virus from his or her spouse. There is a big connection between infidelity and the spread of HIV and AIDS. There are many innocent spouses who have to suffer silently until death. Sometimes these innocent people are blamed for bringing the ailment into the marriage when they are the victims.

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<sup>100</sup> Amy A. Conroy, "Marital Infidelity and Intimate Partner Violence in Rural Malawi: A Dyadic Investigation," accessed 12 June 2015, DOI 10.1007 /s10508-014-0306-2, 2013.

## **The Community**

The community is also impacted negatively by incidences of infidelity. Communities are as good as their members. If some of the members are found to commit acts that tarnish them, the whole community gets tarnished as well. If the offending spouse holds a respectable position in the community, the shame that goes along with the incident of infidelity brings the whole community into disrepute. Immorality has a way of robbing communities of decency and dignity. It is often the case that infidelity may bring fights divorces that can affect communities negatively.

## **The Church**

When members of the Church of God commit acts of infidelity, the mission of the church is compromised. There are many people out there who could have been baptized already, but who cannot be part of the church because of various reasons that have to do with infidelity. Some are those whose spouses were sexually harassed by some church members. Others may be parents whose daughters may have been abused by some members of the church.

It is not a secret that most of the church board business is about dealing with cases of infidelity. The energy and time of the church is spent on issues that are not the core business of the church. If the church was able to live right, no such time was going to be lost dealing with infidelity issues, more time was going to be devoted to evangelism.

## **Safeguarding Marriages from Infidelity**

The prevalence and impact of infidelity need to be addressed in a way that can arrest its progression or minimize the effects. As mentioned earlier, infidelity is a sin. It is a sin before God and man. Like any temptation, infidelity needs to be shunned by all means. It is critical to maintain sound marital relationships as a way of



safeguarding marriages from infidelity. Healing from infidelity trauma may be difficult to attain. The apostle Paul admonishes believers and says, “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you do not fall” (1 Cor 10:12). Leman has this to say on keeping out of temptation, “Be sure to keep a strong spiritual influence working in your marriage.”<sup>101</sup>

One of the ways that is known to protect marriages from infidelity is to invite Christ into the relationship. Human power alone cannot stand the temptation to infidelity. Paul says, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13). Leman says that the same assurance can be claimed by anyone.<sup>102</sup> Anyone can fall, everyone has the capacity to succumb to the temptation to infidelity. No one is safe, man’s safety is in the one through whom man can do anything. Judy Starr has this to say on safeguarding marriages from infidelity, “I cannot emphasize strongly enough that your personal, daily time with the Lord builds an enormous wall of protection around your marriage.”<sup>103</sup> Total surrender to the Lord on a daily basis is the best way to protect marriages from infidelity temptations.

Covey has this to say on safeguarding marriages from temptations, “Things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least.”<sup>104</sup> He is in effect saying that marriage matters most. It must be given the attention it deserves.

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<sup>101</sup>Leman, 147.

<sup>102</sup>Leman, 148.

<sup>103</sup>Judy Starr, “8 Ways to Protect Your Marriage,” accessed 2 March 2017, <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/marriage/troubled-marriage/infidelity/8-ways-to-protect-your-marriage>.

<sup>104</sup>Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Marriages* (New York, NY: Golden Books, 1997), 114.

When marriage is taken as a very important part of one's life, infidelity chances are minimized.

Leman says, "If marriage partners are getting enough attention, affection, and sexual fulfillment at home, they are not likely to stray into an affair."<sup>105</sup> Another way of fireproofing marriages from infidelity is to maintain a happy and healthy relationship. Happy couples are better insulated from the temptation to infidelity. The same author goes on to say, "Satisfied people do not wander."<sup>106</sup> Marital fulfillment may not come by chance, it is a result of purposeful engagement of both parties to the marriage. It is therefore, important for couples to invest in their relationship if they are to minimize the chances of wandering into unsanctified acts.

It may be important for couples to consciously plan to stay together as much as is possible. As cited earlier, protracted separations are known to end up with parties to the marriage wandering out of their primary relationships. Staying together as husband and wife may help to safeguard the marriage from infidelity temptations.

The work place was cited as one of the breeding grounds for infidelity. Nancy Anderson says, "If you feel an attraction to someone in your office and have a romantic or sexual thoughts about them, consider a transfer to a different department, a different site, or maybe you should quit. No job is more valuable than your marriage."<sup>107</sup> This may sound too strong but it is the way to go if one is serious about protecting their marriage. Nancy Anderson goes on to say, "Be bold and fearless when you are defending your marriage at your work place. Resist and flee temptation

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<sup>105</sup>Leman, 150.

<sup>106</sup>Leman, 150.

<sup>107</sup>Nancy C. Anderson, "Safeguard against Workplace Temptations," accessed 21 March 2017, <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/safeguard-against-workplace-temptations-1350820.html>.

before it overtakes you.”<sup>108</sup> Lingering in the evil one’s territory is responsible for some infidelity cases. The same author gives a number of tips as a way of taming the workplace.

1. People of the opposite sex should not ride in a car together without a third party present.
2. Don’t make personal (non-work related) phone calls to a coworker of the opposite sex.
3. Don’t have lunch with the same person every day. Move around the lunchroom or break-room and if you go out to a restaurant, go in a group.
4. Make sure that your e-mails and other correspondence are not suggestive, inappropriate, or flirtatious.
5. Talk about your spouse in positive terms, making it clear that you’re married and intend to stay that way.
6. Be careful not to make any lingering eye contact.
7. The only appropriate touch between business associates of the opposite sex is a handshake.<sup>109</sup>

It is important to know that there is hope even for those partners in a marital relationship who may face the challenge of infidelity at some point in their relationship. The Bible offers pertinent insights on the need for healing and forgiveness.

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<sup>108</sup>Nancy C. Anderson, “Safeguard against Workplace Temptations,” accessed 21 March 2017, <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/safeguard-against-workplace-temptations-1350820.html>.

<sup>109</sup>Nancy C. Anderson, “Safeguard against Workplace Temptations,” accessed 21 March 2017, <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/safeguard-against-workplace-temptations-1350820.html>.

## **Summary**

Literature review was done in this chapter and different authors were cited in the discussion about marital infidelity. The prevalence of infidelity was said to be a common occurrence in the society today. Numerous types of infidelity were identified which are known to exist in the world today. After discussing the types of infidelity the possible causes were explored. Similarly, the possible causes were identified. The list of the causes is long but may not be exhaustive. After discussing the possible causes, the impact of infidelity was also dealt with. It was discovered that marital infidelity impacts the marital relationship, the children, the church and the community negatively. Finally, a look at safeguarding marriages from infidelity was done.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE

The previous chapter focused on what different authors say about infidelity, the different types of infidelity, the causes and impact of marital unfaithfulness. The different types and possible causes of unfaithfulness were presented to help families to be able to identify the factors when they present themselves in marital relationships. The impact of infidelity was presented to help couples to appreciate the fact that marital unfaithfulness destabilizes marriages, families, the church and communities.

This chapter describes the macro and the micro contexts. This is meant to give a brief background of the research parameters. The research design will follow after which the type of research will come next. The research design will include the type of research, and its rationale for selection. The population strata, sampling procedures and the research techniques to be employed will be discussed.

The macro context includes the country of Zimbabwe and its people. The institution of marriage will be studied in the context of the country's laws. Marriage practices will also be looked at in the context of Zimbabwe. The geography, socio-economic factors that have a bearing on marriage and family will form part of this chapter. The Seventh-day Adventist Church will be presented in terms of its ministry strategies for marriage and family. The research design will cover what type of research this is and what will take place, the rationale for choosing the type of research design, the appropriateness of the type selected, the population and sample of

participants, the procedure and selection of participants and finally, the instruments to be used in the process.

### **The Macro Context: Country of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is situated in the southern part of Africa. It is a landlocked country sharing its borders with Zambia to the north and northwest, Mozambique to the east, Botswana to the west and South Africa to the south. The population of Zimbabwe is 13 061 million (2012 Census). Two thirds of the population is below the age of 25.<sup>1</sup> English is the official language while Shona and Ndebele are the two main local languages.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the two main local languages, there are other local languages and dialects. There are thirteen minority languages.<sup>3</sup>

The country has a rich heritage of natural resources. The natural resources include coal, chromium ore, gold, nickel, copper, iron ore, lithium, tin and platinum group metals.<sup>4</sup> Agriculture is one of the main drivers of the economy with 42.5% of the land being used for agricultural purposes. Recurring droughts are the main natural hazards that the country faces.<sup>5</sup> There are some areas where droughts almost always are a common feature.

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<sup>1</sup>Zimbabwe, "Country Profile," accessed 2 April 2016, <http://www.zw.one.un.org/uninzimbabwe/zimbabwe-country-profile>.

<sup>2</sup>"Zimbabwe General Information," accessed 2 April 2016, [www.expertafrica.com/info/zimbabwe-general-information](http://www.expertafrica.com/info/zimbabwe-general-information).

<sup>3</sup>The World Fact Book, "Zimbabwe" accessed 2 April 2016, [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-facebook/geos/zi.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-facebook/geos/zi.html).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

## **Religion in Zimbabwe**

Enshrined in its constitution is the fact that Zimbabwe is a Christian country. The constitution upholds God as the Sovereign Guide. It reads, “We the people of Zimbabwe ... Acknowledge the supremacy Almighty God, in whose hands our future lies ... And imploring the guidance and support of Almighty God.”<sup>6</sup> Zimbabwe is a country of many religions. It is a country where freedom of worship is enshrined in its constitution. Of the total population, 75.9% are protestant churches. Among the protestant churches, 38% are Apostolic Faith churches, 21.1% are Pentecostal Churches. Other Christians constitute 16.8% of the population. Roman Catholics are 8.4% while other Christians are 8.4%. Traditional religious groupings and the Muslims comprise 1.2% of the population. Those that belong to no religion at all are 6.1% of the people of Zimbabwe.<sup>7</sup> The rich religious diversity is a testimony to the freedom that the people of Zimbabwe enjoy in matters of religion.

## **The Socio-economic Climate**

The economic climate in the country may not be very favorable at the moment. There is high unemployment, and because of this, there is a lot of movements as people move from place to place in search of employment. People move from farming areas to mining areas and from mining areas to urban centers as they try to be engaged gainfully.

This massive movement of people does not favor families in that it separates family members. Some go out of the country in the same way, where they may have to be away from home for very long durations. Marital challenges have a way of

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<sup>6</sup>Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20), Government Printer, Harare, 2013, 15.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

sneaking into such relationships. The challenges may be difficult to eradicate. Some cases of infidelity took advantage of these separations to wreak havoc in many marriages.

## **Marriages in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe places a lot of value on marriage and family. Commenting on marriages in Zimbabwe Rumbidzai Dube says,

Zimbabwe has a pluralistic marriage system. It is one of the countries where choices of the type of marriage are wide and varying. One can choose to cohabit (kuchayamapoto),<sup>8</sup> to get married in an unregistered customary law union, to be in a registered customary marriage, or to be in a registered civil marriage.<sup>9</sup>

Individuals have the freedom to choose what type of marriage they consider to work for them. Furthermore, Dube mentions four kinds of unions in Zimbabwe, namely;

1. **Cohabitation:** cohabitation is a situation where a man and a woman choose to stay together as husband and wife without involving their parents and relatives and without formalizing their union. This is increasing in numbers but it is not regarded as a marriage and it enjoys no protection legal protection.
2. **Unregistered customary law union:** this type of marriage is recognized in Zimbabwe. It offers very little protection to the wife. It allows for many wives, (polygamy).

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<sup>8</sup>Kuchayamapoto is a Shona (one of the native languages in Zimbabwe) phrase that describes the situation where a man and woman are cohabiting.

<sup>9</sup>Rumbidzai Dube, "Till Death Do Us Part: Marriage in Zimbabwe," accessed 23 June 2016, [researchandadvocacyunit.org/system/files/marriage %20in %20zimbabwe pdf](http://researchandadvocacyunit.org/system/files/marriage%20in%20zimbabwe.pdf).



3. **Registered customary union:** this marriage, though registered, allows the man to marry as many wives as he may choose.
4. **Registered civil union:** this is a monogamous type of marriage.

Marriage options are as mentioned above. Individuals choose what suits them best. Each type has its own standing in the eyes of the law. The marriage types seem to favor men more than the women. This is so in that men are the ones who normally decide the kind of union they prefer. Many women do not really choose, it is the men who choose for them, which is an unfortunate situation.

### **Adultery/Infidelity in Zimbabwe**

Adultery is regarded as a vice in the country of Zimbabwe. Courts in the country deal with cases of adultery and whoever is caught destabilizing marriages is liable to pay damages. The government's stance on adultery seems to protect marriages. The Zimbabwe government's position on marriages seems to guarantee protection to the marriage institution. The legal definition of adultery in the context of the laws of the country is, "A situation where sexual intercourse takes place between two adults and one or both of are married to a third party at that time."<sup>10</sup> This definition resonates with the biblical rendition of adultery. The Bible prohibits sexual relationships between people who have their marriages. Going out of the marriage limits to go and find sex outside the marriage constitutes adultery.

Same sex unions are not recognized in the country. They are considered to be a crime. Talking about same-sex unions in Zimbabwe, Morgan says that same sex marriages are a criminal offence. He quotes section 4.78 of the Zimbabwe Constitution that says, "Persons of the same sex are prohibited from marrying each

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<sup>10</sup>Sylvia Chirau, "The Roving Eye of the Law," accessed 21 May 2016, <http://www.sundaymail.co.zw/the-roving-eye-and-the-law/>.

other”<sup>11</sup> As alluded to earlier, homosexuality is considered a crime in the country. The biblical record calls it an abomination. It is a heinous sin before the God of heaven. On this particular aspect, the laws of the country and the law of God are seen to be saying the same thing.

### **Monogamy and Polygamy**

Monogamy is a common feature in the country of Zimbabwe. Most marriages are of this nature. It is also important to note that there are many individuals who look at polygamy as a sensible option. Actually, there are women who are in polygamous relationships who feel comfortable in such marriages. They would choose to remain in such marriages than anything else. Sylvia Chirawu, talking on the debate to outlaw polygamy says, “They (those who speak against outlawing polygamy) believe that the agenda to outlaw polygamy is driven by Western societies and yet, ironically even in the West, there are some communities that practice polygamy openly.”<sup>12</sup> There is an ongoing debate on whether or not polygamy should be abolished. To have it abolished altogether may be difficult because it has the support of many people, though it has no sanction from the word of God.

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<sup>11</sup>Joe Morgan, “Zimbabwe’s New Constitution Makes Gay marriages a Crime,” accessed 12 May 2016, <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/zimbabwe%E2%80%99s-new-constitution-makes-gay-marriage-crime310113/>.

<sup>12</sup>Sylvia Chirawu, *Sunday Mail*, November 9, 2014, “Polygamy, Two Sides of the Same Coin,” accessed 22 June 2015, [www.sundaymail.co.zw/polygamy-two-sides-of-the-same-coin/](http://www.sundaymail.co.zw/polygamy-two-sides-of-the-same-coin/).

## **The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zimbabwe is growing by the day. One and half years ago, the church had three entities that are referred to as conferences. These were the East Zimbabwe Conference, the Central Zimbabwe Conference and the West Zimbabwe Conference. Today there are six conferences that cover the whole country of Zimbabwe. The six Conferences are; The South Zimbabwe Conference, the West Zimbabwe Conference, the Central Zimbabwe Conference, the North West Zimbabwe Conference, the East Zimbabwe Conference and the North Zimbabwe Conference.

There are vibrant outreach programs that are designed to reach all age groups, people groups, and professionals and thought leaders. The baptisms that are reported in each conference are a testimony to the fact that evangelism is regarded very highly in the Union.

The SDA Church in Zimbabwe has one main office that is responsible for the work of the church in the whole country. This office is referred to as the Union office because it has six Conferences that are entities that fall under this one Union. There is a family ministries director at the Union and six family ministries directors, one in each conference. The family is regarded as an important institution whose strength will determine the strength of the church. Strong families will produce strong churches. The family is under attack from different angles in the country, and, the church is not spared from the attacks. One of the challenges that the institution of marriage faces is divorce. The Newsday daily paper of July 18, 2015, mentioned something on the divorce rate and said, “The staggering number of divorces granted

by the High Court this week is a serious cause for concern”<sup>13</sup> Marriages appear to be unsafe.

Other challenges that families are facing are, infidelity, infertility, communication issues, health matters and extended family interferences. It is in view of these and other challenges that the church put in place a department that is tasked with the responsibility of strengthening the family. The department is doing a lot in this regard. Many families are saved from total collapse each year through the efforts of the directors of the department.

### **The Micro-Context: Central Zimbabwe Conference**

Central Zimbabwe Conference is one of the six conferences in the country of Zimbabwe. The Conference offices are in the city of Gweru. Gweru is the third largest city in the country. The city has a population of 130,000 people.<sup>14</sup> Gweru city has six church districts and each district has a full-time pastor. Most of the churches in the city of Gweru have many young people as their membership. Most of the couples are young people between the ages of 20 to 45 years.

The church in Gweru is not spared from all the challenges that marriages face elsewhere in the country. Divorces do take place in Gweru. Infidelity cases are being reported on different media platforms. The infidelity cases reports include both church members and the community members at large. They transcend all social classifications. Local Courts deal with divorce cases on a regular basis.

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<sup>13</sup>“Divorce Rate Alarming,” accessed 22 October 2016, [www.newsday.co.zw/2015/07/18/divorce-rate-alarming/](http://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/07/18/divorce-rate-alarming/).

<sup>14</sup>Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* (Carlisle, CA: Paternoster, 2001), 688.

The church is not spared from the many ills that are challenging the contemporary society. Talking about marriages that are breaking Miroslav M Kis has this to say,

The biblical standard of faithfulness, exclusivity and permanence of marriage stand as a rampart against the contemporary flood of adultery and divorce. The experience of many marriages proves that such a stand is not an impossibility. But the grim reality of unfaithfulness and divorce within the church points to the fact that sin and evil do not ask for permission nor do they respect any person. The church is faced with breaking and broken marriages which call for help.<sup>15</sup>

It is believed that a big number of families may be under serious attacks by the evil one. As indicated above, unfaithfulness in marriages and divorces that are taking place are indicative of the hardships that families are going through.

### **Research Design**

The research process of this paper used the Gantt Chart to portray the sequence of the tasks to be taken in the process of the research. The research also employed both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Focus group discussions were conducted and questionnaires were distributed in order to acquire the necessary data.

#### **The Gantt Chart**

The Gantt Chart is a tool designed to monitor the progress in the research process from the beginning to the end. The Gantt Chart shows the time frame for each activity to be undertaken in the research process. Adomako views a Gantt Chart as “a graphical representation of the duration of tasks against the progression of time,”

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<sup>15</sup>Miroslav M. Kis, “Ordinance of Marriage,” accessed 12 May 2015, [www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org](http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org), Ordinance of Marriage.

meant for “planning and scheduling of projects.”<sup>16</sup>The different tasks to be covered in the research process are shown as they relate together up to the last task.

A Gantt Chart has varied advantages. It is helpful in helping the project planners and implementers to work within a designed time frame. Similarly, it helps to keep the tasks flowing in an order of priority. It also helps in monitoring progress in the implementation of the project.

Below is a Gantt Chart that illustrates how the research was implemented with regards to time. Interviews and questionnaires were administered at the beginning of June with the rest of the work following according to the schedule below. By the end of December, the whole process was completed.

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<sup>16</sup>Michael K. Adomako, “Model for Training, Empowering, and Organizing Churches in the Mampong-West District for Shared Leadership in the Central Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” A thesis submitted to Andrews University, 2014, 84, accessed 10 December 2016.

Table 1. Gantt Chart for Research Work, 2016

	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Selection of churches							
Preparing data collection instruments							
Meetings with participating pastors							
Distribution of questionnaires							
Focus group discussions run in the selected churches							
Data collection and analysis							
Distribution of questionnaires and group discussions							
Program design							
Program implementation							
Preparation of evaluation instruments							
Data collection							
Analyzing data							
Writing the final part of the dissertation							
Continuous assessment beyond December							

## **Type of Research**

The research incorporated both the qualitative and the quantitative methods. It was a mixed method approach. John W Creswell says, “there is more insight to be gained from the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research than either form by itself. Their combined use provides an expanded understanding of research problems.”<sup>17</sup> Combining the two methods yields a better understanding of the matter under research.

Commenting on the mixed method approach, Creswell and Clark say “the combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either of the approach by itself.”<sup>18</sup> Combining the two methods is meant to get the best of each method in order to get a better understanding of the research problem. Combining both the words and the numbers was expected to yield better results in terms of understanding the matter for research.

Data was collected concurrently. Both the qualitative and quantitative approaches were done at the same time. This has the advantage of saving time. One field trip would capture data for both. The intention was to have the qualitative approach embedded in the quantitative method. The qualitative part was in the form of focus group discussions that were done in each of the churches. A total of nine people were selected from each church that would take part in the focus group discussions. The qualitative part of the research was to be done within the framework of focus groups.

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<sup>17</sup>John W. Creswell, *Research Design*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London, UK: Sage, 2009), 203.

<sup>18</sup>John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011), 8.



Talking about focus group discussions, Gatara says, “This qualitative method of data collection is an in-depth discussion by a small group led by a facilitator on a given subject of research and practical significance. It is based on group dynamics and is most successful where as many characters as possible in a group are encouraged to discuss freely.”<sup>19</sup> The focus group members included male and female members, the young and old members. Some represented the leadership of the church.

The topic for discussion was a sensitive one. Members of the group were sensitized to the need for confidentiality.<sup>20</sup> Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, individual interviews were not practical. The sampling method was the purposive sampling. The selection attempted to balance the teams as much as possible between gender, age and number of years in marriage.

### **Rationale**

Combining the two methods is known to provide a complete analysis of the problems.<sup>21</sup> The mixed method approach was selected so that a better understanding of the problem could be attained. The qualitative part of the research was expected to provide a deep insight on the problem. The quantitative part was expected to provide figures that would be analyzed. The analysis of the qualitative data and the quantitative data was merged in order to come up with one complete picture.

The rationale of the research was to establish the magnitude of infidelity, its impact on families, children, churches and communities. The biblical and theological

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<sup>19</sup>Henry T. Gatara, *Introduction to Research Methodology* (Nairobi, Kenya: The Olive Marketing and Publishing Company, 2010), 51

<sup>20</sup>Kristin G. Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research* (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2002), 111.

<sup>21</sup>Kristin G. Esterberg, 21.

as well as the literature reviewed indicated that infidelity is sin. It was shown that infidelity destroys families and communities. It was the purpose of this research to establish the existence of these things and to formulate strategies to minimize the impact of the scourge.

### **Appropriateness**

The research was appropriate in that it sought to unravel the infidelity challenge in a bid to minimize its prevalence, establish the causes and to appreciate the impact of infidelity on families, impact on churches and communities. As mentioned earlier, infidelity affects not only the perpetrators, but innocent people as well. It was hoped that after the programs have been implemented, people's attitudes would change in so far as infidelity is concerned.

### **Population and Sample of Participants**

The survey population or the universe (Gatara)<sup>22</sup> was the total membership of each church. Kowalczyk defines population as "The complete collection to be studied."<sup>23</sup> The population in this research is the total membership of the three selected churches. Sampling was done in each of the churches. As indicated earlier, only three churches were selected to participate in the research. The three churches represented, as fairly as possible, the different age groupings, communities and economic circumstances obtaining in the city.

Though all the three churches were churches under the Seventh-day Adventist Church, their circumstances differed in many ways. The findings were also likely to

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<sup>22</sup>Gatara, 31.

<sup>23</sup>David Kowalczyk, "Samples and Population in Research: Definition," accessed 10 March 2017, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/samples-populations-in-research-definition.html>.

differ from church to church. Programs were to be designed based on the findings from each individual church. Implementation was also to be based on the different findings.

### **Criteria for Sampling and Procedures and Selection**

Sampling is necessary because it is less costly. It may be expensive to deal with the whole population. Sampling a small population has some advantages over having to deal with the population in its totality.

Gatara says the advantages of sampling include the fact that it saves both time and money. He says,

On cost basis, sampling makes a study possible. There are a number of reasons that have been advanced to support the above view. First, a large survey would need a large number of researchers and this would threaten the quality of data collected. In addition to this, a large survey would take a long time to implement, which means that by the time results are out, events would have changed greatly the phenomenon studies.<sup>24</sup>

The foregoing reasons given in support of sampling were considered to form the basis for selecting population sampling. The procedures and selection criteria were designed to be representative of the intended population rather than a section of the population. Careless sampling may not have yielded results that would be representative of the population in question. Discussing the importance of diversity in sampling, Kisilu Kombo and Delno L. A. say, “An effective population sample attempts to be as diverse as possible. The greater the diversity and differences that exists in the population sample the higher the applicability.”<sup>25</sup> Sampling was done in a manner that minimized biases.

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<sup>24</sup>Gatara, 30.

<sup>25</sup>Donald Kisilu Kombo and Delno L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008), 76.

The type of sampling used in this research was simple random sampling for the questionnaires where the sampling method gives equal chance of selection for every member of the population.<sup>26</sup> Kombo and Tromp say, “Advantages of simple random sampling are that the samples yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population.”<sup>27</sup> This method was expected to work well, since the population under consideration was large. It is to be noted, however, that this method has its disadvantages. The major disadvantage is that some samples may be over or under represented.<sup>28</sup> In the final analysis, the advantages seem to outweigh the disadvantages.

The purposive approach was used in the selection of the participants in the focus group discussions. Kowalczyk defines purposive sampling as a situation where “a researcher purposefully focuses on a particular subset of the population.”<sup>29</sup> The participants were purposefully selected in a manner that was meant to ensure that the different subsets of the population were included.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The mixed method was used in the collection of data. These were the qualitative and the quantitative approaches.

**Qualitative data.** The qualitative part of the mixed method had focus group discussions.

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<sup>26</sup>Gatara, 36.

<sup>27</sup>Kombo and Delno, 79.

<sup>28</sup>Kombo and Delno, 79.

<sup>29</sup>David Kowalczyk, “Samples and Population in Research: Definitions,” accessed 10 March 2017, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/samples-populations-in-research-definition.html>.

Victor Jupp has this to say about focus groups,

Focus groups are group interviews, facilitated by the researcher, but with a focus on letting the group guide the discussion topics. Analysis of language (for example, conversation analysis, discourse analysis) in qualitative research emphasizes exploring the meanings inherent in language use.<sup>30</sup>

As the participants talked, meaning was deduced from the verbal expressions. It was not just what was verbalized that matters, it is even the non-verbal communication that was considered in the process. Care was taken to ensure that the number of participants did not exceed nine. The sitting arrangement was not a classroom set-up where some sat in front of others, but it was designed to be a round table set up where people sat together forming a circle.

As the interviewer prepares for the interviews, Esterberg says that it is important to consider one's dressing. Inappropriate dressing may limit the information that one can get. The same writer goes on to say that if tape-recording will take place, the interviewer should make sure that enough batteries are in place and the tape is in good repair.<sup>31</sup> In the preparations for the research discussions, care was taken to ensure that there was nothing to suggest that the interviewer was ill prepared for the interview.

Care was taken to make sure that all the participants took part in the discussion, trying as much as possible to make sure that all got equal opportunities to share their views with the group. Those that had wanted to dominate the discussion were assisted to appreciate the need to give others the chance to speak. The facilitators were trained to make sure that they did not push their views on the group,

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<sup>30</sup>Victor Jupp, ed., *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006) 237.

<sup>31</sup>Kristin G. Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Companies 2002), 101, 102.

neither allow the discussion to degenerate into a verbal war, nor do all the talking. The facilitator was assigned the responsibility of putting the whole group at ease in order for the discussion to be fruitful.

A note taker was required in each focus group. This particular individual's assignment was to take notes. The notes did not just capture spoken contributions but sought to include body language and gestures. Some of the contributions were not verbalized, but they were still noted since they contributed to the results of the matter under discussion.

Where the group allowed the use of a tape recorder, it was the note taker's responsibility to record the proceedings. When analyzing the interviews, it was necessary to listen to the recorded materials in order to make accurate evaluations of the issues discussed. Permission was sought from the participants to record the discussion with an audio recorder.

**Focus Group Discussions.** As indicated earlier, three churches were selected to participate in both the focus group discussions and questionnaires. The participants in the group discussions included four women. One of the women was a widow and the other three were married women. Three men were part of the group. One of the men was part of the local church leadership. The last two members of the group were young people. The married men and women who formed part of the focus groups did not come as husband and wife. This was designed to allow freedom of speech. It was feared that some would not be free to talk in the presence of their spouses. The widow was part of the group to represent the widows who are sometimes accused of infidelity. For the three selected churches, the same selection pattern was followed. Following is a breakdown of participants:

Three men, one of whom was in the leadership team of the church, four ladies, one of which was a widow and two young people. All the members were expected to be in good and regular standing of the church. Effort was also made to bring together a group of people who were believed to have the Church at heart and who were known to be frank and honest.

After all the focus group discussions were completed, the next thing was to analyze the data. Gatara says, “the main trick in analyzing group focus data is to do it as soon as the interviews are completed. This is important so that one does not lose the touch of the main arguments, or even the tempo and intensity of the discussion.”<sup>32</sup> If not analyzed as soon as the discussions are over, the information would quickly vanish away. Gatara goes on to say, “In short, data analysis in focus groups should aim at discovering trends, establishing consensus or disagreement according to subjects.”<sup>33</sup> The data analyzed was then merged with the results of the questionnaire surveys undertaken in order to come up with the necessary program to address the problem.

**Quantitative data.** The other element of the mixed research method, the quantitative element was in the form of surveys. The main instrument for use in collecting data in the survey was the questionnaire. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of participants. In describing a questionnaire Gatara says, “The questionnaire is an important tool for the social scientist. It is an orderly listing of questions that one would like to put to would be respondents to solicit particular type of information.”<sup>34</sup> Care was taken in the formulation of the questionnaire to ensure

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<sup>32</sup>Gatara, 61.

<sup>33</sup>Gatara, 61.

<sup>34</sup>Gatara, 71.

that the questions were presented in a simple and orderly manner. Victor Jupp says, “Questionnaires provide an excellent means of collecting large-scale quantitative data.”<sup>35</sup> The need to get information from many people informed the inclusion of this method in the research.

Each of the three churches got 25 questionnaires. These were distributed to the members in the following manner; nine married women, nine married men, four young people (both genders) three widows and widowers. A few church leaders were included in each category.

The rationale in selecting the individuals as listed above was to get views from a cross section of the church. The married men and women were more than half of the total participants per church. This was so because this is the group that may be affected more in terms of infidelity cases. The young people may have knowledge of some infidelity cases that may not be open to the rest of the church members. The young people may also be involved in promiscuity.

The other people who formed part of the participants, like the church leadership, were needed to share their views from a church leadership point of view. The widows and widowers were expected to also share their views on the question of infidelity. It is hoped that the survey would be able to bring out the prevalence, causes and impact of infidelity in the church.

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<sup>35</sup>Victor Jupp, ed., *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (London, United Kingdom: Sage, 2006) 253.



## Results

The results emanating from the research were presented in two sections. The first section was an analysis of the qualitative data. The second part was an analysis of the quantitative data.

### Qualitative Data

**Church A.** All the nine members of this group participated highly in the discussion. It became clear that the subject under discussion was pertinent. The group members indicated that the prevalence of infidelity in the church was unbelievably high. Some of the reasons they said were responsible for infidelity were the media, pornography, stubbornness before God, failure to discern the sinfulness of infidelity and outright moral fall. Mention was also made of a person's life before marriage. One who was promiscuous before marriage will tend to remain so even after marriage.

The group members indicated that there was need for revival to take place in the churches. This they said was the only hope that the church had. Respondents were asked to rate their experience of infidelity in the church, as shown in Table 2. All the participants concurred that infidelity was taking place in the church. The members also indicated that infidelity was seen taking place within the church leadership group. The tables below indicate the opinion of the group members. The bolded and underlined figure is the score on each of the question. Zero stands for disagreement on the statement in question. One indicates that only one or two thought that the statement was correct. Two means that about half of the group members believed the statement was true. Three meant that three quarters of the group believed the statement was correct. A rating of four indicates that all the group members believed the statement was true.

*Table 2. Experience of Infidelity in Church A\**

Variables	Median Rating				
Understanding the term infidelity	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Is infidelity taking place among SDA Church members?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Can we say that church leaders, including the pastors are also involved in the sin of infidelity?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Can we say that the current church policy is inadequate to address the problem of infidelity?	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Can we say that infidelity is a big problem in the church?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Does infidelity affect the church?	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4

\*See preceding paragraph for interpretive scale

The group pointed out that infidelity disrupts the proper running of the family, affecting the couple, the children, the church and the community. It was noted that infidelity tarnishes the image of the church to a great degree. They said there are some men who stopped their wives from coming to church because the husbands believe that the church is infested by men who commit adultery. Respondents highlighted various possible causes of infidelity at Church A as shown in Table 3. The causes that they placed on the same level were, poor communication, lack of sexual satisfaction in the primary relationship, wrong friends and peer pressure.

*Table 3. Possible Causes of Infidelity*

Causes	Rating Scale				
	0	1	2	3	4
Poor communication	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Looking for money	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Lack of satisfaction (sexual) in the relationship	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Life before coming into the church	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Wrong friends	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Peer pressure	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>

**Church B.** Most of the observations that were made at church A were also made at Church B. Participation was lively. The group was so excited to get the opportunity to address a problem they felt the Church was too silent about. They mentioned that the prevalence of the problem was too big to be ignored. They went to the extent of wanting to reveal names of those members and pastors who were involved in infidelity.

The feeling that church leadership, especially the pastors were not keen to deal with the problem because they were also implicated in the matter was made very clear. They said that the things that leadership emphasizes are the things that will be done. If fidelity would be emphasized the way stewardship, personal ministries and violence against women and children are emphasized, there is bound to be a change.

This group went on to say that the Conference should put a suggestion box at the Conference office so that people can expose what they see happening in the Churches. The researcher felt that a suggestion box would not be the best route to take. It is a biblical concept to face a brother. They also mentioned that those who continue in this sin comfort themselves by saying that many members are also doing it, including church leadership. The experience of infidelity in Church B is shown in

Table 4. All the group members said that infidelity was taking place among church members. They also indicated that church leaders are involved in infidelity. All of them indicated that infidelity affected the church.

*Table 4. Experience of Infidelity in Church B*

Variables	Median Rating				
Understanding the term infidelity	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Is infidelity taking place among SDA Church members?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Can we say that church leaders, including the pastors are also involved in the sin of infidelity?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Can we say that the current church policy is inadequate to address the problem of infidelity?	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Can we say that infidelity is a big problem in the church?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Does infidelity affect the church?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>

The group pointed out that infidelity disrupts the proper running of the family, affecting the couple, the children, the church and the community. It was noted that infidelity tarnishes the image of the church to a great degree. They said there are some men who stopped their wives from coming to church because the husbands believe that the church is infested by men who commit adultery. The possible causes of infidelity in Church B are shown in Table 5. The group members indicated that poor communication, looking for money, lack of satisfaction in the primary relationship, peer pressure, lack of self-control and lack of faith were issues that were responsible for infidelity among members. They placed this whole list on the same rating as indicated below.

*Table 5. Possible Causes of Infidelity in Church B*

Causes	Rating Scale				
	0	1	2	3	4
Poor communication	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Looking for money	0	1	<u>2</u>	3	<u>4</u>
Lack of satisfaction (sexual) in the relationship	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Life before coming into the church	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Wrong friends	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Peer pressure	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Lack of self-control	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Lack of faith	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>

**Church C.** The discussion was exciting, with all the participants sharing their views. The group members spoke out their minds feely. The group pointed out that infidelity brought a lot of unhappiness in the families. It affects the couple, the children, the church and the community. It was noted that infidelity tarnishes the image of the church. They said there are some men who stopped their wives from coming to church because the husbands believe that the church is infested by men who commit adultery. They feared that their wives would be abused. The same observation was brought out in all the three churches.

One thing that came up so clearly from this group was that many members would not expose the people who were committing adultery for fear of being hated. They said that they knew some members who were now sleeping in the local cemetery because they dared to expose individuals who were committing the heinous sin. The group also mentioned that at the local ECD (pre-school) center, what some of them who work there saw the children doing was beyond what they could describe. The point was that children seem to see what parents are supposed to be doing

secretly and these become the games the children played during break times. They said that the upsurge in infidelity cases could have its foundation laid early in children’s lives. Church C, like churches A and B, the group members concurred that infidelity was indeed a challenge in the church. The experience of infidelity at Church C is shown in Table 6.

*Table 6. Experience of Infidelity in Church C*

Variables	Median Rating				
Understanding the term infidelity	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Is infidelity taking place among SDA Church members?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Can we say that church leaders, including the pastors are also involved in the sin of infidelity?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Can we say that the current church policy is inadequate to address the problem of infidelity?	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Can we say that infidelity is a big problem in the church?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Does infidelity affect the church?	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>

Focus group members felt that the main causes of infidelity are as indicated below. Poor communication, peer pressure, living apart, lack of self-control and lack of faith in God were rated as the highest causes of infidelity, as shown in Table 7.

*Table 7. Causes of Infidelity in Church C*

Causes	Rating Scale				
Poor communication	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Looking for money	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Lack of satisfaction (sexual) in the relationship	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Life before coming into the church	0	1	<u>2</u>	3	4
Wrong friends	0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4
Peer pressure	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Lack of self-control	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Lack of faith	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>
Spouses living apart (protracted separations)	0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>

**Possible Causes of Infidelity.** What came out from the focus group discussions in terms of the prevalence of infidelity in the church was that the sin is widespread. The three groups, representing the three selected churches, confirmed in clear terms the prevalence of infidelity in the three selected churches. As shown in figures one through six the prevalence cannot be mistaken. The causes that were identified cover a wide spectrum. There was not one cause that was said to be the one and only cause of infidelity.

The impact of infidelity was seen as covering the parties to the marriage, the children, the church of God, the extended family and the community at large. The parties to the marriage may remain unhappy for long periods, or may end up considering divorce. The children may be affected by their parents' unhappiness and the subsequent divorce. All the groups mentioned that the image of the church is impacted negatively by infidelity. This, they said, affects the church in its mission and ministry. It was also observed that the extended family gets exposed to a lot of

suffering due to infidelity. The community is also impacted by infidelity. Community values may be disregarded, paving way for a permissive society.

**General Observations.** The focus groups made some general observations in terms of what could be done to arrest the progression of the challenge of infidelity. These included the following;

1. Need for seminars designed specifically to address the problem
2. Need to teach the policy repeatedly to help the churches to know how to handle infidelity cases
3. To apply the policy consistently. It was felt that inconsistency in applying the policy may be responsible for perpetuating the problem
4. Need for preaching sermons on the sinfulness of infidelity
5. Need to set specific dates on the annual calendar to address the infidelity challenge.
6. Need to help the youths on the importance of shunning fornication. Young people who get involved in fornication before marriage are likely to commit adultery after they get married.

### **Quantitative Data**

The quantitative part of the research used questionnaires as the instrument for research. The results from the quantitative data are summarized hereunder.

**Response Rate.** Questionnaires were distributed in the three selected churches where focus group discussions were carried out. Each of the three churches was given 25 sets of questionnaires. Church A had 25 respondents, Church B had 23 respondents



and Church C had 22. Of the 75 sets that were distributed 70 were filled. This means that 93.3% of the total distributed were filled and brought back.

**Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents.** The respondents to the questionnaires provided socio-demographic data. This data is summarized in Table 8.

*Table 8. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Characteristic	Category	Percent (%)
Age	18 to 21 years	1.4
	22 to 45 years	74.0
	46 to 58 years	21.9
	59 years and above	2.7
Gender	Male	42.5
	Female	57.5
Education Level	Primary	5.4
	'O' Level	54.0
	'A' Level	2.7
	Diploma/Degree	37.0
Marital Status	Married	86.4
	Widows	2.7
	Singles	8.2
	Divorced	2.7
Years in Marriage	0 to 10 years	42.5
	11 to 20 years	26.0
	21 to 35 years	23.3
	36 to 45 years	2.7
	46 years and above	5.5

Based on the above information, the following observations can be made; most of the respondents fell under the 22-45 years' age bracket. This means that most of the respondents were fairly young people. Most of the respondents were married. The married people were 60 in number, which was 86.4% of the 70 people who responded. This was rightly so because this is the group that the research is mainly

meant to assist. The questionnaire revealed that 64 people, who formed 91.8% of the 70 respondents were between 1 and 35 years in marriage. Again, this is indicative of the fact that the three churches are composed of young couples mainly. Finally, 38 individuals, who were 54.8% of the 70 respondents attained 'O' level education and 37% of the 70 respondents attained Diploma or Degree level education. This indicated that most of those who responded were fairly educated. The three churches put together indicated a fairly high prevalence rate of infidelity.

A number of questions were designed to capture the prevalence of infidelity in the churches. A look at some of these questions and the responses to the questions may be necessary at this point.

**Prevalence of infidelity.** Question number 7 was; Adultery/ Infidelity does take place among SDA Church members. Question number 8 was; Infidelity cases are common in the church. Question 9 says; the word adultery is a common word. This question was included to check whether the participants understood the subject under discussion. Question number 10 was; Cases of infidelity/adultery among church members are very high. Those who agreed were a significant number. Question number 11 was; Cases of infidelity/adultery among church members are too few to worry about. Question 12 was; Cases of adultery/infidelity are too many to be ignored. The responses to this question show that a significant number of people agree and some strongly agree, as shown in Figure 1.

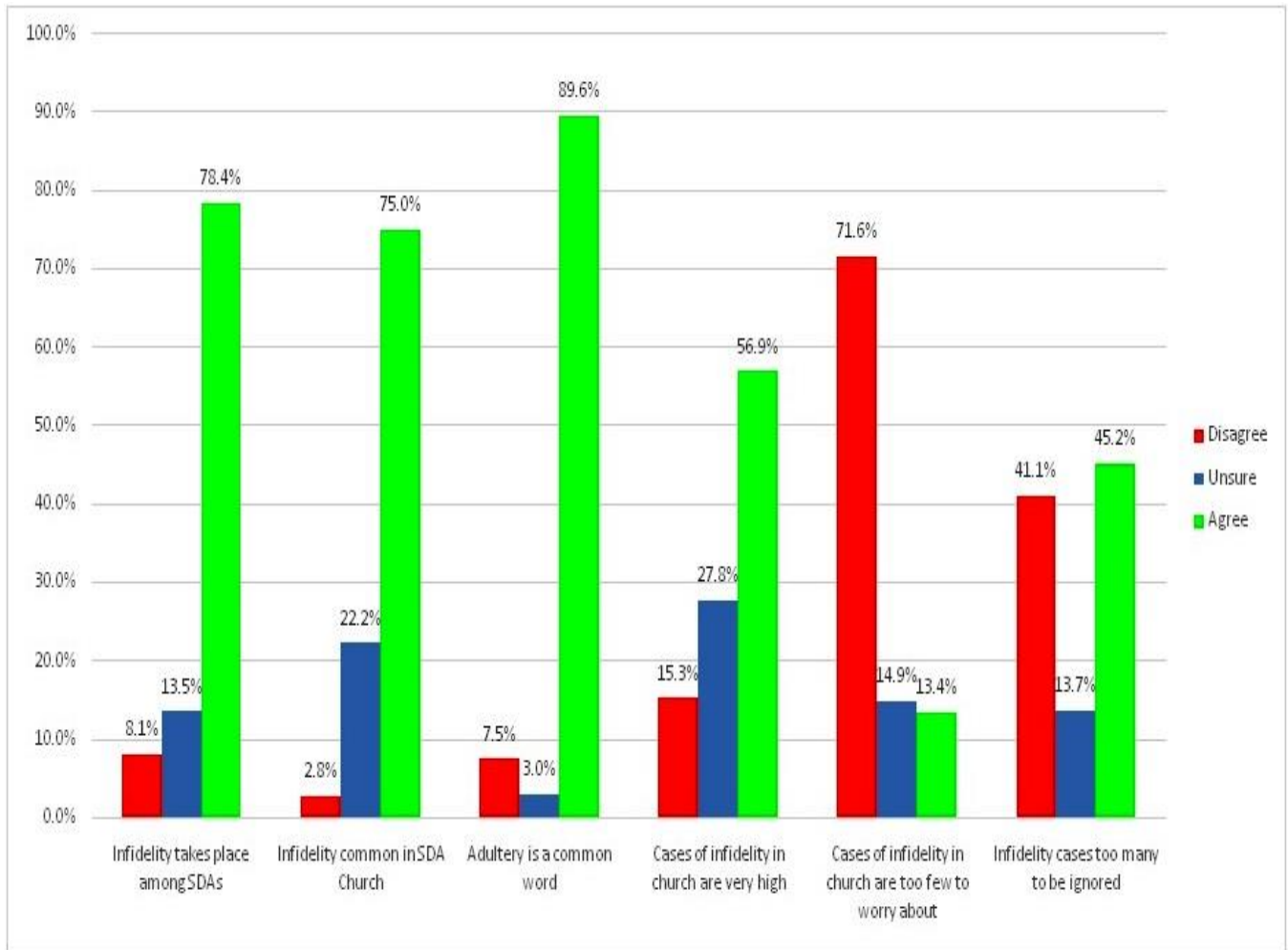


Figure 1. Prevalence of Infidelity

On the possible causes of infidelity, multiple causes were identified. The following were picked as the main drivers of infidelity among the church members. Table 9 below shows the possible causes and the percentage of the total respondents who rated it. As shown in the table, lack of love in the primary relationship has 57 people, which is 82% of the 70 respondents. This means that, according to the respondents, lack of love in the marital relationship is viewed as a major contributor to infidelity. Unfulfilled promises are next with desire for something different taking the third place. Communication problems take the third place. Other causes and their scores are shown below.

*Table 9. Most Common Causes of Infidelity*

Cause	Percent (%)
Lack of love in the primary relationship	82.0
Unfulfilled promises	79.7
Desire for something different	78.9
Communication problems	77.4
Poor sexual relationship in the marriage	70.8
Lack of faith in God	69.0
Peer pressure	63.4
For the fun of it	60.0
Barrenness	55.6
Looking for handsome men/pretty women	50.7

The focus groups added the following causes to the list

1. Living apart
2. Poor spirituality
3. Failure to appreciate the sinfulness of sin
4. Immorality before marriage
5. Societal moral decadence
6. Economic reasons (looking for money)

The respondents to the questionnaires and focus group discussions revealed that infidelity negatively impacts the partners to the marriage, the children, the church of God, the extended family and the community at large. All the respondents to the questionnaires indicated that all the five categories are affected in a big way.

### **Research Findings**

The research made the following findings;

- a) Marital infidelity does take place in the church.
- b) There are numerous possible causes of infidelity

c) Infidelity negatively impacts the couple, the family, children, the church and the community.

**Prevalence of marital infidelity.** The prevalence of infidelity in the churches is high. The need, therefore, to address the problem of infidelity is high. The Bible consistently calls adultery an abomination or sin before God. The OT account assigned death as the penalty for adultery. The Bible further says that all who indulge in this the sin of adultery will not be saved.

The church has a mandate to help people to be saved. It is therefore necessary to develop or design a program that must address the problem of infidelity. Having established the fact that infidelity does take place among church members, and having established some of the possible causes and some of the impact of infidelity, it is important at this point to design a program that is meant to mitigate the effects of infidelity.

### **Program Development**

Both the focus group discussions and the questionnaires indicated a high prevalence of infidelity in the selected churches. All of the three churches had a fairly high prevalence rate of infidelity. In order to minimize or eradicate the problem of infidelity in the churches, the following program was designed for implementation in the churches.

A seminar that was meant to sensitize the members of the church on the sinfulness and consequences of infidelity was designed. The purpose of the seminar was to bring about a revival and reformation in the church. A revived church will shun immorality and all the other vices that the devil brings into the lives of God's people. The theme of the seminar was: There is hope for all.

### **First Presentation**

The Sanctity of Marriage; The first presentation focuses on marriage according to God's plan and how God wants the sanctity of the marriage institution to be upheld. Departures from the divine plan, especially adultery would be dealt with. The consistent pattern that was followed in dealing with sinners of this nature would be highlighted to show how God abhorred the sin of adultery. God's people were expected to be different, peculiar and clean.

### **Second Presentation**

Biblical examples of individuals who succumbed to the temptation of infidelity and how God dealt with the sin of adultery; Examples of people who fell into the sin of adultery would be examined with a view to appreciate what God said about them. The story of David and Bathsheba and its disastrous ending was to be explored in this presentation as a warning to the church of the consequences of infidelity. Other incidences of adultery like Reuben and Bilhah and statements from the book of Proverbs were also to be viewed as a warning against adultery. Phinehas' reaction upon seeing an Israelite entering a tent with a foreign woman is another example of how distasteful infidelity was before God.

Some of types of infidelity and the causes of adultery would be discussed as a way of helping members to be alert in order to avoid situations that are generally known to predispose people to the temptation to infidelity. An attempt was made in this presentation to help people appreciate the impact of infidelity to the spouses, the children, the extended family, the church and the community.

### **Third Presentation**

Hope for sinners and a call to holiness. Realizing that some of the members might have succumbed to the temptation to immorality, or are deep into the sin of

adultery, there is need to point them to the savior as the way out. Revival is known to take place when an individual realizes his need for the Savior. The hope that David experienced when he realized his sinfulness and confessed would be projected as something every sinner could also experience. The woman who was caught in adultery is another case of a sinner who was forgiven of her sin and was commanded to sin no more. The theme that says that Jesus came to seek and save the lost is the basis of this presentation. Finally, a call to the participants to re-commit themselves to purity and holiness would be made. The need to ask for forgiveness from one another would be emphasized to bring about healing in the affected relationships.

### **Summary**

The fourth chapter had the description of the initiative as its main focus. The chapter began by discussing the macro and micro contexts of the study. The SDA Church was discussed as it was the place where the program would be implemented. The environment in which the church is surviving has a high prevalence of infidelity. The church is not spared from the scourge of infidelity.

The mixed method approach was chosen as the type of research that was used to collect data. The objective of the research was to establish the prevalence of infidelity in the church, to establish the possible causes and the impact of infidelity. The mixed method approach that was used unveiled information to the effect that infidelity was taking place in the church. Possible causes were identified and its impact was also established.

Having established that infidelity was a real challenge in the church, a program was designed as a strategy to minimize infidelity in the church. The designed program would be implemented in the three selected churches where the data was collected.

## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVE OF INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

The previous chapter gave a description of the ministry context. The ministry context included the macro and micro contexts. The research design and data analysis were covered in chapter four. Further, the findings of the research were described.

This chapter gives a concise narrative of the chronological implementation of the intervention. Further, a concise narrative of the final evaluation, research instruments used and data analysis will be given in this chapter.

#### **Purpose of Study**

It is important at this stage to reflect on the purpose for which the study was intended to achieve. The study was meant to establish the prevalence, causes and impact of infidelity and to develop, implement and evaluate a program that was meant to minimize infidelity the Gweru Urban territory.

It was necessary to establish the prevalence of marital infidelity in the church in order to develop an intervention strategy that would address the problem. It was important to establish the facts insofar as the prevalence of infidelity within the church was concerned. The causes of infidelity needed to be ascertained in order to help couples to be wary of these. To know the causes would help in that couples would avoid situations that would predispose them to infidelity. It was necessary to study the impact of infidelity as a way of helping the church to appreciate the fact that marital infidelity leaves behind a trail of destruction. Exposing the causes and impact of infidelity would empower couples to protect their marital relationships from the



scourge of infidelity. The youth and the widows who are part of the church would benefit in that they would know that engaging in infidelity destroyed the church.

The strategy was to implement a designed program that was meant to help members to understand the sinfulness of infidelity and to commit themselves to living a life that is free from infidelity. Included in the strategy was to share the causes and impact of infidelity as highlighted in the research. This information was designed to assist members of the church to recognize them when they met them in order to keep themselves safe from temptations to infidelity.

The research carried out established the fact that infidelity was indeed taking place among church members. The survey that was carried out through focus group discussions and questionnaires revealed that marital infidelity was rife in the church. A number of types of infidelity were identified in the research. It is important for couples to know the types because infidelity takes different shapes, some of the types may be hidden from view. All the types indicated below were defined in chapter three. The types, the causes and the impact of infidelity were discussed in the implementation of the intervention. The types included the following;

- a) The physical affair, an affair that involves physical contact, where physical sexual contact is involved.
- b) The emotional affair, this is an affair that may not involve any physical contact but brings people too close emotionally.
- c) Flings, this one is not a lasting affair but one that is for a moment without any commitment whatsoever.
- d) The cyber affair, this type of infidelity refers to an attachment that happens between two individuals electronically.

- e) The serial affair, this affair refers to a situation where an individual gets involved in affairs one after another endlessly.
- f) The obligatory affair, this is an affair that is entered into as an obligation.
- g) The opportunistic affair, when an opportunity arises.
- h) The exit affair, this is an affair that is done as a way of trying to quit on the primary relationship.
- i) The split in two affair, this is a situation where an individual does not want to lose both his spouse and the mistress or someone with whom they are involved in an adulterous relationship.

Possible causes of infidelity were identified and defined at length in the third chapter. There cannot be an exhaustive list of the causes of marital infidelity. The possible causes of infidelity as discussed in the research were;

- a) Psychological factors
- b) Religious factors; some values that are taught early in the development of a child may interfere with sexual activity later in that person's life. Some parents or religious educators paint a negative picture on human sexuality. This picture is able to interfere with sexual performance, thus, exposing the other partner to temptation.
- c) Physical conditions such as erectile dysfunction (ED) arousal disorders. When ED affects the husband, the wife may find herself trying to find relief outside the confines of their relationship.

- d) Medical conditions that inhibit the proper functioning of the sexual apparatus in the human body. When one partner is no longer performing sexually, the other partner may stray from the relationship.
- e) Relational problems affect the partners to a marriage. If the relationship is not healthy, infidelity may set in.
- f) Family scripts may push individuals into infidelity. Scripts refer to the way things have always been handled in the family. Issues like wife inheritance may end up causing a married man to marry his deceased brother's wife
- g) Barrenness; when conception is failing to take place in a marital relationship, infidelity may set in.
- h) Protracted separations; infidelity may come as a result of long periods of separation.
- i) Social media; social media can wreak marriages as people engage in infidelity due to the influence of social media
- j) Friendships at work; the work place can be the place where some marriages are destroyed.
- k) Multiple sex partners before marriage; the research found that a life of promiscuity before marriage may continue even after marriage.
- l) Pornography is known to encourage unfaithfulness
- m) Traditional relationships; some traditional relationships, if not properly guarded may expose individuals to infidelity.

- n) Search for a son; certain men do not believe that girl children are just as good as male children. If they get female children only, they will leave the primary relationship in search for a son.

The impact of infidelity was discussed in chapter three of this document.

Areas of concern in terms of the impact of marital infidelity that were identified were the following;

- a) The partners to the marriage
- b) The children whose parents have gone through the experience of infidelity in their relationship.
- c) The extended family; the whole family gets affected when infidelity strikes in the family.
- d) The church; when infidelity takes place among church members, the image of the church gets tarnished.
- e) The community; the image of the community gets tainted when infidelity cases are reported in the community.

A program was designed for implementation in the three churches where the focus group discussions were undertaken and where the questionnaires were administered. The program was designed to help the members of the church to understand God's design for marriage. It was also intended to help the members to know the fact that infidelity is one of the deviations from God's design for marriage. God's abhorrence of infidelity was to be clearly illustrated from the scriptures. Possible causes of infidelity and its impact were to be presented.

The program designed for implementation; included the following topics

- a) God as author of marriage
- b) Deviations from God's ideal for marriage
- c) Infidelity and the kingdom
- d) The forgiveness factor
- e) Types of infidelity
- f) Possible causes of infidelity
- g) The impact of infidelity

### **Implementation of the Intervention**

Two pastors were enlisted into the program. With each of these pastors taking one of the three selected churches, the implementation would run concurrently. The pastors who were selected served in the family life department in the local conference and had a passion for marriage and family. They were known to be apt teachers and presenters of family life studies. It was important to introduce the two pastors to the work that was to be done. The researcher held three sessions with the two pastors to share the vision. Each session was about an hour long.

The first session dealt with the broader concept, where the topic and its relevance were discussed. The conceptual framework of the topic under review was articulated. The findings from the focus group discussions and the questionnaires were shared. This was done in order to have the two pastors appreciate the whole research. It became evident that the two pastors appreciated the scope of the study by the way they contributed in the discussion.

The second session focused on how God as author of the marriage institution views infidelity. The Bible formed the basis for this session. The sanctity of the marriage institution was discussed as the foundation to understanding any departures

from God's design. Deviations from God's ideal for marriage were discussed in this session. Some of the deviations were highlighted briefly.

The main area of deviation that was discussed to some depth was the area of adultery. Biblical passages where God indicated His displeasure and abhorrence of adultery were shared. The Ten Commandments were reviewed in relation to the seventh commandment that prohibits adultery. Included in the second session were instances of adultery as recorded in the Bible and how God dealt with this sin.

Some of the cases that were cited included the story of Reuben and Bilhah. Reuben committed adultery with his father's wife, Bilhah. This sin was responsible for Reuben's downfall. The case of David and Bathsheba was also shared. God's displeasure over David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba was highlighted. Similarly, Phinehas' reaction when he saw an Israelite taking a foreign woman into his tent to commit adultery with her was discussed. This was done to have the two appreciate the seriousness of the sin of adultery. Similarly, the two pastors appreciated the biblical passages that were shared and indicated that some of the scripture passages shared were striking.

In this same session, the different types of infidelity were shared. It was deemed important for the two to appreciate the existence of different types of infidelity. They would need this information in the implementation process. Furthermore, the different possible causes of infidelity were reviewed. The causes of infidelity that were shared were those that came out from the focus group interviews and the questionnaires.

It was agreed that on the possible causes and impact of infidelity, the participants would be given the opportunity to discuss this and add what they felt were the other causes of infidelity and the possible impact of the same. It was

gratifying to hear the two pastors articulating more possible causes beyond what the research had established. This was an indication to the researcher that the pastors had grasped the subject under discussion.

The impact of infidelity as found from the research was shared with the two. The impact of infidelity on the couple's relationship was discussed first. Its impact on the couple's children, the church, the extended family and the community was also shared. The consequences of infidelity were discussed under the topic; Infidelity and the kingdom. The reason why this topic was selected was to remind the members of the church that infidelity was a sin that would cause people to be lost. The fact that those who practice infidelity will not be part of God's eternal kingdom was discussed at length.

The final part of the second session focused on Hope and Healing. The research findings indicated that infidelity was taking place in the church. This meant that there was the possibility that some among the participants were going through the pain of having their spouses engaging in infidelity. These needed to be given hope and to be healed. Biblical accounts where infidelity was forgiven and new hope was given to perpetrators were recounted.

David was given as an example of a man who realized his sinfulness and sought to be forgiven. Similarly the New Testament story of the woman caught in the act of adultery was discussed. She was forgiven. The two stories were given to emphasize the fact that forgiveness is possible. Mention was made that God is able to save to the uttermost, even the vilest of sinners. This part was emphasized more because, it was felt, healing, was what many people needed.

The third and final session focused on the actual presentation. Power point presentations were shared in which all the different tenets of the designed program

were put together. The presentations were to be delivered in power point form. The presentations were scrutinized thoroughly in order for everyone in the team to grasp the presentations and own them. It was pleasing that the long presentations became our own presentations and not the researcher's work. Confidence was therefore, built on the whole program. The sequence of the presentations was shared so that each facilitator followed the same program.

The designed program was to be presented in the three churches concurrently. Two days were set aside for the presentation of the intervention. Two days were chosen because the designed program had topics that could not be covered adequately in a single day. The intervention was to be implemented on two Sabbath days when most of the people who were designed to benefit from the program were present.

On the first Sabbath (October 1, 2016) that was set aside for the implementation of the intervention, the following topics were covered; God as author of the institution of marriage, deviations from God's ideal for marriage, infidelity and the coming kingdom of God and the forgiveness factor. The worship hour was used to prepare the audience for long afternoon hours. The sinfulness of adultery and the exclusion of adulterers from the kingdom were highlighted in the morning presentation.

Each of the facilitators took the morning worship service. The morning sermon was designed to arouse interest in the members on the importance of living lives that are free from sin, especially the sin of infidelity. It was observed that the attendance on that day was high in all the three churches. All the three church buildings were full to capacity. The local pastor, through his local leadership worked tirelessly to prepare for the day. They requested the members to plan to attend, and to invite their spouses who may not have been members of the church. This yielded



some positive results in that those spouses who were not normally coming to church were seen on this particular day. The promotion that took place before the day was responsible for the high turnout that was witnessed on the day in question.

On the second Sabbath, (October 8, 2016) all the three churches were full to capacity as they were on the first Sabbath when the first part of the designed program was implemented. The facilitators took the morning service in their respective churches. The topics that were covered on this day were; types of marital infidelity, possible causes and the impact of infidelity.

The focus group members in each church worked to encourage members to attend the meetings on that particular day. In the afternoon, the, facilitators took their places at two o'clock in each of the three selected churches. The presentations ran up to between seventeen thirty hours to eighteen hours. The responses were almost the same but differed in some ways from church to church. It is therefore necessary that each church be reviewed separately.

### **Church A**

As indicated earlier, the building was full beyond its capacity on the two selected days, some more chairs had to be squeezed into the building to try and accommodate the audience. Some people from the neighboring church who had heard of the program came to this church. In the afternoon, it became obvious that the participants would not be accommodated in the building. A decision was quickly made to meet outside the building. They ended up meeting outside the building. Unfortunately, the presentation could not be screened for the audience to follow, but the facilitator used the power points as his notes for the presentations.

At the beginning of the presentation on the first day, the audience was a bit apprehensive, they appeared unsure of where the presentation was going but soon got

highly excited with the presentation. The participation that was witnessed was an indication that all the participants were engaged. It emerged that some of the biblical passages that were dealt with were new to some individuals. The biblical stories that dealt with cases of infidelity were highly appreciated. Some openly mentioned how much they appreciated the presentations and wondered why the church was quiet about the sin for such a long time. One disturbing comment was, “What are you going to do with some pastors who are known to be living in this particular sin?” No answer could be given to the question but the intended message was grasped, the question was designed to inform the facilitator of the existence of the sin even among the clergy.

On the second Sabbath, the attendance was no different from the first day. The three churches remained full to capacity up to the end of the day. When it became time to talk about the causes of infidelity, the audience concurred with the list that was shared. The audience shared some deeper insights on some of the items listed, helping everyone to understand some of the mentioned causes better. It became clear that a poor marital relationship was understood to be responsible for pushing partners outside their relationships to commit the sin of infidelity.

Similarly, on the impact of infidelity, it emerged from the discussions that some members in the group were hurting. They had not come to terms with the experience of infidelity in their lives. Some individuals in the audience mentioned that divorce was almost always the final end of a relationship in which infidelity was experienced at some point.

When a call was made at the end of the final presentation, almost all the participants stood up to recommit themselves to fidelity in their marriages. The call was designed in a way that was not going to embarrass anyone. It was designed to be

inclusive, with those who were never involved in infidelity being invited to ask God to keep them faithful, those who were involved in the sin being called to repent and renounce their sinful ways, and those who were bitter towards their unfaithful spouses being called to ask God to heal their broken spirit. This was viewed as a solemn moment for everyone who was in that church.

### **Church B**

At church B, the attendance on the first Sabbath was unusual in that the people who came early that morning were more than what normally happened at this church. The church got filled to capacity early that day. The morning service prepared the members for the afternoon sessions. In the afternoon, the church building was just as full as it was in the morning, which was an unusual occurrence at that church. The excitement was very high from the beginning. All the participants appeared to have been engaged right from the beginning.

Almost everyone in the audience was seen taking some notes and seeking clarification where they felt they needed more information. Questions and comments were seen coming from all directions in the church. This church, like church A indicated that some pastors were not giving the right example in this matter. The mention of pastors as being involved in this sin of infidelity remained a challenge to the whole program. It is normally the case that pastors are esteemed highly and any failure by the pastor may cause someone to fall. They went on to say that the problem was difficult to fight because some in the local church leadership were involved in the sin. It was difficult for leadership to stand against a sin they were also practicing.

On the causes of marital infidelity, the quality of the marital relationship was seen as the main cause. Where the relationship was poor, misdemeanors of all kinds are possible. Protracted separations were highlighted as being responsible for

infidelity also. The audience confirmed that most of the causes as found in the research were indeed responsible for infidelity among members.

On the impact of infidelity, as it was observed in church A, the partners to the marriage were cited as the first to be impacted negatively. The contributions that were made in the discussion pointed to the fact that the quality of the relationship in which infidelity was experienced took long to normalize if ever it normalized after all.

When the call was made, it became apparent that the moment was no longer a light one. Most of the participants appeared to have been engaged spiritually, the atmosphere in the church became somber. All the people who were in the church stood up to recommit themselves to the Lord.

The comments that were made by different individual after the program indicated a deep appreciation for the program. Some suggested that the same program be one of the camp meeting lessons for the ensuing year.

### **Church C**

The attendance at this church was high, the church was 100% full from morning till the end of the day. The morning service appeared to have captivated the attention of the audience. The good attendance in the afternoon was believed to have been influenced by the program in the morning.

In the afternoon the participation of the audience was good from the very beginning. It is at this church where one of the members stood up in the course of the presentation to confess that he was very sorry that he was actually living in sin at that very moment. He asked the church to pray for him so that he could be granted power to stop sinning. His confession changed the atmosphere in the whole building, a certain kind of seriousness was observed in the church from that moment onwards.

When the call was extended to the participants, both young and old sprang to their feet as a sign of contrition, it was observed. A special prayer program was put in place that was meant to strengthen individuals in their resolve to overcome and to forgive. The implementation of the program ended at that note. It is at this church were one widow requested all the widows to remain behind after the session. It was later leant that they remained behind to reprimand one another on the failure of some of them to resist the temptation to infidelity. This meant that the presentation had made in impact on them. Change, at least in attitude was evident.

### **Program Evaluation**

The implementation of the program may not mean much if it is not followed by an evaluation of the program to establish whether or not the program helped the church to minimize infidelity. Evaluation also helps in sharpening the program for further implementation.

### **Evaluation Tools**

The mixed method approach was deemed necessary as a way of evaluating the program. The mixed method approach included both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects. The qualitative aspect of the evaluation process took the form of focus group discussions. The quantitative aspect was in the form of a questionnaire.

**Focus group discussions.** Focus groups were formed in each of the three churches that met to review the program and determine whether the program brought any change, at least in attitudes. Focus group discussions were undertaken as way of assessing the impact of the designed program. Each of the three churches set up a group of nine individuals who took part in the focus group interviews. The nine were

picked from those members who attended the designed program. Each focus group three men, four women and two young people.

The focus groups dealt with the following questions on the evaluation of the implemented program: the usefulness of the program, the effect of the program in terms of the change it wrought in the lives of members, personal benefit from the program, and the aspect of healing in the relationships that experienced marital infidelity at some point in life. The following were the results that came out from the group interviews.

**Church A.** The focus group members in church A indicated that the program was a necessary program for the church. All the members of this group indicated that the program was helpful to both the old and the new members. To the old members the group observed, the program was a call to faithfulness. To new members, it was also observed, they were hearing information that was not familiar. They were aware that infidelity was a sin but they had not met the details that were presented during the implementation of the program.

The focus group also observed that some members of the church were hearing that information for the first time ever since they were baptized. The focus group members were quick to say that they were personally helped in understanding God's abhorrence of the sin of adultery. They also indicated that they believed that attitudes on adultery changed due to the program.

Mention was made by some of the members of the group that they believed that some members were helped to overcome the sin of adultery. One individual in the group alluded to the fact that she observed that there was some thawing in terms of the relationship in a particular couple's lives. They indicated that more such programs would be necessary in the fight against infidelity.

**Church B.** The focus group participants in church B appeared excited about the program. They articulated the belief that the program helped in calling the attention of the church to holiness. The sinfulness of infidelity, they said, was laid bare and the need to overcome was properly articulated. They believed that the picture of infidelity that was articulated from the scriptures would go a long way in discouraging infidelity among all those who were present on the days when the program was implemented.

Some felt that the program came a little late in that some marriages were already suffering the impact of infidelity. They mentioned that some of the marriages that were suffering from the effects of infidelity could have been saved the agony they were currently going through. Almost all the group members believed that some individuals who were present during the implementation of the program were helped to overcome infidelity. On the aspect of healing, it was believed that healing was already taking place in some relationships that were affected by infidelity at some point in their lives. Most of the focus group members felt that healing was a long process that could take years to happen, but they believed that it was possible as they looked at the implemented program.

The group members mentioned that the leadership of the church, including the pastors, was responsible for the sin of adultery due to their failure to be good examples in the matter and their silence on the issue. Just like it was mentioned in church A, church B requested that more of such programs be implemented on a regular basis if the church would minimize the occurrence of infidelity cases in the church.

**Church C.** The individuals who constituted the focus group under church C indicated that at least something had been done in minimizing infidelity. A feeling

that some individuals who were living a life of sin had been set free was expressed. They also mentioned that some individuals were helped by the program not to engage in the sin of adultery. One member of the group mentioned that one participant in the program confided in her that she was not aware of the sinfulness of infidelity until she attended the program. She asked her friend to pray for her so that she could order her life according to the word of God.

The three focus groups in the three churches expressed the feeling that the program yielded positive results in the churches concerned. As indicated earlier, the war against infidelity was not to be taken as an event, but a regular program in the church's calendar of events. Mention was made to the effect that the seriousness that is seen in dealing with stewardship, evangelism and many other ministries of the church should also be sin in dealing with marriage and family, especially as it relates to infidelity. In all the focus group discussions, the need to take the minimization of infidelity in the church, they said, needed an approach that would be consistent. This approach would need to be seen to be serious enough to cause the members of the church not to feel comfortable to live in sin.

**Questionnaires.** Having looked at the first instrument that was used to evaluate the implemented program, which was the focus group discussions, it is time to look at the second instrument. The second instrument that was used to evaluate the program was the questionnaire. A questionnaire was designed to try and capture information on the impact of the program on the general population of the participants. Questions were formulated in a manner that was meant to establish the usefulness of the program in minimizing marital infidelity in the three selected churches. The questionnaires were distributed in the selected churches in the following manner;



**Church A.** Questionnaires were distributed to 25 individuals who attended the seminars. It was deliberate to select participants from the people who were there when the program was being implemented, people who were present the first and second Sabbath when the designed program was implemented. These individuals would give relevant information in terms of evaluating the program. Of the 25 individuals who were given the questionnaires, four did not return the papers, two were spoiled and nineteen were brought back. The nineteen questionnaires that were returned represented 76% of the total distributed. All the 25 questionnaires that were distributed were expected back. Only nineteen came back. It was felt, however, that the nineteen fairly represented the rest of the participants.

**Church B.** A total of 25 questionnaires were distributed. Three were returned unfiled (blank), five were not brought back and seventeen were filled and returned. The papers that were returned were seventeen, which was 68% of the questionnaires that were distributed. In terms of the papers returned, Church B was worse than Church A in that Church B got back seventeen only while Church A had nineteen that were brought back. It was not clear as to why some individuals decided to return blanks questionnaires, it was not necessary to speculate. The seventeen copies that were brought back (68%) gave a fair picture of the survey.

**Church C.** The total number of questionnaires that were distributed was 25. Papers that were not returned were four and those that were filled and returned were 21. The papers that were returned were 84% of the total distributed. Church C was much better in terms of the questionnaires that were filled properly and brought back. The 21 that were filled and brought back, which was 84% of the total distributed was fair enough. The researcher had hoped that in each of the three churches all the 25 copies would be filled properly and returned back. This proved to be not the case.

For the three churches, 57 individuals, which is 76% of the 75 questionnaires distributed were filled and brought back. The findings from the three churches were put together in terms of analysis to minimize the repetition and the number of pages it would take if the churches were analyzed individually.

### **Characteristics of Evaluation Respondents**

The people who participated in the evaluation exercise were classified per their age, marital status, years of marriage, education level and number of children. In terms of age, 45 people, who form 60% of the respondents were in the 22-45 years age bracket. The majority of the participants were young couples. Slightly more than 20% or 15 people were in the 46-58 years age bracket. Nearly 80% or 60 people of all the respondents were married. Almost 40% or 30 individuals of the respondents were between 0 and 10 years in marriage, 25% or 19 people were between 11 and 20 years in marriage and 30% or 22 people of the participants were between 21 and 35 years in marriage.

It is clear that most of the respondents were fairly young couples. In terms of education, almost 60% or 45 of the respondents had 'O' level certificates and 30% or 22 people participants had Diplomas and Degrees. The respondents were fairly educated, they were not illiterate in any way. Close to 80% or 60 respondents had three children. It is, therefore, believed that most of the respondents believed in birth control. The above information indicates that most of the respondents were between one to twenty years in marriage.

### **Evaluation Findings**

The following were the observations that were made on the whole program as it relates to the three selected churches. Of the total respondents, 95% or 71 people indicated that the presentations were clear, only four individuals or 5% had a different

opinion. The 5% or four individuals indicated their disagreement on the clarity of the presentations, they felt the presentations were not clear. On whether the program addressed a real need in the church, 96% or 72 people believed that it did, only three people or 4% differed in terms of opinion. The 4% or three people disagreed with the statement that said the designed and implemented program addressed a real need in the church.

On whether the program helped the church, 63 people or 84% of the respondents indicated that the program did help. Those who disagreed were slightly more than four, which is 6% of the total number who responded. Another 10% or 7 people were unsure whether the program helped the church. It was necessary to check whether the audience appreciated the gravity of the sin of adultery. The findings were that 64 people or 86% of the respondents indicated an appreciation of the gravity of adultery. Those who were not sure were 7, which is 10% of the total participants and those who disagreed were 3, which is 4% of the respondents.

On whether the program helped to change attitudes on adultery, 42 people, which is 56% of the respondents said that they believed the program helped people to change their attitude as it relates to marital infidelity, 38% or 28 were unsure, and 6% or four people felt that it did not change the attitudes of the participants. According to the figures, at least some change of attitude was believed to have taken place because of the program.

The questionnaire included a question on whether some individuals were helped to quit adultery. Of the total respondents, 52% or 39 people indicated that some individuals made a decision to quit adultery, 34% or 25 individuals were unsure and 14% or ten people did not believe that there could be anyone who decided to quit adultery. The findings indicate that some individuals could have decided to quit the

life of sin. The purpose of the whole study, as indicated from the onset was to minimize marital infidelity, any indication to the effect that some individuals could have decided to quit, would be gratifying.

On whether the credibility of the church would have been enhanced by the program, 74% or 55 people felt that the program was able to enhance the credibility of the church, 24% or eighteen were not sure and 2% or about two people disagreed. The researcher believes that the credibility of the church would need a lot more time to be enhanced. It is not possible to bring about meaningful change on the image of the church overnight.

It was important to check whether the individuals who participated in the questionnaire personally benefited from the program. Almost all of them acknowledged that the program assisted them in different ways. Those who said they benefited from the program were 96% or 72 individuals of the total participants. Only 4% or three people indicated that they did not benefit from the program. A deliberate question on the list of questions was whether the participants would invite their friends if a further program addressing issues of adultery would be announced. In response to this question, 69 people or 92% of the participants indicated that they would invite their friends. Figure 2 below gives a summary of the findings

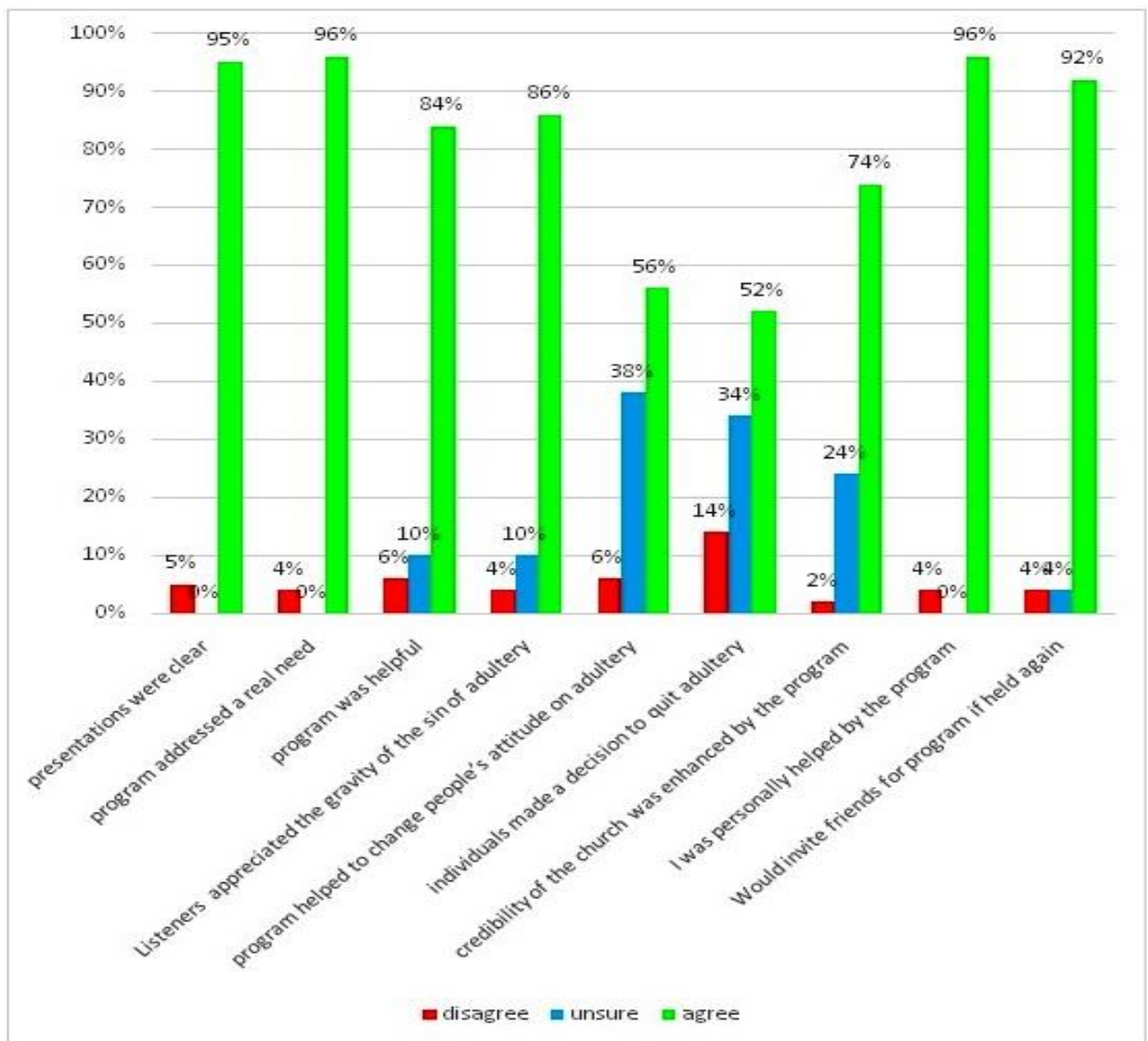


Figure 2. Responses to Evaluation Questions

### Impact of the Designed and Implemented Program

It is encouraging to note that the effort to minimize infidelity can yield positive results. Judging from the results that came from the program that was implemented, the responses were indicative of a change of attitude in the way infidelity is viewed. The fight against infidelity is not something that can be done overnight, it may take time to win this war but the church can benefit from programs of this nature.

The responses from both the focus group discussions and the questionnaires indicated that some individuals could have been helped to quit adultery. This is the focus of this dissertation. Having proved that infidelity is actually taking place among God's people, having ascertained its prevalence, possible causes and impact, to know that some might have decided to quit would mean that more needed to be done in endeavoring to minimize infidelity in the churches.

Following are the findings that the evaluation process brought;

It was established that the program addressed a real need in the church. Both the focus group discussions and the questionnaires indicated that the implemented program was pertinent and relevant. It also emerged from the two instruments used in the research that the program was helpful. The participants in both the focus group discussions and the questionnaires indicated that they benefited from the program as individuals and that they believed the whole church benefitted from the program.

As indicated earlier, 56% of the 70 respondents believed that attitudes on marital infidelity did change as a result of the program that was implemented. Further, as alluded to earlier, decisions to quit adultery were made by some. The respondents also indicated that the program impacted positively on the credibility/image of the church.

It emerged from the focus group discussions and the questionnaires that the program helped members of the church to understand the implications of infidelity on the family and the church.

It emerged from the study that working to minimize infidelity needed continuous programming and evaluation. A single program may not succeed in dealing with the challenge of infidelity.

## Summary

This chapter gave a condensed version of the development of the initiative. The focus of the study, which was to develop, implement a strategy to minimize infidelity among members of the church was presented first. The strategy was developed in chapter four of this dissertation. The intervention that was designed in the previous chapter covered the theology of the marriage institution, the sinfulness of infidelity, and healing from the scars of infidelity. Possible causes and the impact of infidelity were presented also.

The implementation of the project started by enlisting two pastors who worked as facilitators together with the researcher. The pastors went through an orientation program to have them appreciate the whole program. The implementation of the initiative was done concurrently in three different churches. Two worship days were set aside for the seminars.

Evaluation was done after the implementation of the program. The instruments used for the evaluation were the focus group discussions and the questionnaire. The evaluation aimed at establishing the impact of the implemented program with regards to minimizing marital infidelity in the church.

In the final analysis, the intervention was found to be useful. The respondents indicated that the intervention helped members to change their attitude towards infidelity. This meant that a casual approach to issues of adultery was found to be against God's ideal of holiness. The evaluation done indicated that some individuals decided to quit living in the sin of adultery.

It is to be noted, however, that the need for continuous implementation and assessment is necessary. To minimize or eradicate marital infidelity may need to be

viewed as a process rather than an event. Continuous teaching and evaluating may be what is needed to combat infidelity in the church.



## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

This chapter summarizes the whole dissertation. A concise description of the evaluation method employed will be made. The interpretation of data and the conclusion drawn from the data and recommendations will be given in this chapter.

#### **What the Bible Says About Marriage and Infidelity**

This dissertation was meant to help minimize the occurrence of infidelity among Seventh-day Adventist Church members in the Gweru Urban Territory. It was to establish the prevalence, causes and impact of infidelity among the members. First to be considered were the biblical foundations of marriage. The Genesis narrative (Gen 2:18-25) was examined as the narrative gives God's design for marriage. God is seen as the author of marriage. He designed marriage as a permanent and life-long union between a man and a woman.

The same narrative excludes many models that are seen in the world today. These models came as a result of sin and they include polygamy, polyandry, divorce, same-sex unions, incest, bestiality and adultery. These models have no support from the scriptures. By disregarding God's word, mankind fell short of the glory of God.

God is seen as the author and designer of the marriage institution. The devil came and attacked the marriage institution and brought about a lot of distortions that have become so common. Among the distortions is adultery. God forbids adultery (Ex

20:14). God sees adultery as an abomination. The Bible is clear on that. The death penalty was assigned to those individuals who were found committing the sin of adultery. The penalty on its own was an indication of God's abhorrence of adultery.

Some individuals committed the sin and God was not amused by their behavior. Among those who committed the sin of adultery were King David (2 Sam 11) Reuben (Gen 35:22; 49:3, 4). Terrible consequences became the lot of these individuals. God consistently showed his disapproval of the sin of adultery. Those who fell into this sin were reprimanded heavily. The case of Phineas was a case in point (Num 25:6-9). When an Israelite brought a foreign woman into his tent, to commit adultery with her, he swiftly thrust his javelin on the two and killed them instantly. The Bible says that Phineas' action pleased God. David's sin with Bathsheba did not go unpunished, the child born from the adulterous union died.

The New Testament affirms the OT's position on adultery. Adultery is portrayed as a grievous sin. Jesus goes further to say that a lustful look on a woman constitutes adultery (Matt 5:28). This is an indication that adultery takes place beyond the confines of a physical union. The Bible goes on to say that all who commit the sin of adultery will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven. There are many references in the New Testament to the effect that those who sin against God by committing adultery will not be part of the saved. The Apostle Paul confirms the sinfulness of adultery in his writings (1Cor 6:9,10, Eph 5:5). He also articulates the fact that those who commit the sin will not be saved. The book of Revelation sums it up by saying that all those who commit adultery will be destroyed (Rev21:8).

The Bible gives examples of forgiveness. Like all other sins, God forgives those who commit adultery if they choose to repent. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Mark 19:10). He is faithful to forgive (1 John 1:9). David confessed his sin and

was forgiven. So did the woman who was caught in adultery (John 8:3-11). Jesus said to her “Go and sin no more.” There is hope for every sinner.

### **What Other Writers Say About Marital Infidelity**

Ellen White in the same way affirms the biblical position on adultery. She says that it is a terrible sin before God. She says that some in church leadership are living in that sin. She goes on to say that God’s displeasure rests upon such individuals.

Writers other than the biblical writers and Ellen White differed in terms of opinions. Some say that adultery is an amusement while others think that it is a coil. In general, the prevalence of infidelity in society is widely acknowledged by different authors. Though some do not consider infidelity as a vice, it remains a sin before God. The Seventh-day Adventist Church views adultery as a sin for which a member can be disciplined.

### **Infidelity Types, Causes and Impact**

The different writers indicate that there are numerous types of infidelity, and these include; the physical affair, which is the most common and easily understood type of adultery. Others on the list include but are not limited to emotional affair, cyber affair, flings, obligatory affair, serial affair and opportunistic affair.

On the possible causes of adultery, different authors cite a number of causes. The possible causes include physical conditions like vaginismus, erectile dysfunctions, arousal disorders, vaginal fusions and certain medical conditions like hypertension and diabetes which affect the proper functioning of the sexual apparatus, rendering sexual responses ineffective. When a partner in a marriage is deprived of sex in the primary relationship due to the conditions mentioned above, chances are that he or she may go out of the relationship to find fulfillment elsewhere.

Other causes include challenges in terms of relationships. A poor marital relationship predisposes couples to infidelity. Barrenness is seen as one factor that is also known for pushing marriage partners out in order to get a child, search for a son is another common cause, social media, pornography, protracted separations, friendships at work, and, multiple sex partners before marriage. All the above have a way of pushing individuals out of their primary relationships.

Infidelity impacts the couple in a negative way. A marital relationship in which infidelity has taken place may not heal easily. Many such relationships end up in divorce or prolonged separations. Building trust again may take long. Whatever the cause may be, the negative impact on the couple is horrible.

Apart from the couple, the children whose parents went through an infidelity challenge are affected in many and different ways. Children who have to live with parents whose relationship has broken down suffer a lot. Seeing their parents fighting affects them psychologically. In some cases, the children end up suffering economically. The extended family is affected as well in that the family members get divided as they take sides in the matter.

Apart from the children, the church is also impacted negatively. The mission of the church is compromised in that the reputation of the church is tarnished. Evangelistic endeavors have often failed because the church's credibility is affected by cases of infidelity in the church. Some individuals may find it difficult to be associated with a church whose members are not morally upright. It is not just the church that is affected by issues of infidelity. The reputation of the community suffers as well.

## **The Macro and Micro Context**

In chapter four of this paper a description of the country of Zimbabwe was made. This included its geographical position and its people. The country has a population of 13 million people. The economy is largely agro-based. Mining plays a significant role in the economy. The economy is not doing very well at the moment with an unprecedented unemployment rate. The rate of unemployment as indicated above is responsible for a myriad of social ills that are taking place in the country.

People move from place to place as they seek for gainful employment. This movement has a way of affecting marriages and families negatively. As they look for gainful employment, they leave their families behind, this is responsible for the proliferation of HIV/AIDS among family members as infidelity, due to these separations disturbs the families. Family cohesion is seriously compromised.

**Marriages in Zimbabwe.** Three types of marriages are recognized in the country of Zimbabwe. The marriages are: The Unregistered Customary Law Union. This marriage is recognized though it is not registered. It allows for polygamy if the man decides to marry more than one wife. The second type is the Registered Customary Union. This type allows for polygamy also. The third type is the Registered Civil Union. This is a monogamous type of a marriage.

There is another union that is not recognized but is common in the country. This union is known as cohabitation. Cohabitation is the type of union in which two individuals, usually a man and a woman, choose to stay together without formalizing their union. Researchers and Newspapers indicate that infidelity is rife in the country. Divorce and maintenance cases handled by the courts every week are a testimony to an upsurge in infidelity.

The SDA Church is not spared from the scourge. Church boards handle cases of adultery quite regularly. Newspapers carry news headlines reporting infidelity cases among the leadership of the church, including pastors. These reports have a way of tarnishing the image of the church, compromising the church's mission.

### **Research Design**

Having looked at the Bible, the writings of Ellen White and what other writers say about infidelity, a research process was put in place to ascertain the prevalence, causes, and impact of infidelity in the church. Three churches were selected from the Gweru Urban Territory. The three churches that were selected differed in their locations. The first church was in the city center. This is a church with mainly young couples, most of which had Diplomas and Degrees in terms of their level of education. The second church was one that was in an old residential area. Most of the members in this church were self-employed, and yet a significant number were retired. The third and final church was in a fairly new residential area where young couples were just settling.

The circumstances in each of the three locations differed significantly. The socio-economic climate was unique with each location. The purpose for selecting these three different churches was to establish whether there were going to be different outcomes from the research. It was discovered that there were differences in the findings for each church. Though the differences were not quite pronounced, they were significant enough.

**Research type.** The research type was the mixed method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined in the research. The qualitative part had focus group discussions. Each of the three churches formed a group of nine individuals who formed the focus group. The nine included married

men and women who did not come as couples, two youths, a widow or widower. The researcher, together with the district pastor, set down with each of the three focus groups and held the discussions. The discussions were designed to establish whether indeed there was infidelity among church members, the prevalence of infidelity in the church, the possible causes of infidelity and the its impact.

All the three focus groups confirmed that there was infidelity going on in the churches. Indications from the focus group discussions were that one of the three churches was more affected than the other two churches. The most affected church was the one located in the old residential area. This is where, as mentioned earlier, most of the members were self-employed. In one of the churches some members of the focus group were ready to mention names of those who were said to be involved in marital infidelity at that moment.

The focus group discussions put together a list of things they believed were the possible causes of infidelity in the churches. These included but were not limited to protracted separations, trying to make money, barrenness, trying to get a boy child, failure to fear God, doing sex (intercourse) before marriage and peer pressure. Some participants mentioned that church leadership's failure to lead by example in this matter was another factor caused infidelity.

On the impact of infidelity, the innocent spouse was seen as the one who suffered most. He or she would be traumatized for a long time. Healing from an incident of infidelity may take such a long time, they said. The children are also affected by the break of trust among their parents. It was mentioned in one of the groups that some children end up living on the streets due to unhappiness in the homes.

The quantitative part of the mixed method had questionnaires that were designed to capture information as to the prevalence, causes and impact of infidelity among the church members. The questionnaires were distributed among the members of the three selected churches. Each of the churches got 25 questionnaires. Random sampling was used in the selection of participants. Married individuals were randomly selected, trying as much as was possible to cover all age groups. One or two young people were included in list of participants. A widow was included in the list also.

The questionnaires were distributed to the participants who filled them and brought them back. Most of the participants did fill the questionnaires wholeheartedly. The papers that were returned back were carefully analyzed, and it was established that there was a high prevalence of infidelity within the church. The possible causes were also indicated. The possible causes were mainly those that were mentioned in the focus group discussions and the impact of infidelity centered on the couple, children, the church and the community.

### **Intervention**

After establishing that indeed infidelity was taking place among God's people, a program was designed in a bid to minimize incidences of marital infidelity in the churches. The designed program had three presentations. The first presentation dealt with the biblical model of marriage. This model gives God as the author of marriage. The second presentation examined the Bible's position on marital infidelity or adultery. Examples of people who committed the sin of adultery were examined with a view to establishing God's response to adultery. People like David, Reuben and Phinehas were reviewed. God's displeasure was emphasized.

Some types of infidelity were discussed. Similarly, possible causes were examined in a bid to help members to be wary of such in order to avoid falling. Many



people just find themselves in situations that predispose them to danger. Knowing such situations was the aim of the presentations as a way of helping members to maintain fidelity in their marriages.

Adultery was examined in the light of the Kingdom of God. Biblical references were examined that indicated that the home of the saved was not going to be inherited by those who commit adultery. The point to be driven home was that losing the eternal kingdom on account of infidelity was not necessary. Emphasis was made on keeping the faith in order to be saved.

The final presentation focused on God's willingness to forgive, examples of individuals who were forgiven were highlighted. People like David, the woman who was caught in adultery were presented to re-enforce the fact that God is willing to forgive sinners who come to Him in contrition of heart. God's willingness to forgive was the climax of the whole program. A general call was made at the end of the program inviting people to commit themselves to marital fidelity, and to stop sinning if they were living in the sin of adultery.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the program to establish whether it made any difference in the churches was carried out in the mixed method fashion. Focus group discussions were constituted in each of the three churches. These groups were meant to indicate whether the designed program was of any help in the fight against marital infidelity. All the three focus groups indicated that the program made a difference in the churches. It was believed that some individuals decided to quit living in sin because of the designed and implemented program

Apart from the focus group discussions, questionnaires were distributed in the three selected churches as before, each church had 25 questionnaires. These were

filled and brought back. An analysis of the returned questionnaires indicated that people felt that the designed and implemented program brought about some difference in the churches. Indications were that the program helped people to understand the sinfulness of adultery. The filled in questionnaires indicated that some attitudes changed because of the program. A few felt that some may have been helped to quit adultery by the program. It is important to mention that there is need for continuous assessment and evaluation. Change may not take place in the short term. Continuous evaluation may lead to re-designing the programs for implementation.

### **Conclusion**

The problem of infidelity is a sensitive issue. People will not easily open up and share information for fear of being stigmatized. The researcher feels that the respondents were fairly co-operative. The information shared was significant in trying to tackle marital infidelity. As indicated earlier, minimizing or eradicating infidelity cannot succeed if it is taken as an event. The researcher believes that the war against infidelity is to be taken as a process. The process may need to be given more time to be able to bring about meaningful change in the churches. Continuous evaluation remains critical in minimizing infidelity.

Among the questions that were included in the questionnaire were; were you personally helped by the program and if a similar program is to be held again, would you invite your associates to attend. About 52 people, that is 70% of the participants indicated that the program helped them personally, and that they would invite their friends if another program would be announced. The idea of wanting friends to get the information as well was indicative of the success of the program that was implemented.

## **Recommendations**

After carrying out the research and making some findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. One of the reasons that contribute to the occurrence of marital infidelity in marital relationships, according to this research, has to do with the quality of the relationship. A poor relationship, where there is fighting and disharmony may find one partner or both of them going out to commit adultery. It is recommended that churches design family life programs that will help families to love and appreciate one another. A family where there is love may be protected from temptations to infidelity.
2. The research established that the gravity of the sin of adultery may not be properly appreciated by some church members. It is recommended that programs be designed and implemented on a regular basis to teach the members what the word of God says about adultery.
3. There should be regular programs run for church leaders (pastors) to sensitize them on the impact of infidelity on the part of church leadership. The research found that the leadership of the church is not leading by example in that some leaders are involved in infidelity. It is important to help the leaders by way of seminars, to have them appreciate what infidelity on the part of leadership does to the church at large.
4. The church should run programs with qualified medical personnel as facilitators to teach human sexuality and sexual disorders as a way of helping church members to know how to handle them. As shown in the research, there are numerous

disorders that are better explained by medical personnel. Some of these disorders lead to infidelity.

5. Programs must be designed that can assist individuals who experience infidelity at some point in their relationships to find hope and healing. As established in the research, couples who go through infidelity experiences go through excruciating pain that may take a long time to heal. Programs that are designed to address such pain are necessary in the church. The Bible offers healing in many ways. The programs need to be designed from the word of God
6. It is recommended that parents be close to their children to provide guidance and counseling. Being far from their children may leave the children to embrace promiscuity. As seen earlier, young people who fail to appreciate fidelity before they marry may find themselves living in the sin of adultery even after they get married. Parents need to provide guidance to their children both formally and informally.
7. The church needs to design programs that can help young people to understand the evils of premarital sex. As seen in the research, those who engage in premarital sex may remain unfaithful in their marriages. As the parents do their part, the church needs to design programs that can help the young people to embrace fidelity at an early stage.
8. It is recommended that church members be exposed by way of seminars to the evils of some cultural and traditional practices. Some of these practices predispose couples to infidelity. Cultural issues that were identified in the research include things like wife inheritance, giving of a woman whose husband is barren to one of his brothers for the sake of conception and some traditional relationships.

9. It is recommended that the Zimbabwe Union Conference and its six Conferences appoint Family Life directors who will not be given any other department in order to strengthen families. The current family life directors in the Zimbabwe Union Conference have other departments besides the Family Life Department.
10. It is recommended that each district pastor run programs that are meant to minimize infidelity in the churches. This is so in view of the research findings establishing the existence of infidelity in the church
11. The church may benefit from studying the possible causes of infidelity and its impact. Knowing some of the causes may help individuals to know how to recognize them when they see them. A number of possible causes were exposed. Regular programs that address some of these causes may be helpful to the church.

#### **Further Research Recommendations**

1. The research indicated that human sexuality issues are responsible for a lot of infidelity cases. The researcher believes that properly qualified and certified sexologists are needed in the church. It is important for the church to employ properly qualified sexologists who can give the necessary counsel to those members who may require their services.
2. It may be necessary in further researches to deal with the prevalence, the causes and the impact of marital infidelity separately to cover them adequately. Dealing them in one dissertation may not cover them properly.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
CORRESPONDENCE

Letter seeking authority to conduct the research in the Gweru Urban Territory

To the Conference Executive Secretary,  
Central Zimbabwe Conference,  
P O Box 559,  
Gweru.

March 12, 2014.

Dear Sir,

**Re- Authorization to carry out a research**

I write to seek permission to carry out a research in three churches in the Gweru urban territory. This research is part of my Doctor of Ministry studies under The Adventist University of Africa.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,

Jotham Manyakara

## **Letter of Authority from the Conference**

Central Zimbabwe Conference

P O Box 559,

Gweru.

Dear Pastor Manyakara

### **RE- AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH**

I write to inform you that the Central Zimbabwe ADCOM took an action to allow you to carry out your research as per your request. We hope the research will be beneficial in the advancement of the Lord' work, God Bless.

Yours truly,

Cenias Ndebele

CZC Executive Secretary



## APPENDIX B

### DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

#### **Focus Group Discussion Questions**

- 1 Can we say that adultery is taking place among church members?
- 2 Would we say adultery is a real problem in the church?
- 3 Who are most involved in the sin; men or women?
- 4 What could be the causes of adultery in the church?
- 5 Who are affected by the sin of adultery?
- 6 Can anything be done to minimize the problem?

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STUDIES

**Kindly take a few moments to complete this questionnaire**

**Do not write or sign your name on this document**

#### Questionnaire

- 1 Age {Below 18} {18-21} {22-45} {46-58} {59 and above}  
 2 Marital status {married} {widow} {widower} {single} {divorcee}  
 3 Gender {male} {female}  
 4 Years of marriage {0-10} {11-20} {21-35} {36-45} {46 and above}  
 5 Education Level {primary} {O level} {A level} {Diploma/Degree} tick  
 highest  
 6 Number of children (0) {1-3} {4-6} {7 and above}

Numbers 7 to 22 circle one figure on each statement;

**1 stands for Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 for Disagree (D), 3 for Unsure (U) 4 for Agree (A) and 5 for Strongly Agree (SA).**

	(SD)	(D)	(U)	(A)	(SA)
7 Adultery/infidelity does take place among SDA Church members	1	2	3	4	5
8 Infidelity cases are common in the church	1	2	3	4	5
9 The word adultery is a common word	1	2	3	4	5
10 Cases of infidelity among church members are very high	1	2	3	4	5
11 Cases of adultery or infidelity among church members are too few to worry about	1	2	3	4	5
12 Cases of infidelity/adultery are too many to be ignored	1	2	3	4	5
12 Women are more involved in adultery/infidelity than men	1	2	3	4	5
13 Men are more involved in adultery/infidelity than women	1	2	3	4	5
14 Cases of adultery are easy to discover	1	2	3	4	5
15 It is common for people to take responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
16 I once was involved in adultery/infidelity	1	2	3	4	5
17 My spouse was once involved in the sin of adultery/ infidelity	1	2	3	4	5
18 I am currently failing to quit adultery/ infidelity	1	2	3	4	5
19 I am aware of some current cases of adultery/infidelity taking place among church members right now	1	2	3	4	5
20 The church can do something about this	1	2	3	4	5
21 Some church leaders are involved in this also	1	2	3	4	5
22 The church has the capacity to put an end to this	1	2	3	4	5
23 I have been involved in this myself	1	2	3	4	5
24 My husband/wife was once involved	1	2	3	4	5

25 My parents or one of them were/was once involved	1	2	3	4	5
26 Infidelity affects marriages	1	2	3	4	5
28 Infidelity affects the immediate family	1	2	3	4	5
29 Infidelity affects children	1	2	3	4	5
30 Infidelity affects the church	1	2	3	4	5
31 Infidelity/adultery affects the community	1	2	3	4	5
32 Infidelity affects the extended family	1	2	3	4	5
Possible causes if adultery/infidelity					
33 Lack of love in the primary relationship	1	2	3	4	5
34 Communication problems	1	2	3	4	5
35 Desire for something different	1	2	3	4	5
36 Unfulfilled promises	1	2	3	4	5
37 Poor sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5
38 Looking for handsome men/ pretty women	1	2	3	4	5
39 Peer pressure	1	2	3	4	5
40 For the sheer fun of it	1	2	3	4	5
41 lack of faith in God	1	2	3	4	5
42 Barrenness	1	2	3	4	5
43 Protracted separations	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for taking your time to fill in this questionnaire

## APPENDIX C

### EVALUATION TOOLS

#### Focus Group Discussion Questions

##### **Group Interview questions**

- 1 Do you think the program done in connection with infidelity helped the Church?
- 2 To what extent was the Church helped?
- 3 Do you think the program helped in changing attitudes on infidelity?
- 4 Which group of people benefited most?
- 5 What do you suggest needs to be done next in the continuous fight against infidelity?

## Program Evaluation Questionnaire

### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STUDIES

**Kindly take a few moments to complete this questionnaire**

**Do not write or sign your name on this document**

- 1 Age {Below 18} {18-21} {22-45} {46-58} {59 and above}
- 2 Marital status {married} {widow} {widower} {single} {divorcee}
- 3 Gender {male} {female}
- 4 Years of marriage {0-10} {11-20} {21-35} {36-45} {46 and above}
- 5 Education Level {primary} {O level} {A level} {Diploma/Degree} tick highest
- 6 Number of children (0) {1-3} {4-6} {7 and above}

Numbers 7 to 16 tick one figure which you believe is the best on each statement

1 stands for Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 for Disagree (D), 3 for Unsure (U), 4 for Agree (A) and 5 for Strongly A (SA)

	(SD)	(D)	(U)	(A)	(SA)
7 The presentations were clear	1	2	3	4	5
8 The program addressed a real need in the Church	1	2	3	4	5
9 The program was helpful	1	2	3	4	5
10 Listeners appreciated the gravity of the sin of Adultery	1	2	3	4	5
11 The program helped change people's attitude on adultery	1	2	3	4	5
12 Some individuals made a decision to quit committing adultery	1	2	3	4	5
13 The credibility of the Church could be enhanced by the program	1	2	3	4	5
14 More programs of this nature are necessary on a regular basis	1	2	3	4	5
15 I was personally helped by the program	1	2	3	4	5
16 My spiritual life was enhanced by the program	1	2	3	4	5
17 If the program would be done again, I would definitely invite my friends to attend,	1	2	3	4	5

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