

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Leadership

Adventist University of Africa

School of Postgraduate Studies

TITLE: HOW UNHAPPY MARRIAGES AFFECT THE SPIRITUALITY OF MEMBERS IN THE WEST CAMEROON MISSION

Researcher: Jean Nenko Chentu

Faculty advisor: Philemon O. Amanze, PhD

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Marriage is one of the institutions that God blessed in the Garden of Eden and as the director of the family life ministries in the West Cameroon Mission, the researcher had to find means and strategies to reduce the marital problems which affects the spirituality of members.

With this study the researcher expects that those couples who have lost happiness in their homes and their spirituality is reduced, will regain them back. Three churches were selected in the West Cameroon Mission in which the researcher conducted a survey and an interview to couples who have been married between 5 and 31 years to both men and women, before and after the family life seminar. After the seminar 54.11% of spouses started praying together and 93% started observing regular family worship. In conclusion, unhappiness in the home affects the church community hence spirituality also. So seminars, retreats and workshops should be organized at least once a year.

Adventist University of Theology

School of Postgraduate Studies

HOW UNHAPPY MARRIAGES AFFECT THE SPIRITUALITY
OF MEMBERS IN THE WEST CAMEROON MISSION

A project

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree
Master in Arts in Leadership

by

Jean Nenko Chentu

June 2015

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



Advisor: Philemon O. Amanze, PhD

Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies
Willard Munger, PhD



Reader: Paul Ikouba, DMin

Extension Centre: Babcock University

Date: December 2015

This work is dedicated to my wife Susana Nasale Chentu.

My wife and faithful companion and prayer partner

for 28 years of married life

and labor in the ministry.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Marriage and Sabbath were the first two institutions that God gave to man before the fall. Since then, Satan the enemy of our souls is trying very hard to destroy these special gifts to mankind. The enemy has tried to substitute Sunday for Saturday. He is doing the same for marriage. It was Satan's studied efforts to pervert the marriage institution, to weaken its obligation and lessen its sacredness; for in no surer way could he deface the image of God in man and open the door to misery and vice.¹

The Central African Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventist church is made up of nine conferences and missions, of which West Cameroon Mission (WCM) is one of the nine. WCM comprises four regions out of the ten regions in Cameroon. These four regions of Cameroon that form the West Cameroon Mission have half of the population of the Republic of Cameroon, that is, eight million inhabitants.

The West Cameroon Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist was organized in 1962, and reorganized in 1972. It is the youngest and the smallest in terms of Seventh-day Adventist members among the Adventist Conferences/Missions in Cameroon. The latest figure of September 30, 2013 shows WCM having a membership of 12, 585 out of this figure, 2,855 are married.²

Observation has shown that many of these married members are not happy in their marriages, and this greatly affects the spirituality of the church in West Cameroon Mission.

This situation has motivated the researcher to investigate in the spirituality of married members in order to help them realize that "marriage is honorable" (Heb

¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1958), 338.

² West Cameroon Mission General Secretary, Quarterly Report for West Cameroon Mission, Cameroon, 30 September 2013.

13:4) and that the spiritual growth of the church depends largely upon the happiness that comes from the homes. In their turn, these members can encourage the younger ones to create Christian homes. Sister White gives this counsel:

Family religion is a wonderful power. The conduct of the husband toward the wife and the wife toward the husband may be such that it will make the home life a preparation for entrance to the family above. Christianity ought to have a controlling influence upon the marriage relation, but it is too often the case that the motives which lead to this union are not in keeping with Christian principles. Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen his power over the children of God by inducing them to enter into alliance with his subjects, and in order to accomplish this, he endeavours to arouse unsatisfied passion in the heart. But the Lord has in His Word plainly instructed His people not to unite themselves with those who have not His love within them.³

Problem of the Study

There is a relationship between happy marriages and spirituality in the church. The researcher has observed repeatedly in West Cameroon Mission that in churches where the married members have serious marital problems, their spirituality is low. Considering that there is a close relationship between quality of life in the home and the church setting, one may wonder how these married members could encourage those who are not married to be couples tomorrow, if they are not experiencing themselves the joy and satisfaction of married life.

The researcher wants to focus his study on how to remedy the ugly situation of unhappiness in the homes, which affects seriously the spiritual growth of the church community in West Cameroon Mission of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a program to strengthen marriages in West Cameroon Mission and hence to improve spirituality in the entire Mission

³ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1952), 94, 95.

territory. The researcher will design strategies, workshops, seminars and retreats, which will help couples to have a wider understanding of their mission to foster spiritual growth in their homes and in the church community.

Justification of Research

The beneficiaries of this research will be the following: pastors, elders, and family life director's families and above all the West Cameroon Missions whose memberships will experience more happiness in their homes and this happiness will eventually be communicated to their churches. Thus improving the spiritual development of the members. The Seventh-day Adventist church in West Cameroon Mission will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18), fulfilling her mission of proclaiming the Three Angels message of Revelation 14:6-12 to all the population of the West Cameroon Mission. This will take place through the various family life seminars and workshops that will be developed and conducted throughout the mission territory. The implementation of the strategy of this study will be a continual process; because of the fact the results expected from this study will not occur immediately, but will be a gradual and continual process. As the marriage counsellors that will be trained get more experience, the results will improve as time goes on. So the continuous reporting will need some time to bear the expected results.

Limitation of the Study

Because of time and financial challenges the research will be conducted in three churches of the West Cameroon Mission territory.

Delimitation of the Study

The impact of the study is supposed to touch all aspects of the marital life; the study will not touch the aspect of the family evangelism outreach, but it will focus on church growth through happy marriage will be rather in reach evangelism.

Methodology

The researcher will work with Pastors of West Cameroon Mission, the elders and family life directors, and plan and work with them on how to get solutions. The procedure will involve training the above persons, equipping them with appropriate materials, develop devotional programs and much counsellors for distress families. This is the suggested way the researcher will use to achieve the purpose of study.

Firstly, a survey will be conducted in some of the main churches in West Cameroon Mission, especially where there are reported cases of unhappiness in marriages, in order to be conversant with the main problems in the various marriages.

Secondly, good materials will be developed in due time in the form of workshops and seminars placing emphasis on the specific problems couples encounter the most. The researcher must have read different sources relating to the subject of the study. Thirdly, the pastors, elders and family life directors will be assembled by districts to be trained as family counsellors.

Fourth, they will then function in the various churches as counsellors. Then the researcher will visit some of the churches himself, depending on the gravity of the situation. Then the pastors and elders must have hinted him of the need of his visit. The researcher must plan to repeat these training sessions at least once per year in all the fifteen districts that comprise the West Cameroon Mission. A monthly and quarterly report must be submitted regularly in order to ascertain the progress and continuity of the program.

This report sheet will design by the researcher in due time. It has to be noted that the Bible and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy are to be the primary sources of information for the research and they will constitutes the bases of the materials for the family life seminars and workshop. The results of these seminars concerning how unhappy marriage affect the spirituality of the church might not be immediately felt. However, the researcher strongly believes that sometime will be needed before the results will be realized in all the territory of the WCM.

CHAPTER 2

MARRIAGE

According to the World book Encyclopedia, “marriage is the relationship between a man and woman who have made a legal agreement to live together. When a man and woman marry, they become husband and wife.”¹

Marriage may be defined as the legitimate union or society of a man and woman established for the purpose of generating and educating children, for mutual aid, and for sexual companionship. Hence the essence of the act of marriage is the mutual conjugal consent; the essence of the marriage state is the mutual sharing of conjugal life together.²

Marriage is a union; it is the coming together of two people of the opposite sex with a view of building a God-centered home as the Word of God states: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh” (Gen.2:24).

Marriage “is a unique relationship ordained of God for a man and woman to give and receive satisfaction of the healthy needs and desires.”³

¹ *World Encyclopedia* (Chicago: World Book, 2008), 8:329, s.v. “Marriage.”

² Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1962), 9:601.

³ Peter O. Akalamudo, *The Journey Before Marriage* (Lagos: Soloj Resources, 2007), 16, 17.

The Origin and Purpose of Marriage

God is the originator of marriage (Gen 1:27, 28, 31). Marriage is not the peculiar culture of any people or country in the world. It is heaven's culture. Since God Himself instituted marriage, anyone who wants success in it should make God the centre of such a relationship. God then is the only sure foundation for success in marriage. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus-Christ" (1 Cor 3:11).

Everything in life has a purpose. Everyone on this planet was born with a purpose. It is this purpose that makes life meaningful. Akalamudo states that: "Without purpose, marriage is an experiment or a haphazard journey that will surely result in frustration, disappointment and failure."⁴ He further states that: "Without purpose, marriage is subjective or it is a trial-and-error game that is ruled by environmental influences and the circumstances of the moment."⁵ Likewise, in the absence of purpose, marriage has no meaning, no reason and no precision. Therefore, it is essential that we understand and discover our purpose in marriage so that we can experience an effective, full and rewarding marital life.

Purpose therefore is the original intent in the mind of God that motivated Him to create a particular thing. This is what explains the reason for existence. The author continues to expound on his thoughts in this manner: "Every product is a child of purpose."⁶ In other words, before any product is made, there is a purpose established in the mind of the manufacturer that gives conception to the idea that becomes the substance for the design and production of the product. Thus, purpose precedes things

⁴ Akalamudo, *The Journey Before Marriage*, 18, 19.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

discovered, and without this discovery, its existence has no meaning. All things begin and end with purpose; marriage is no exclusion.

Dr. Lloyd Saxton in his well-written book, *The Individual, Marriage and the Family* gives the following ideas on the purpose of marriage:

Marriage provides the formal basis for stable heterosexual relations and for the formation of nuclear families. In addition, marriage institutionalizes and therefore aids the fulfillment of many basic individual needs (besides sex), such as the need for a paired relation with its commitments of love, nurture, and verification of the self-image; the need for socialization of children; the need for status; and the physical needs (food, clothing, housing, etc.), which are shared and alternatively or mutually fulfilled by the two persons in the marital relation. In short, the stability and continuity of the social order and the need for satisfactions and achievements of individuals are dependent upon the marital institution.⁷

In order to encourage and benefit from the social order provided by marriage, all societies control and regulate the marital institution by putting it into a legal or sacred framework that:

1. makes it a liaison of expected permanence;
2. formalizes the reciprocal rights and obligations of the married couple;
3. requires the nurture, protection, and socialization of children and;
4. provides formal kinship relations and thereby establishes property rights and stable lines of inheritance from generation to generation. A society's legal institutionalization of marriage also traditionally protects the female from exploitation.

What does Ellen G. White say about the origin and purpose of Marriage?

⁷ Lloyd Saxton, *The Individual Marriage and the Family*, 9th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1996), 183.

God's Purpose for Marriage from Ellen White

The threefold purpose for God creating marriage is:

To fill a God created vacuum in every man. The statement is very true that, “no man is an island.” When God created Adam and put him in the garden with all the food and animals and also gave Him the privilege of naming all the animals. In spite of the things he had, He was still bored and felt lonely. The sweet songs of the birds and the lovely physique of all other animals did not appeal to Adam until God said,

‘It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him.’ 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: the man said ‘this is now the flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.’⁸ Genesis 2: 18, 21, 23

This vacuum cannot be filled by a vocation or career; neither can wealth or high social standing take its place. It can only be filled by someone in Adam’s bones and flesh.

To Serve as Help Mates. For Adam to function at full capacity and produce the results befitting of his status as God’s workmanship, he needs a help mate who will support and motivate him. The support will be bodily, mentally and spiritually. The wise man, Solomon advised in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 saying

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the one that falls down and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one can be overpowered two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The following statement accurately sums up the above scripture “two heads are better than one.”

⁸ Unless otherwise stated, the bible references are from the Holy Bible version.

To Replenish the Earth

So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him; male and female; he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. (Genesis 1:27, 28)

For the human race not to be extinguished, God had the programming of humanity's replenishment. Whereby a man would meet his wife in order to produce heirs that would take their place after they are gone or too old to be relevant in the scheme of things.

How Does Unhappy Marriage Affect the Spirituality of Members

A church community is made up of members and these members come definitely from homes. If the spiritual climate of the home is pleasant, and joyful, one can sense that as the members arrive in church service on a Sabbath morning or as they attend prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings. One can read joy and happiness on the members' faces. On the other hand, if in the family there have been verbal fighting, physical fighting.

You can detect that there are problems by the way the people sing, participate in Sabbath School Lesson Study, return tithes and offerings; sometimes the situation can be seen even in the way one is dressed for worship. Unhappiness in marriage affects the spirituality of members in the sense that couples find it hard to get along well with God. In other words, Christianity should be practiced daily in the family which will lead to happiness and happiness will eventually lead to more fulfilled spiritual life.

Happiness as a By-product of Life

An individual can either make or destroy his own happiness. It comes as the result of living actively and unselfishly. Dr. Shryock says that:

Happiness comes as one learns to spend his energies in the interest and for the benefit of someone else. It comes from focusing the attention on those things which are wholesome and desirable rather than looking for the things which are unpleasant and disappointing.⁹

If a spouse has an attitude of feeling sorry for his/herself and feeling that he/she has got married to the wrong person and that her prayers to God before marriage were only a delusion, how then can his/her spiritual life be uplifted? His/her unhappiness in the married life will eventually give some hindrance to his or her spiritual life.

Marriage Vows Threatened

Some marriage vows are being seriously threatened and they are seriously not happy. When the Pastor or Mayor joins a couple, it is “for better or for worse” as long as life shall last. Marriage is a divinely appointed and sanctioned by the institution. The vows which a young man and a young woman take at the time they pledge their absolute fidelity to each other in the presence of a minister of the gospel or government mayor, represents the most solemn and binding obligation which human beings can assume.

The parties agree to accept each other “for better or for worse” as long as life lasts. And for a husband or a wife to lightly cast aside this sacred obligation for any reason other than that mentioned in the New Testament, is the equivalent of removing himself from the sphere of the Lord’s blessing.

⁹ Harold Shryock, *Happiness for Husbands and Wives* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 2013), 69.

If someone wilfully removes himself from the Lord's blessing, how can he experience spirituality? How can such a person pray for the forgiveness of his sins, if he refuses to adhere to forgive someone else? The unhappy marriage situation has affected negatively the spirituality of the members of that family. Dr. Shryock states that, "the marriage vows are such as to bind husband and wife together in harmony with their agreement to share faithfully and loyally whatever disappointments and hardships this life may hold."¹⁰

When Both Partners Are Not of the Same Religion

Marriages where husbands and wives are not of the same religious background they will have problems in their marital relationships, if they later get married. When dating, it is difficult to think realistically about marriage and it is easy to minimize the difficulties likely to be encountered during marriage at this time either to marry someone of another faith or to quit the relationship. Nancy Van Pelt says that, "mixed faith marriages experience trouble sooner than marriages in which both partners are of the same faith."¹¹

When couples attend church service together, their marriage is happier. A recent study by Les and Leslie Parrett showed that, "couples, who attend church service together even as little as one time a month, increase their chance of staying together in marriage for life."¹² Church going couples feel better about their marriages than those who do not worship together.

¹⁰ Shryock, *Happiness for Husbands and Wives*, 70.

¹¹ Nancy Van Pelt, *Highly Effective Marriage* (Accra Ghana: Advent Press, 2000), 165.

¹² Les and Lesslie Parrett; *Soul Mates, Virtue*, May/June 1995, 28, 29.

The four most common causes of conflict in mixed-faith marriages are summarized below:

- a) Conflict over what religion the children will follow. In homes in which children are taken alternatively to both religious services in two faiths, one study showed that 6 out of 10 children end up rejecting all religion.
- b) Conflict over church attendance.
- c) Conflict over interference between in-laws in religious matters.
- d) Conflict over size of family and/or spacing of children.¹³

Van Pelt states that,

Worshipping together automatically draws a couple closer. In addition to physically bonding, a spiritual bonding takes place that promotes closeness. In addition to physically bonding, a spiritual bonding takes place that promotes humility, sharing, compassion, and intimacy. Spiritual truths help couples transcend selfish desires and become part of a larger plan.¹⁴

We find in this that couples who attend church together have higher spirituality than those who do not. We can conclusively state that unhappiness dwells in that marriage that couples do not attend church services together and that affects negatively the spiritual life of members.

For Example, in West Cameroon Mission, about one fifth of couples are in the category that only one of the member is a Seventh-day Adventist.

Some of the marriage seminars will be structured to meet these specific needs of couples that their spouses are not yet Seventh-day Adventists.

¹³ Paul Landis, *Making Most Marriage* (Appleton, NY: Century Crofts, 1965), 260.

¹⁴ Van Pelt, *Highly Effective Marriage*, 165.

Absence of Praying Together

The adage that says, “couples that pray together, stay together” has been proven very correct. And the opposite is also very correct that those couples who do not pray together do not also stay together. Research shows that couples who pray together are happier than couple who do not. And couples who pray together frequently are more likely to rate their marriages as being highly romantic as those who pray together infrequently. And get this-married-couples who pray together report higher satisfaction with their sex lives than those couples who don’t pray together! “Because prayer makes one vulnerable, it draws a couple closer.”¹⁵

In their course of praying and studying the Word of God together, the husband will support the wife through prayer and the wife will do likewise to the husband. “The marriage that functions in a mutually supportive manner has fewer arguments and less fighting or contention.”¹⁶ A natural peace and harmony settles over the family once power struggles vanish. This brings closeness and intimacy which would not have been possible through any other way.

The husband will grow in self-confidence as he practices supportive leadership. The wife will notice an improvement in her attitudes toward herself and her marriage as she responds to his leadership. Together, backing each other up, supportive attitude will enrich their relationship and make their marriage more cohesive and enjoyable.

Nancy Van Pelt gives this timely advice:

The children will learn a natural respect for family organization. This respect will be transferred from home to the school, church, and society. Our homes

¹⁵ Ibid., 166.

¹⁶ Ibid.

are the basic unit of society, and only when a home functions successfully is a house in order. When a home is in order, the community, church, and nation can function as they should.¹⁷

What are the Characteristics and Features of Unhappy Marriages?

How do we know an unhappy marriage? What characterizes an unhappy marriage? What are the warning signs to indicate that a marriage is in trouble?

There are certain destructive habits that show that couples are in problem. Nancy Van Pelt says, “Any habit that makes your spouse unhappy threatens the love and security of your relationship.”¹⁸

Willard F. Harley in his book, “Love Buster” created the “Love Bank” to describe how love feelings are created and destroyed. Every experience we have with our spouses affects the balance held in our love according to Love Bank. We are either making deposits or withdrawals in the account throughout each day. When things go well and we are loving, kind, supportive, and understanding of our partners, hundreds of credits flow into our Emotional Bank Account (EBA) and create the feeling that our partners are loved and accepted the way they are.

When things go bad, huge withdrawals are made from the EBA. At times, the account can be seriously overdrawn, and the relationship goes into a serious deficit.¹⁹

The following factors are characteristics of an unhappy marriage:

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Willard F. Harley Jr., *Love Busters: Protecting Your Marriage from Habits that Destroy Romantic Love*, 15th Anniversary Edition, (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2008), 28.

Nagging. The Dictionary defines nagging as “to torment by persistent faultfinding or complaining.” Wise King, Solomon said, “A constant dripping on a rainy day and cranky woman are much alike! You can no more stop her complaints than you can stop the wind or hold unto anything with oil-slick hands” (Prov 27:15, 16 TLB). Van Pelt said, “Nagging tops the list of feminine faults.”²⁰

Angry Outbursts. Certified Family and Consumer Science Professional, Van Pelt who has written 22 books says, “Each of us has a private arsenal of weapons we draw upon at these times when we need them. These may take the form of shouting, put-downs, criticism, or sarcastic name-calling. Some couples resort to profanity, striking each other, throwing things, kicking, and pulling hair.”²¹ She continues to say, “The angrier you are, the uglier the things spat out during the outburst, the more devastating the results on the relationship. Not only do displays of anger hurt the spouse at whom they are directed, but they usually make a complete fool of the angry spouse.”²²

Criticism. Psychologist, John Gottman and other respected researchers in the field have found they are the strongest predictors of separation and divorce. So, “if you want your marriage to end, criticize your partner.”²³ This is the advice of marriage counsellors and experts of all kinds; criticism heads the list in destroying marriage. Witnessing criticism in a marriage shows an obvious sign of unhappiness.

²⁰ Van Pelt, *Highly Effective Marriage*, 166.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 366.

²² *Ibid.*, 367.

²³ John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail: And How You Can Make Yours Last* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), np.

Constant criticism or contempt on the part of either partner is predictive of marital distress and divorce and it leads to a vicious cycle. The wife criticizes or blames her husband; the husband becomes defensive and either withdraws from the discussion or defends himself by also going on the attack. The result is a highly destructive fight that can end in a verbal battle and physical abuse. Once this occurs, further discussion is fruitless and spouses must call time-out until they have calmed down. Third party intervention will likely be necessary to help the couple control this negative cycle.

Lack of Communication. Communication is important to the family as blood is important to the body. When a body lacks blood, death follows subsequently. So, when communication is absent in a family that marriage is at the point of collapsing and immediate plan should be made to restore constructive communication. Van Pelt in “To Have and to Hold” states that, “Today, communication has become the very foundation of marriage because intimacy and communication are inextricably intertwined. Through communication we disclose who we are and from this self-disclosure intimacy grows.”²⁴

The author cited above stated ten rules for avoiding intimacy and they said, “If you want to avoid intimacy, here are ten rules that have proven effective in nationwide testing with men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children. Follow these guidelines and you will never have an intimate relationship.”

1. Don't talk.
2. Never show your feelings.
3. Always be pleasant.

²⁴ Van Pelt, *To Have And To Hold* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1980), 86.

4. Always win.
5. Always keep busy.
6. Always be right.
7. Never argue.
8. Make your partner guess what you want.
9. Always look out for number one.
10. Keep the television on.²⁵

These are sure indicators in the family to ascertain that there is unhappiness.

The above list is not complete. To bring healing, joy and happiness in your home, this list could be reversed.

Causes of Unhappiness in Marriages

Marriage should be a little heaven on earth. But there are times when this is not so. Happiness has disappeared and it is replaced with unhappiness and all that comes with it. In the next section, the researcher will deal with some causes of unhappiness in marriage.

The first on the list is unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. The Bible calls this adultery. “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14). What then is adultery? Adultery is defined as “voluntary sexual intercourse of married person other than with spouse.”²⁶ When a partner suspects that his or her mate might be having an affair with someone else, the climate of the home is no more serene. Feelings of jealousy build up and the suspicion develops to unhappiness within the family cycle.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 6th ed., 1978, s.v. “Adultery.”

The commandment, “Thou shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14) upholds the marital bond and encourages a plan to work out their struggles in the context of a monogamous relationship. In fact, three of the Ten Commandments refer to sex outside the marriage covenant: “Do not commit adultery, do not covet your neighbour’s spouse, and do not lie.” These commandments elevate the marital union as sacred and not to be broken. In other words, married persons should neither seek nor have intercourse with anyone other than their spouses.

The warning against adultery sets the marriage bond up as a priority that must be guarded at all costs. The ninth commandment, “Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exod 20:16), has implications for extramarital sex too. Lies and falsehood are an inevitable part of an affair. Secrets come between the marital couple, for one cannot avoid the impact of lies that impinge on vows of fidelity.

Balswick and Balswick, in their book *Authentic Human Sexuality* states, “When spouses discover they have been deceived, their often tremendous rage is due to betrayal of trust. When the covenant vow is broken, it pierces to the core of that promise. It’s not only the adultery that is hurtful, but the secret that undermines the integrity of the relationship.”²⁷

The seriousness of adultery is addressed in the New Testament passage in 1 Corinthians 6:18: “All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually, sins against his own body.” Sexual intercourse is not only regarded as an external act but as an internal offense that impacts self and spouse. “One-flesh union symbolically joins a man and woman through memories, expectations, fantasies and

²⁷ Judith K. Balswick and Jack O. Balswick, *Authentic Human Sexuality: An Integrated Christian Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 164.

secrets, so that even a casual affair has implication for the adulterer, adulteress, the spouse and all three relationships.”²⁸

The second on the list for causes of unhappiness in marriage life is lack of mutual confidence. In the family where mutual confidence has disappeared, whatever the cause may have been, there is real trouble which creates unhappiness and where there are children, they are not exempted from the unhappy situation in the home. Such a family might need the help of a third party to work with them in order to resolve the lost mutual confidence.

The third cause of unhappiness in marriage is lack of sexual satisfaction.

Nancy Van Pelt who has conducted over 1,000 seminars on family relationships around the World states,

A sexual problem can separate a couple or it can bring them together, depending on their response to it. If they are willing to trust each other and share their fears, they can more firmly cement their relationship. Sex is like that; it can rip a couple apart or bond them together more securely.²⁹

When a partner is not always satisfied in his or her sexual relationship, the unsatisfied partner might be tempted to satisfy him or herself in some other quarters which will instead increase the problem in the home.

Balswick states that,

A national sample of 6,029 married persons revealed that 16 percent of the married couples surveyed had been sexually inactive during a month prior to the interview. Factors that predicted the sexual inactivity in these couples were unhappiness with the marital relationship, lack of shared activity, increased age and poor health.³⁰

²⁸ Balswick, *Authentic Human Sexuality*, 165.

²⁹ Van Pelt, *Highly Effective Marriage*, 192.

³⁰ Balswick, *Authentic Human Sexuality*, 157.

The researcher concluded that the lack of sexual activity is often a danger signal for married couples.

The fourth cause of unhappiness in marriage is lack of adequate preparation for marriage. How can one prepare adequately for marriage? In her book, *Preparing for Marriage*, Bete L. Channing suggests the first thing is “know yourself”³¹ and she states the following ten points:

1. I am a good listener.
2. I know that I am worthy of being loved.
3. I am usually sensitive to others’ needs.
4. I know and understand my family’s attitudes and background.
5. I can accept honest criticism.
6. I make a real effort to understand my partner’s feelings and point of view.
7. I can tell my partner what I really think and feel.
8. I believe marriage should allow freedom for personal growth.
9. I know the kind of people I get along well with.
10. I know how to be a friend to my partner³²

Then she also advises to “know your partner” indicating the following ten points of interest:

1. Does my partner understand me?
2. Do I know what my partner wants out of life?
3. Do I know his or her spiritual beliefs?

³¹ Bete L. Channing, *About Preparing for Marriage* (Greenfield, MA: Channing L. Bete Co., 1986), 8.

³² Ibid.

4. Does my partner communicate his or her needs clearly?
5. Do I know my partner's views on having children?
6. Are we as a couple able to manage money wisely?
7. Does my partner let me be the person I really am?
8. Do I know my partner's needs and views sexually?
9. Does my partner trust me?
10. Do I know my partner's feelings about his or her family and friends?³³

Discuss important issues before you say "I do." Understanding one another's feelings on these topics can prevent disagreements and misunderstanding later. The partners must discuss about values, work, sex, religion, money, in-laws, children, household tasks etc., before they can engage in marriage. If done adequately, this can prevent unhappiness in marriage.

Pastors can help discuss potential problem areas in your relationship, or refer you to other skilled counsellors. Premarital counselling is very essential. Many intending couples that refuse to avail themselves of the benefits of pre-marital counselling, are in a lot of pains and troubles today that would had avoided otherwise.³⁴

When the counselling is handled by a trained Christian Minister, it strengthens mutual understanding on the part of the intending couples. They shall also receive help that will guide them to make and follow-up realistic plans for their future. More

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ Ibid.

so, counselling will prepare them for the realistic challenges of every area of marital life in order to attain happiness and fulfilment in marriage.³⁵

The fifth cause of unhappiness in marriage is Inadequate

Communication. At the heart of marriage is the communication system. Kevin Howse et al. writes that, “The primary cause of marriage difficulties is the inability or reluctance of couples to communicate . . . communication is to love what blood is to life. Intimate relationships involved frequent interaction, personal sharing and caring, indicating that they understand each other and feel understood. . . . Effective communication skills are an essential factor in personal happiness and emotional health.”³⁶

Many reasons exist for the inability to communicate. Let us examine briefly some barriers to effective communication.

Lack of courage. A basic reason behind the reluctance of husbands and wives to discuss innermost problems is fear of criticism. They fear that conversation by becoming more real, will open wounds to which they are especially sensitive. Aware of his own sense of failure and to protect himself, a marriage partner will often denounce the other’s shortcomings.

Lack of Effective Communication Skills. Perhaps the most obvious is that most of us have never been taught effective communication skills. When we have ever learned proper skills, we continue to function in the ineffective ways we create for ourselves.

³⁵ Akalamudo, *The Journey Before Marriage*, 19.

³⁶ Kevin Howse, Hugh Dunton, and Davis Marshall, *Family Matters: A Guide to Family Life* (Alma Park, Grantham: Stanborough Press 1989), 96.

Fear. Another reason couples fail to communicate adequately is they are afraid to share real thoughts and feelings with their mates.

In the “Learned Patterns from the Past,” the manner in which you speak and listen today is affected by what you learned as a child when growing up. You carefully observed how family members talked, listened, and responded. You may have observed positive patterns such as respect, directness in asking for things, and cheerfulness – and you may have observed destructive patterns. Such hostility, mind reaching, silent treatment, and yielding. You have developed your own pattern but it may not work well with mates who have learned to settle matters through loud negotiation and arguing.³⁷

Conditioning. Another barrier for effective communication is social conditioning. These social conditioning are learned especially between the ages of five and fifteen.

Temperaments. These also have more profound influence on your style of communication.

How Can Unhappiness in Marriage be Treated?

When unhappiness has been established in a home, the first thing to do is that the couple should be able to see their respective mistakes and honestly ask for mutual forgiveness (Eph 4:32). The couple should seriously learn to communicate. What then is communication? Kuntaraf states that,

Communication is been called the ‘Central Nervous System’ of any relationship. If anything goes wrong here, it will surely affect many other parts, many people assume that since they know how to talk, they must therefore know how to communicate. It is not as simple as that. Communication is not just talking. Communication is not just speaking. Real communication takes place when two or more people know what to say, how to say it and also when best to say it.³⁸

³⁷ Van Pelt, *Highly Effective Marriage*, 80.

³⁸ Kathleen Kuntaraf, lecture notes for Foundations of Health Ministry, Babcock University, Nigeria, June 2013.

Family dynamics can be greatly improved through communication in a loving and generous way, between spouses, parents, and children. It is interesting to know that of all the problems facing families throughout the world, communication appears to be the primary difficulty in the marriage relationship. Redbook Magazine asked 730 marriage counsellors to list the most common marriage problems that divide and push couples apart. From that survey, they formulated the following list of the ten most common marital problems:

1. Breakdown in communication
2. Loss of shared goals and interests
3. Sexual incompatibility
4. Infidelity
5. Excitement and fun-gone from relationship
6. Money
7. Conflicts over children
8. Alcohol and drug abuse
9. Women's right issues
10. In-laws³⁹

While breakdown in communication is the number 1 marital problem, numbers 2 through 5 are also related to communication breakdown. The breakdown in communication may include using harsh or gun-powder words, silence, superficiality, not listening to suggestions, criticism, tone of voice, nagging, talking too much, and many other problems.

³⁹ Rowland Croucher, "The Ten Marks of a Happy Marriage," accessed 11 November 2015, <https://www.retrouvaille.org/pages.php?page=30>.

Effective communication is an important characteristic of strong, health family dynamics. Research identifies communication as an essential building block of strong marital relationship. Communication involves not just talking but listening and paying attention to what others are thinking and feeling.

Dr. Kathleen Kuntaraf in her lecture on Family Dynamics says,

Communication within the family is extremely important, because it enables members to express their needs, wants, and concerns to each other. Open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows family members to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another. It is through communication that members are able to resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in all families.⁴⁰

While love is all-important, it may not last unless a couple keeps rebuilding their relationship. For love to keep on growing or to rekindle love, a partner needs to appreciate the other. Each partner values appreciation; they value the other for the unique person he or she is. This can rekindle love.⁴¹

The marriage where unhappiness has crept in, the couple would want that first love to be aflame need each other's interaction. Two people are alive to each other's presence as they speak, listen and share. At the same time they need independence. Each partner needs to recognize the other's need to enjoy activities that foster personal growth.

The couples in crisis that need to renew their happiness must cherish acceptance. That two people like and love each other, at the same time they should realize that no human being is perfect. They should be willing to forgive one another as Christ forgives them. Laying aside past hurts and working together to renew mutual trust.

⁴⁰ Kuntaraf, Foundations of Health Ministry, June 2013.

⁴¹ Van Pelt, *To Have and To Hold*, 78, 89.

Yes unhappiness in marriage can be treated or minimized. Couples who see divorce as a quick, easy way to solve problems may not take necessary steps to sustain the marriage. The researcher strongly believes unhappiness in marriage can be remedied or reduced drastically by sound marriage counselling. Summarily, I want to cite Dr. Lloyd Saxton who says that there is no winner or loser, which is the most reliable satisfying and complete model of conflict adjustment. It may actually improve a marital relationship.⁴²

It is stated that the family that prays together, stays together. One of the most outstanding remedy to treat unhappiness in marriage is the couple should make a serious commitment of studying the Bible daily and praying together. The Word of God is so powerful that if rightly applied would change ugly situations to be brighter. Here is what the Bible says: “For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

Apart from daily Bible study and regular prayer, the couple that needs healing should resolve to forgive one another. The Holy Bible says, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16). There is power in prayer; there is more power when that prayer is accompanied with forgiveness in the family cycle.

The healing of unhappiness in marriage will be completed if the family will find time to have regular fun together. Bill and Lynne Hybels gave this advice, “Vacations, gateways, recreation, and fun sometimes make the difference between letting go and hanging on. Creating pleasant memories doesn’t have to cost a lot of

⁴² Saxton, *The Individual Marriage and the Family*, 7.

money, but the result can be priceless.”⁴³ When their marriage was in trouble and in a bid to remedy the ugly situation, the Hybels say,

We went to seminars and workshops and conferences on marriage. We listened to tapes on marriage. We read books on marriage. Oh did we read books! We read books together and read separately. We read on vacation and read ourselves to sleep at night. We read books by theologians and psychologists and marriage counsellors. We read about temperaments, personal growth, workaholism, conflict resolution, sex, stress management, how to relax, how to raise kids, how to handle money. We latched on to every good idea we could find, and it helped tremendously.⁴⁴

Here again is another timely advice from the Hybels on how to treat an unhappy marriage:

One of the wisest choices we made was to open our marriage to the scrutiny of close friends. We have always had someone, usually, a couple, with whom we could discuss the truth about our relationship, with whom we could say, “We had a terrible fight last night and were hurting” or “We are struck and we need help, or we are discouraged, we’ve been working so hard and getting nowhere.”⁴⁵

Sometimes we just needed a safe place to blow off steam so we could settle down and talk constructively...At other times we need advice from people who knew and loved both of us. We often needed somebody to cheer us on, to root for us, to say, “We love you two, and we know you can make it through this. You have so much invested in this marriage. Keep trying. It will be worth it.”⁴⁶

Instrumental and Affective Communication

Communication can be divided into two different areas: instrumental and affective. Instrumental communication is the exchange of factual information that

⁴³ Bill Hybels and Lynne Hybels, *Fit To Be Tied: Making Marriage Last a Lifetime* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 213.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

enables individuals to fulfil common family functions (e.g. telling a child that he/she will be picked up from school at a specific time and location). Affective communication is the way individual family members share their emotions with one another (e.g. sadness, anger, joy). “Some families function extremely well with instrumental communication, yet have great difficulty with affective communication. Healthy family dynamics have both areas of communication.”⁴⁷

In her articles on family dynamics, Dr. Kathleen Kuntaraf in Foundations of Health Ministry gave some keys to building effective family communication which I would want to share here.

Keys to Effective Family Communication

Communicate Frequently. One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. According to a recent Wall Street Journal Survey, 40 percent of the respondents stated that lack of time was a greater problem for them than lack of money.

Communicate Clearly and Directly. Healthy families communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear and direct manner. This is especially important when attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members. Ephesians 4:26 says, “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems early, but will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.

Be an Active Listener. The Bible mentioned about being an active listener in the following verses: James 1:19 says, “Let everyone be quick to listen, and slow to

⁴⁷ Kathleen Kuntaraf, Foundations of Health Ministry, June 2013.

speak, slow to anger.” An essential aspect of effective communication is listening to what others are saying. Being an active listener involves trying one’s best to understand the point view of the other person. Whether one is listening to a spouse or a child, it is important to pay close attention to the verbal and non-verbal messages. As an active listener, one must acknowledge and respect the other person’s perspective.

Open and Honest Communication. In order for effective communication to take place within families, individual family members must be open and honest with one another. Ephesians 4:25 says, “So then, putting falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbour, for we are members of one another.” This openness and honesty will set the stage for trusting relationships.

Think about the person with whom you are communicating. Not all family members communicate in the same manner or at the same level. When communicating with young children, it is important for adults to listen carefully to what the children are saying without making unwanted assumptions.

Parents should in a special sense regard themselves as agents of God to instruct their children as did Abraham, to keep the way of the Lord. They need to search the scriptures diligently, to know what is the way of the Lord that they may teach it to their household... In order to be teachers, parents must be learners, gathering light constantly from the oracles of God and by precepts and example bringing this precious light into the education of their children.⁴⁸

Pay Attention to Non-Verbal Messages. In addition to carefully listening to what is being said, effective communications also pay close attention to the non-verbal behaviours of the family members. For example, a spouse or child may say something verbally, but their facial expression or body language may be telling you something completely different.

⁴⁸ White, *The Adventist Home*, 184.

Be Positive. While it is often necessary to address problems between family members, or to deal with negative situation, effective communication is primarily positive. Marital and family researchers have discovered that unhappy family relationships are often the result of negative communication patterns (e.g. criticism, contempt, defensiveness). The Bible advised us to use careful words, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Prov 18:21, NASB). “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1). It is very important for family members to verbally compliment and encourage one another.

Health Impact on Poor Communication between Spouses

In 1996, Dr. Janice Keicolt Glaser and Dr. Ronald Glaser reported their study at the Fourth International Congress of Behavioural Medicine, Washington D.C, regarding “old” couples who have been married for an average of 42 years, but constantly argued with one another, resulting in a weakened immune system. Discouraging words impart negatively, regardless of how many years the couple had been married, how many disagreement and discouraging words they had gone through before, and had learned to deal with them.”⁴⁹

Studies on 90 newly-wedded couples who had agreed to spend 24 hours of their honey-moon in a hospital research unit, revealed that after a 30 minute discussion of their marital problems, those who exhibited more negative and hostile behaviours during that short period of time had greater decrease over 24 hours on four functional immunological assays (the immune system is less effective when you are in

⁴⁹ Janice K Kiecolt-Glaser et al. “Marital Conflict in Older Adults: Endocrinological and Immunological Correlates,” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 59 (1997): 339 - 349.

conflict, speaking discouraging words to one another, even when you just got married and you are otherwise happy).⁵⁰

Good communication means affirming and supporting each other. No matter how many shortcomings a person has, he or she always has something good. It is important for one to practice appreciating the good things in other members of the family. God has reasons for advising men to encourage one another, including one's spouse, which is the closest tie on earth, because it imparts the person holistically.

Communication as a key to healthy family dynamics. Researchers agree that clear, open, and frequent communication is a basic characteristic of a strong healthy family. Families that communicate in healthy ways are more capable to problem-solving and tend to be more satisfied with their relationship.

What is Spirituality

Spirituality is described by Walter A. Elwell as, "The state of deep relationship to God."⁵¹ The New Dictionary of Theology gives the following as to the origin of the word, "Spirituality is a word that has come into vogue this century. French Catholic in Origin, it is now common in Protestantism as well. The term has no direct equivalent in scripture and did not emerge historically as a well-defined branch of theology until the 18th century, when Giovanni Scaramelli (1687-1752) of the Society of Jesus established ascetical and mystical theology as a science of the spiritual life."⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Walter A. Elwell, "Spirituality," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 1139.

⁵² Anthony Bright Atwam, *Building Your Life on the Principles of God: The Solid Foundation* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2014), 81.

The term “Spirituality” is used in various senses by different scholars and Christian traditions, partly because the spiritual life is itself so complex. Here we will attempt to provide a broad definition of the term and illustrate some of the major issues involved in attempting to understand the spirituality of any particular group.

Christian spirituality involves the relationship between the whole person and a Holy God, who reveals himself through both testaments – and supremely in the person of His unique Son, Jesus Christ. This relationship began at creation, but was broken by sin and can only be restored through faith in Jesus Christ.

How is Spirituality Tested?

“The test of Christian spirituality is conformity of heart and life to the confession and character of Jesus Christ as Lord” (1 Cor 12:3). The guarantee of Christian spirituality is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (resulting in conformity to God’s revealed will). Jesus described the ultimate test for Christian spirituality when He told His first disciples “all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another...as I have loved you” (John 13:34, 35).

Nature of Spirituality

1. Christian Spirituality is Christo-centric: The apostle Paul frequently describes the life of the believer in Christ to emphasize the union Christians enjoy with Jesus Christ. This implies the growth and dynamism of the life of Christ in the believer. For God’s original purpose to create man in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26, 27, Rom 8:29).
2. Christian Spirituality is life in the Trinity: The Christian lives in the acceptance of Sonship of Jesus Christ, His saving work of forgiveness

and His gift of eternal life. He actualizes this by the gift of the Holy Spirit who enables the believer to cry “Abba Father” (Rom 8:15).

3. Christian Spirituality is the outworking of the grace of God in the soul of man beginning with conversion to conclusion in death or Second Advent. It implies a life of prayer (Matt 6:5-15; 1 Thess 5:17). The life of the spiritual person is filled with the Holy Spirit and manifested in practical life and the fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
4. Christian Spiritual life engenders fellowship and communion of saints deepens its character. He is present always in public worship (Heb 10:25; Acts 2:42). The Spiritual Christian worships not only on special occasion but it become to him/her a lifestyle (Rom 12:1, 2; 14:6).
5. The Spiritual Christian grows continually in his faith in God and have a good relationship with his neighbours (1 Pet 3:18).
6. The Spiritual Person keeps the Ten Commandments not as a means of salvation, but because he is already saved (Gal 2:20).
7. The Spiritual man or woman reads and study regularly his/her Bible in order to be acquainted with the will and instructions of the God he/she serves. He/she meditates constantly on the Word of God (Acts 17:11; Ps 119:105, 130; John 5:39).

What then is Spirituality?

Spirituality is holiness as God is holy (Lev 11:44, 45, 1 Pet). Spirituality is regular participation of a married couple in the ordinance of humility and the Lord’s Supper as often as the local church celebrates it (1 John 13:1-17; 1 Cor 11:23-26).

Spirituality in the family is demonstrated when the couple supports the church by their tithes and offerings and influence (Lev 27:30, 31; Mal 3:8, 10). If couples

identified themselves with the above cited practices, we can safely assume that that couple is spiritual; they do practice what visibly man's eyes can see. So, then, spirituality is practical religion as James 1:27 says.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL SETTING

Before the arrival of Europeans, the territory and peoples that make up present day Cameroon actually existed though without a well-defined boundary, map or modern national government. The territory then was not known as Cameroon. Rather, there were ethnic groups living as separate “countries” and ruled by local rulers (Chiefs, Fons or Kings and Lamidos). These ethnic groups could easily be identified by the differences in their language and culture.¹

It is worth mentioning here that in those days the people of Cameroon who lived in separate communities had well organized political, economic and social systems. In fact, the naming of the territory called Cameroon and the establishment of a geo-political entity and present territorial boundaries and government was a European creation. The Portuguese words “Rio dos Camaroes” gave birth to the name Cameroon and the Germans were the people who brought the many ethnic groups under one modern country called Cameroon and drew the first modern map of the country after the partition of Africa in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.²

Early Contacts between Cameroon and Foreign Peoples

Before the period of the scramble and annexation of Cameroon in the 1880s, the people of Cameroon had contacts with the people of North Africa, Arabs,

¹ Johnson Chongwain, *Cameroon, Africa and World History Simplified* (Bamenda, Cameroon: Maryland Printers, 2009), 7, 8.

² Beseka P. Lyonga, *Ordinary Level History* (Yaounde, Cameroon: Book House, 2005), 9, 16.

Nigerians and Europeans. Cameroonians especially those of the Lake Chad Basin joined the rest of West Africa to trade with the people of the Sahara Desert and North Africa.³

The people of present day South – West – notably the Ejagham and the Balondo established trade links with the Efiks of Ikom and Calabar on the eve of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The Ejaghams acted as middlemen by buying slaves, ivory, kolanuts, tobacco and beans from the Bangwas, Bamenda, and Bamileke traders of the grasslands, supplying them to Calabar where they were sold to the Europeans.⁴ The people of Northern Cameroon also supplied slaves, Ivory, kolanuts and wild peppers in parts of northern Nigeria such as Sokoto and Kano.⁵

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive Cameroon in the year 1472 (15th Century). The Portuguese explorers led by Fernando Po saw lots of prawns in the River Wouri and named it Rio dos Cameroes meaning, River of prawns. And that's how this territory got its name Cameroon⁶

German explorers and traders also had interest in Cameroon even before the German annexation of Cameroon. In 1833 for example the Cameroon coastal chiefs living between Bimbia and Rio del Roy, led by King William of Bimbia, voluntarily offered their territory to the British crown, calling on the British to give them protection.⁷

In 1864, conflict between the coastal chiefs increased. As a result of this, some Duala chiefs led by King Bell called on the Queen of England to come and control

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 35.

⁵ Ibid., 36.

⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁷ Chongwain, *Cameroon, Africa and World History Simplified*, 19.

their territory, so as to bring peace. However, the first formal request from the kings and chiefs of the Cameroon coast came from a group of Duala chiefs led by King Akwa in a letter dated 7th August 1879.⁸

European Activities on the Coast of Cameroon

Many European nationals flocked the Cameroon coast many centuries before the official annexation of Cameroon. The earliest European on the coast of the Cameroon was the Portuguese. They were closely followed by the Dutch, Danes, British, French, and Germans. These European powers had different motives for moving to the coast of Cameroon.⁹

General Motives for European Interest on the Coast of Cameroon

1. The search for slaves: The Portuguese were the leading competitor in this trade.
2. The need for African raw materials like cotton, groundnuts and palm oil for European industries.
3. The Europeans also desired to trade in commodities such as spices, ivory and pepper.
4. The Christian missionary bodies also came to spread the glad tidings of western religion.¹⁰

The Arrival of Early European Missionaries

The London Baptist Missionary society was the first mission to work in West Africa and Cameroon in particular.

The team was composed of some Jamaican freed slaves. The first group of Baptist missionaries to arrive the coast of Cameroon included: Dr. G.K Prince

⁸ Lyonga, *Ordinary Level History*, 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰ Chongwain, *Cameroon, Africa and World History Simplified*, 35.

and Rev. John Clerk of Jericho. They first arrived Fernando Po in 1841 and visited the mainland of Cameroon that same year. Kings Bell and Akwa were glad to welcome them.¹¹

The main aim of the London Baptist Missionaries was to give light to the dark continent by spreading the “glad tidings” (good news) the anti-slavery movement with some liberated Negro Christians from Jamaica.

Joseph Merrick and Joseph Fuller were amongst those who arrived Fernando Po in 1842 and 1844 respectively. Joseph Merrick crossed to Bimbia where he preached to the Isubu people and later on opened up the Jubilee mission in Bimbia. Alfred Saker also crossed to Douala where he preached to the Dualas and later on, offered baptism to many converts.¹²

The Establishment of Victoria by Alfred Saker (1858)

The arrival of the Spanish Catholics in Fernando-Po made life very difficult for the London Baptist Missionaries after 1844. The Spanish Catholics from Spain (the Jesuits) opposed the London Baptist missionaries for both religious and economic reasons. Firstly, they wanted only the Catholic religion to survive in the region. Secondly, Spain had colonized Fernando Po since 1778. And thirdly Fernando Po was an important commercial center for export and import trade. As a result of the conflict, Alfred Saker and his Baptist Christian brothers crossed to the mainland opposite and found a vacant land close to Bimbia and Ambas Bay. Alfred Saker decided to buy the land that he named Victoria as a tribute to Queen Victoria.¹³

¹¹ Lyonga, *Ordinary Level History*, 25.

¹² *Ibid.*, 31.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

Other Churches

- a. The Presbyterian Mission of American origin was the second to arrive Cameroon in 1879 after having stayed in Gabon since 1871.¹⁴
- b. The third was the Catholic Church that arrived Cameroon in 1884. All those churches came to stay and were involved in the same activity of spreading Christianity.

Description of West Cameroon Mission (WCM)

The West Cameroon Mission of Seventh-day Adventist church is comprised of four regions namely. Littoral, West, North-West and South – West. The last two regions are English speaking; while the other two are French speaking regions. The headquarters of the mission is situated in Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon and the largest and most populated town of Cameroon Republic.

Moreover, the territory of West Cameroon Mission (WCM) is part of the most populated regions of Cameroon. These 4 regions have about half of the population of the Republic of Cameroon estimated at 20,000,000 inhabitants. This territory is rich in agriculture, trading, handicraft and industries. In brief, about 70% of the riches of the country emanate from these 4 regions with the refinery (SONARA) situated in Limbe formerly Victoria.¹⁵

There are 2 conferences and 2 missions in the Republic of Cameroon namely: The East Cameroon Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church was organized in 1932 with a membership of 20,069.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bernadette Mbarga, Bureau Central des Recensements et des Etudes de Population (Cameroon : 3^e RGPH, 2005).

North Cameroon Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church organized in 1933 with a baptized membership of 35,231. The West Cameroon Mission in consideration was organized 1962 and with a membership of 12,071.¹⁶ And lastly the Centre –South Conference of the Seventh day Adventist church organized in 1971 with a membership of 25,586. One can see that our mission is one of the youngest of the 4 and it possess the smallest membership with the largest population of 7.275,344 inhabitants to evangelize. That figure represents 41.7% of the population of Cameroon.¹⁷

Beginning of Seventh-day Adventist work in Cameroon

The Seventh-day Adventist work began in Cameroon in November, 1926, when W.H. Anderson, founder of several missions in South Africa and in the Congo, chose the site of the first station at Nanga Eboko 165 kilometers from Yaounde the capital of Cameroon. Early in 1928, Robert Jones organized the first Sabbath School and the first primary school.¹⁸

On January 1, 1929, Cameroon was assigned to the Southern European Division, and Marius Raspal, who had pioneered the work in Madagascar, was called. He erected the first brick buildings in Nanga – Eboko and conducted the first baptism there. Daniel Ndi, Josue Medjo, and Antoine Mpfoumi were the first converts. At a second baptism the wives of Ndi and Medjo also joined the church. On March 12, 1930, when eleven persons were baptized, the first Seventh-day Adventist church was organized.¹⁹

¹⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Office of Archives and Statistics, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 2013* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 444-446.

¹⁷ Bernadette Mbarga, *Bureau Central des Recensements et des Etudes de Population* (Yaounde, Cameroon: 3^e RGPH, 2005), 3.

¹⁸ Don F. Neufeld, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, revised ed., (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976).

¹⁹ Ibid.

With the arrival of two more missionaries, Serges Yeretizian and Aime Sallee, the work grew. National evangelists were quickly trained and sent to the following stations: Nsem, Andom, Mbong Eteke, Ngama, Mbargue, Mbinang, Wall, Sandja, and Menga. The pioneer national workers were Daniel Ndi, Josue Medjo, Robert Amougou, Thomas Ndongo, Joseph Efo, Samuel Bina, Joseph Assou, Joseph Mimbiang, Antoine Mpfoumi, and Pierre Assamba.²⁰

Beginning of the Work in West Cameroon Mission

In 1940 the district of Babimbi, among the Bassas, was entered. A station was opened in Mandjab by the African Pastor Antoine Mpfoumi, and a school was opened by Oscar Nzhie. In Douala the port of Cameroon, a Sabbath school was established 1953, directed by a lay-man, Antoine Mahelet. In May 1960, Pastor A. Ekitike was transferred to Douala, where he was assisted by K. Waber and his family. The following year a church of 26 members was organized. In 1963, an evangelistic centre was bought, which Eliseo Cupertino used in May 1963 for a series of evangelistic meetings, the first in Douala.²¹ This is where the mission headquarters are situated now with a primary school and a branch of the Cosendai University.

The Anglophone Section of West-Cameroon Mission

This is the area on the eastern border of Nigeria (Formerly the southern part of the British Cameroon). During World War 1 (1914-1918), British and French allied themselves to fight the Germans. After eighteen months of fighting, August 1914 to January 1916 the Germans were defeated by the allied forces and the Germans were consequently expelled from Cameroon. Cameroon was then divided between Britain and France. The sector given to France was named East Cameroon and the sector allocated to Britain was called Southern Cameroon or West Cameroon which was

²⁰ Neufeld, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*.

²¹ Ibid.

administered through Nigeria. This is the sector that has English as official language.²²

How did the Adventist Message Come to Southern Cameroon?

In July, 1960, M. Gbadiah, went from the Calabar area and conducted an evangelistic campaign in West Cameroon. The first overseas missionary to enter the area was Louis Nielsen, who arrived in February, 1961. He found a small group of unbaptized converts in Bekura village who had been faithfully instructed for two years by a Nigerian trader, Okpan Kalu Oyeoku. This trader, formerly a fetish priest at Ikong in Calabar, had been converted by Seventh-day Adventist layman named Chuks, from Calabar, but before he could be baptized he moved to the West Cameroon to set up his own business. There he shared his new found faith and organized a Sabbath School. Later S.A. Chicaye, a young minister of the East Nigeria Mission, and S.Giba, a Cameroonian national living in Nigeria, came as missionaries to this new territory. Since then the work has grown to most of the big towns in the area.²³

Collection of Data

“How Unhappy Marriages Affect the Spirituality of Seventh-Day Adventists in West Cameroon Mission” was gotten from the married membership of 3 selected churches in the West Cameroon Mission (WCM). These selected churches are: Obed-Edom, Mambanda and Bali.

The researcher is presently the Family Life director for the WCM, the Ministerial Secretary and District Pastor for Bonaberi 1. As a result of these different

²² Neufeld, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*.

²³ Ibid.

positions held by the researcher, he has received many challenging complaints from the married membership of his pastoral district, the district pastors and the administrators of the WCM of those who are afflicted by the various challenges of married life. These challenges do not spare the pastoral families as well for they also are plagued with these family problems. So, when the spirituality of the pastoral family is affected, that contaminates the local church family as well.

Population of the Study

In order to ascertain a good result, three churches in West Cameroon Mission were selected. Amongst the three churches selected, 85 married persons responded to the questionnaire. The respondents were married, male and female who had one to thirty one years and above of married life.

The questionnaires were designed, distributed and collected personally by the researcher. The distribution of the first questionnaires was on October 20, 27 and November 3, 2012 respectively. At each distribution, 30 minutes were given to the respondents to fill in questionnaires. After responding, the researcher collected the questionnaires by himself.

The interviews conducted were done with a tape recorder and noted at the approval of the interviewee. The interviews were carried out the same day the questionnaires were filled out. But not on the same time.

It was remarked that 6 persons who were interviewed were married male and female who expressed their need for family seminars and workshops. Through the interview, the interviewees voiced out ideas that the questionnaire did not contain or explain.

Instruments

Questionnaires

Questionnaire Type 1 was distributed to the married members of the church in the selected churches in West Cameroon Mission. This questionnaire contained 9 questions designed to find out “How Unhappy Marriages Affect the Spirituality of Members in West Cameroon Mission.”

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents on October 20, 27, and November 3, 2012. Anonymity was granted to the respondents who were 85 in number.

They only need to state if male or female and must be married members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The questionnaires were distributed and collected personally by the researcher the same day. All the questionnaires returned and were properly filled out.

Questionnaire Type 2 was used after the seminar on Family Life in the selected churches that took place during the following dates:

- January 13 – 19, 2013. seminar in Obed-Edom church;
- January 20 – 26, 2013 .seminar in Mambanda church;
- February 3 – 9, 2013. seminar in Bali church.

This type 2 questionnaire was used two months later, after the various Family Life seminars have taken place as stipulated above. The type 2 questionnaire was designed by the researcher in order to ascertain the positive effects and impact the seminar must have had on the participants.

Type 2 questionnaire has a series of 8 questions. After, the survey was carried out by the researcher himself, the respondents showed dramatic improvements in their

spiritual life two months after the Family Life Seminar. The percentage of the returned questionnaire was 100 percent.

Surveys and Interviews

The researcher after realizing the importance and need that the married membership of West Cameroon Mission had according to the survey conducted in 3 selected churches (Obed-Edom, Mambanda, and Bali). One week of Family Life Seminar was organized by the researcher in all these churches of West Cameroon Mission and its environs within the following dates:

- Obed-Edom – January 13 – 19, 2013;
- Mambanda – January 20 – 26, 2013;
- Bali – February 3 – 9, 2013.

Each seminar comprises an hour presentation and 30 minutes of questions and answers and output from the participants. The program was carried out each day from Sunday to Friday 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Sabbath morning Divine Service period was part of the seminar as the sermon was presented in conformity with the program. Also the Sabbath afternoon was not left out, from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., the topic of the seminar was presented with closing remarks and special prayers for distressed families. The program was faithfully carried out by the researcher in the above selected churches.

Two months after these seminars, the researcher revisited the above congregations to carry-out the second survey and interviews. These were conducted personally by the researcher in April 6, 13, and 20, 2013. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in the church; 30 minutes were given for responses and writer of this project work collected 100 percent of the questionnaires.

The interviews were carried out on the same date of the questionnaires; but individually. What the respondents could not explain through the questionnaires (because of its briefness), they were able to voice out the joy, satisfaction, etc. through the interviews that were conducted by the researcher himself. The recording and note taking was in accordance with the interviewee's knowledge and acceptance. Six persons were interviewed, three males and three females.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Section A

The table 1 below shows that the number of male respondents was 40%, while the female respondents had 60%

Table 1. Gender of the Respondents

Sex	Response	Percentage
Male	34	40%
Female	51	60%
Total	85	100%

Table 2 below shows that 16.4% of the respondents have had 1-5 years of married life, 17.6% of the respondents have had 6-10 years of married life, 14.1% of the respondents have had 11-15 years of married life, 16.4% of the respondents have had 16-20 years of married life, 14.1% of the respondents have had 21-25 years of married life, 11.7% of the respondents have had 26-30 years of married life and 9.4% of the respondents have had 31 years and above years of married life. It also indicates that most of the respondents were those who had 6-10 years of married life and the least were those who had 31 years and above of married life.

Table 2. Number of Years in Marriage

Years in Marriage	Response	Percentage
1-5	14	16.4
6-10	15	17.6
11-15	12	14.1
16-20	14	16.4
21-25	12	14.1
26-30	10	11.7
31 and above	8	9.4
Total	85	100%

Table 3 shows that 50% males as well as 50% female respondents have had problems that affected negatively their spirituality during the past 12 months.

Table 3. Respondents Whose Spirituality has been Affected Negatively

Information	Sex	Response	Percentage
Do you have some marital problems that affect negatively your spirituality in the past 12 months?	Male	Yes	50%
	Female	Yes	50%
	Total		100%

Table 4 below shows that 61.17% respondents have had problems in their marital life that had made them to be absent during the Lord's Supper in the past 12 months while 38.82% have had no problems, but participated in the Lord's Supper.

Table 4. Have Marital Problems Hindered Attendance to the Lord's Supper

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you had some problems in your marital life that had made you to be absent during the Lord's Supper in the past 12 months?	Yes	52	61.17%
	No	33	38.82%
	Total	85	100%

According to Table 5, 33.3% of the respondents have had some problems in their marital life that made them not to return a faithful tithe while 64.7% have had problems but had not prevented them from returning a faithful tithe to the Lord.

Table 5. Marital Life Problems that have Caused Unfaithfulness in Returning Tithe

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you had some problems in your marital life that have made you not to return a faithful tithe?	Yes	30	35.3%
	No	55	64.7%
	Total	85	100%

Table 6 below makes us to realize that 54.11% of the respondents have had some problems in their marital life that has prevented them to pray together with their spouses; while 45.89% of the respondents say “No.” They had problems but despite the problems, they still had their normal prayers with their spouses.

Table 6. Marital Problems that have Affected Prayer Life

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you had some problems in your marital life that have made you not to pray together with your spouse?	Yes	46	54.11%
	No	39	45.89%
	Total	85	100%

From the information below, 20% of the respondents have had problems with their spouses that have prevented them from having regular normal sexual relationship. Likewise 80% of the respondents who said “No,” their problems did not prevent them from normal sexual relationship but instead resolved them.

Table 7. Marital Life Problems that have Prevented Regular Normal Sexual Relations

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you had some problems in your marital life that has prevented you from having regular normal sexual relations?	Yes	17	20%
	No	68	80%
	Total	85	100%

Table 8 shows that 14.11% of the respondents have had some problems in their marital lives during the last 12 months that has impaired their communication; while 85.89% of the respondents have not experienced such difficulties during the last 12 months.

Table 8. Marital Life Problems that have Impaired Communication

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you had some problems in your marital life that has impaired your communication during the last 12 months?	Yes	12	14.11%
	No	73	85.89%
	Total	85	100%

The information contained on table 9 is that only 13% of the respondents have attended a workshop or seminar on family life for the past 12 months. The overwhelming majority of 87% did not attend any workshop or seminar during the last 12 months. That is a strong indication of the need for such seminar to be conducted in this place.

Table 9. Respondent's Attendance of Family Life Seminars or Workshops

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you attended seminar or workshop on family life during the last 12 months?	Yes	11	13%
	No	74	87%
	Total	85	100%

The reading of Table 10 indicates 100% “yes” from the respondents that they will appreciate and attend regularly if a seminar on Family Life is conducted in their congregation. This is a sure indication that there is real need for such a seminar to be conducted in this place.

Table 10. Respondent's Willingness to Attend a Family Life Seminar

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Would you be appreciative and attend regularly if a family life seminar is conducted in your congregation?	Yes	85	100%
	No	Nil	0%
	Total	85	100%

Section B

In this section, we would find the results of the survey done in the same congregations two months later, after a Family Life Seminar had been conducted by the researcher in West Cameroon Mission.

Table 11 below shows that during this second survey the percentage of male respondents has increased to 42.35% whereas the first survey indicated that they were 40%. The female respondents have dropped to 57.65% compared to the first survey that indicated 60%.

Table 11. Gender of Respondents

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Sex	Male	36	42.35%
	Female	49	57.65%
Total		85	100%

Table 12 indicates that 2 months after the family life seminar, more males still had marital problems that still affect their spirituality. 9.41% of the male said yes, while only 7.05% of the female said yes; who had some marital problems that affect their spirituality. Moreover, 50.58% of the female had no more spiritual problems related to marital life. The same goes to the male with 33% indicating no marital problems that affect negatively their spirituality. From the above results, we can conclude that more females benefited from the family life seminar than males.

Table 12. Respondents Spirituality after the Family Life Seminar

Information	Sex	Option: Yes/No	Response	Percentage
Do you still have some marital problems affect negatively your spirituality after the last family life seminar organized in your congregation?	Male	Yes	8	9.41%
		No	28	33%
	Female	Yes	6	7.05%
		No	43	50.58%
Total			85	100%

Table 13 truly indicates that only 9.41% have had some marital problems that had prevented them from participating in the last Holy Communion service. 90.59% of the respondents answered “No.” It is a sure indication that the family life seminar

resolved a number of marital problems that have been hindering them from participating in the Lord's Supper.

Table 13. Have Marital Problems Hindered Attendance to the Lord's Supper

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you had some marital problems that prevented you from participating in the last Holy Communion Service organized in your congregation after the family life seminar?	Yes	8	9.41%
	No	77	90.59%
	Total	85	100%

Table 14 below indicates that 100% of the respondents have been faithfully returning their tithe after the seminar on family life. For how long will this continue? No one can predict now. The researcher strongly believes that if the Family Life leaders in each church continue with at least a quarterly program, the figure might not drop.

Table 14. The Returning of Tithe after the Family Life Seminar

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you been returning a faithful tithe since the last seminar on family life?	Yes	85	100%
	No	Nil	0%
	Total	85	100%

Table 15 indicates that after the seminar 93% were observing regular family worship and only 7% were not. Before the seminar, 54.11% were not praying with their spouses. So, there is an increase of 39% after the seminar.

Table 15. Effect of Family Life Seminar on Family Life Worship

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Do you pray regularly with your spouse since you participated in the last Family Life seminar organized in your congregation?	Yes	79	93%
	No	6	7%
	Total	85	100%

According to Table 16, 100% of respondents say that they have been having regular sexual relationship with their spouse since they participated in the last family life seminar. Before the seminar 20% of the respondents were having such problems. The seminar has scored 100% on this issue regarding sexual relationship.

Table 16. Effect of Family Life Seminar on Sexual Relationships

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
Have you been having regular sexual relationships with your spouse since you participated in the last family life seminar that was organized in your congregation?	Yes	85	100%
	No	Nil	0%
	Total	85	100%

After participating in the family life seminar, respondents, as shown in Table 17, reported that their communication pattern in the home “is very valuable” at 85.89% and those “of some value” had 14.11% while “of little value” scored 0%. It is an indication that the seminar has produced some valuable results.

Table 17. Respondents Communication Pattern after the Family Life Seminar

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
How do you rate your communication pattern in your family after participating in the last family life seminar organized in your congregation?	Very valuable	73	85.89%
	Of some value	12	14.11%
	Of little value	0	0%
	Total	85	100%

According to Table 18 below, 61.17%, a majority, expressed their decision that a family life seminar or workshop be organized quarterly in their congregations; 29.41% expressed their desire that it should be done per semester, while 9.41% indicated their wish to be done yearly. This seems also to be the general wish of the congregations of the West Cameroon Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Churches.

Table 18. The Frequency with which Respondents Desire a Family Life Seminar

Information	Option	Response	Percentage
How often do you want a family seminar life or workshop to be organized in your congregation?	Once quarterly	52	61.17%
	Once semester	25	29.41%
	Once yearly	8	9.41%
	Total	85	100%

Conclusion

These questionnaires and interviews have helped us a lot to see deeply how unhappy marriages lower the spirituality of members. If the spirituality of members in West Cameroon Mission must be uplifted, the home is where to start. Unhappy marriages breed unhappy Christians, unhappy children, unhappy churches, unhappy society and unhappy country.

The researcher after all the analysis of the various tables, responses of the respondents and interviews conducted suggest that the salvation or the future of the church in West Cameroon Mission rests in the happy homes comprising our mission territory. More seminars and workshops on the family should be multiplied throughout the West Cameroon Mission. The members are eagerly and anxiously waiting to support such an endeavour. The most appropriate time for that is now.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

When I was transferred to this new pastoral district, of Bonaberi 1 and at the same time, was elected by the mission committee to be the new ministerial secretary and the Family Life leader for the West Cameroon Mission. (WCM) As the new leader for the above ministries, many complaints came in from married members as to the difficulties existing in their homes. When I also inquired from my administration what is expected of me for choosing me to lead out in the above functions: the response was “there are so many family matters that you are to solve as an experienced minister and also an old married person. This includes the pastoral families as well.”

Preparation for the Task

So the information was fed to me by the various district pastors in the mission, the married members as they lay their complaints to the mission administrators. I know that I have a tough task in front of me to accomplish. The first step was to take time to pray, asking God for creative ideas. And second to read the Bible and many books on the topic of marriage in general and problem solving in particular. Thirdly, I have to look for seminars that have been prepared and presented by experienced persons in the area of Family-Life.

The Need of Teaching Marriage Principles in WCM

The need to teach marriage principles in WCM is great because there are many who think that housing a woman is already marriage. Or still, having children with a man means he is already your husband. Our study will not be based in the above problems. But on those who are legally married but still have serious problems in their homes that affect both couples in their religious experiences with the Lord. Thus the study of the theme: “How Unhappy Marriage Affect the Spirituality of Seventh-day Adventist in West Cameroon Mission” Because of this great need, this research was put in place in order to remediate the ugly situation. If this process as of teaching marriage principles becomes a continuous endeavour, the spirituality of married persons of WCM will be highly improved.

Some of the problems these married members have, came from lack of adequate preparation before marriage or parents did not do their work well on behalf of their children before sending them for marriage. Hence the dare need for the continuous education of the parents also. The family problem that negatively is affected by the spirituality of members is not only for newlyweds but for even those who are parents and grandparents.

Components of the Strategy

The strategy which the researcher has used to begin with is organizing Family-Life seminars in 3 selected churches in the WCM. This is a testing ground to experiment whether it will produce good results. From the surveys and interviews conducted before and after, a week’s seminar in those congregations proved that the strategy is successful. The spirituality of the members had increased. This was verified two months after the one week’s presentation. There was an increase in

returning tithe, participation in the Lords Supper and having regular morning devotions with their spouses.

Furthermore, the strategy planned comprised also of family workshops and retreats. These were not implemented for lack of time; but in due time they shall become part of the program of family life ministries in WCM.

Implementation of the Strategy

As of now, the only strategy that has been effectively implemented in the 3 selected congregations is the marriage seminar. It was used as an experiment for further seminars that will eventually take place in all the churches and companies of WCM to improve spirituality by decreasing unhappiness in married life.

Marriage Seminar

The material the researcher used as pilot study for the Family-Life seminar that took place in the congregations of Obed-Edom, Mambanda and Bali is entitled: “Biblical Family Seminar.” It is a series of 21 lessons made for the enrichment of the family. Eight of them were selected and presented daily in the above 3 congregations as follows: Obed-Edom 13-19 January 2013; Mambanda 20-26 January 2013 and Bali 3-9 February 2013.

The church boards of each of the congregations had voted to hold these seminars. And the announcements and publicity were made two weeks earlier. It started on Sunday 6:30 – 8pm daily. It was made for those who are married, but unmarried members were also present. One hour was used as lecture time and the remainder of the time was used for questions and answers as well as comments and observations by the participants. There were prayers, songs and special songs to grace the presentation. Some non-Adventist couples were present in all the seminars. On Sabbath, two lectures were presented; one during divine service as the sermon of the

day and the second was presented in the afternoon 4-6pm. According to the testimonies of the participants, they expressed great satisfaction and requested for the program to be repeated.

Marriage Workshops

Marriage workshops are like seminars but the participants work in groups. The facilitator(s) divides the couples in groups. A topic is proposed to them to brainstorm; ideas are collected by the secretary of the group and when all the groups have gathered the secretaries present their findings. Sometimes the groups have the same topic to treat but often times different topics. The solutions to various problems are gathered and there facilitator(s) compile the final wordings. Workshops are also places where Family-Life leaders are trained so that they can function effectively in their various churches and companies.

I want to note with regret that because of the lack of time the researcher did not organize any Family-Life workshop per se. In order for the follow-up of the seminars to be effective, the Family-Life leaders of the churches and companies must be trained and given adequate materials for the effective follow-up in their various churches.

Marriage and Engagement Weeks

This is a special program which is organized twice yearly by the Family-Life Ministries of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist on the months of February and September. They supply the materials to be used during these weeks.

Retreats

In a local church, when the number of couple is consistent, they can organize a retreat or it can be organized in the district level. Retreats can be organized for

singles, the widows and those who are engaged etc. The leader in the local church should work with that of the district to see the particular needs before such a retreat is organized.

It should be noted in passing that these retreats are usually not organized in the local church settings; but in schools and colleges with dormitory and kitchen facilities and in hotels etc. These singles also can meet a life partner. The participants should be ready to invest some considerable amount of finance for the realizations of these retreats which can be held yearly for spiritual revival of the couples or singles etc.

Results of the Strategy

Marriage workshops, retreats and marriage and engagements weeks have not been experimented yet in WCM. These will be done in the nearest future by the researcher because he is the current leader of Family-Life ministries of WCM. The strategy which the researcher has successfully implemented is Family-Life seminars entitle: "Biblical Family Seminars."

This seminar was presented in 3 selected churches in WCM namely Obed-Edom January 13-1, 2013; Mambanda January 20-26, 2013 and Bali February 3-9, 2013. Eight lessons were presented in each of the churches by the researcher. Before the seminar, a survey and interview were conducted in each of these churches to know how unhappy marriages have affected their spirituality. It was discovered that many were not participating in the Lords Supper; returning tithe and even some not having regular sexual relations with their mates etc.

After a week's seminar, another survey and interview was conducted two months later in the above churches to married members and the results were very positive in spiritual matters and also in the married life of the couples, they looked happier and at ease with each other.

It becomes very evident that unhappiness in marriage lowers the spirituality of members. So, if we expect the spiritual lives of our members to be high, we should improve happiness in the home life.

If this change was made possible by a week's seminar, how will it be when family life retreats, workshops etc. will be implemented in all our churches and companies in WCM.

Strength of WCM

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of West Cameroon Mission has many strengths, namely:

1. The pastoral staff is dynamic, youthful, educated and zealous. They can easily learn and transmit information to their members.
2. The territory covered by the WCM has good roads that can be used throughout the year. Transportation is easy at all seasons and possible during the day as well as night.
3. There is relative peace. People can assemble without being molested. Evangelistic meetings could be held in churches as well as in public places. All that needs to be done is to obtain a permit from the mayor or prefect of the community.
4. The territory of WCM has 4 regional headquarters. Unlike other missions and conference in Cameroon that has one, two or three at most.
5. The territory of WCM is highly populated. According to Bernadette Mbarga, the region of littoral has 124 inhabitants per km². And the west 123.8 inhabitants per km². These are the most populated areas in the Republic of Cameroon and they are situated in WCM.

6. Agriculture and industries are progressing in these regions. So the population is richer compared to all the other regions in Cameroon.
7. There is no language barrier. Nearly every person living the territory of WCM can speak one of the following languages English, French or Pidgin English. That helps in the transmission of the message.

Weaknesses of WCM

The west Cameroon Mission of Seventh-day Adventist has some weaknesses which are stated below:

1. The majority of the church members are peasants.
2. No health institution has been established by the Seventh-day Adventists in the WCM. Unlike The Catholics, Presbyterians and Baptists have their own hospitals.
3. Educational institution is still to be developed. There are 3 primary schools owned by local churches. No secondary school is owned by the WCM.
4. The numerical growth of the church is too slow. The absence of health and educational institutions are the major causes of the slow growth of the church here.
5. Some of the church buildings are poorly constructed and situated at hidden areas of the towns and villages
6. The message concerning marriage is not preached over the television and radio
7. Fifty per cent of the pastors of WCM are indigenes of other sister conferences of Cameroon.

Opportunities of WCM

The WCM has the golden opportunity of becoming a conference very soon. Administration should use all the financial means at its disposal to purchase lands in strategic areas to build a secondary school. Maranatha International is ready to help in doing this job. This should be done in all the towns. WCM should never miss such an opportunity.

Administration should likewise facilitate the training of dedicated young people who are willing to enter the ministry in order to have more qualified workers and leaders in the future. This should be in the strategic plan of the WCM

Threats of WCM

The WCM has some serious threats which we want to point out here:

1. The threats of the charismatic movements. Some of our members are too Pentecostal inclined. Some worship with us on the Sabbath and on Sundays they attend these churches to sing, dance and pray with them. This is syncretism at its best.
2. Islam is also another threat to WCM because they are gaining more and more grounds.
3. Materialism and worldliness is seriously threatening the spirituality of membership of WCM.
4. Rural exodus is a serious threat; the churches in the villages are dying because the young people who are baptized are leaving the villages to the towns where they can attend universities and have a better job opportunity that is why the churches in the villages are left for the old illiterate mothers and fathers to lead.

5. Because life is expensive, some members will not want to take their responsibility. Instead of getting married the normal way, they will like to just stay together for years without being married in the court or within the church. That is called “”come and let us stay” “trial marriage.” The Family Life ministries should address those living in such abnormal marital situation.
6. Lack of brotherly love among pastors.
7. Scramble for position, increases hatred among competitors.

Conclusion

After looking carefully into the cause of spiritual weakness in the lives of married members in WCM, the researcher’s conclusion is that unhappiness in their marital homes is the primary cause. If the issue is addressed with appropriate remedy like good Family-Life seminars, workshops, retreats, counselling before marriage, the spiritual development of the married membership will be greatly improved. The pilot program implemented in the churches of Obed-Edem. Mambanda and Bali speaks for itself. Such programs should also be developed in future for singles as well because they also have similar needs that must be met through this pilot program.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Marriage was ordained by God in Eden before sin. It is in the Family circle that God wants to prepare us for heaven. The enemy of God and man is not happy about that. So he does all to bring unhappiness in marriage to mar its sacredness. The Lord declared in the Garden of Eden that it is not good that the man should be alone. One research shows that,

In all parts of the world, married men and women have lower death rates than those in the same sex and age groups who are unmarried-whether never married, divorced, or widowed. As yet, there is no explanation for this phenomenon other than the fact that unmarried people die earlier.¹

Those who are following the instruction of the Lord to marry live longer. But it is not only to marry in order to live longer; there should be happiness in the married life that will promote spirituality. The causes of unhappy marriages can be lack of communication, lack of mutual confidence, lack of sexual satisfaction and lack of adequate preparation for marriage. All these can be treated with mutual forgiveness and seriously learning to communicate within the family circle.

In order to improve spirituality in marriage, the couple should find quality time for Bible study and prayer and regular fun together through recreation. The improvement of spirituality is enhanced when the couple supports the church by their

¹ Morten Frisch and Jacob Simonsen, "Marriage, Cohabitation and Mortality in Denmark: National Cohort Study of 6.5 Million Persons Followed for Up To Three Decades (1982–2011)," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 42 (2013): 559-578.

tithes and offerings and participation in the ordinances of humility and Lord's Supper. A daily study of the Word of God and regular family prayers are sure spiritual growth exercises that promotes spiritual and vitality in the family circle. Distressed families will do well to pay close attention to those inspired counsels.

Conclusion

After studying the fascinating topic "How Unhappy Marriages Affect the Spirituality of Members of West Cameroon Mission, the researcher would like to conclude with Ellen G. White who says.

In the home the foundation is laid for the prosperity of the church. The influence that rule in the home life are carried into the church life; therefore church duties should first begin in the home.²

If religion is to influence society, it must first influence the home circle. If children were trained to love and fear God at home, when they go forth into the world, they would be prepared to train their own families for God, and thus the principles of truth would become implanted in society and would exert a telling influence in the world.³

The unhappiness in the home that negatively influences the spirituality of the members of WCM can be solved with serious, planned hard work. The researcher who is the current Family-Life leader for WCM wish to continue with the pilot program implemented and experimented in the 3 selected churches. I will add to the Family Life seminars workshops and retreats.

Happiness will return into those embittered marriages and real spiritual growth will be re-established in those homes by God's grace and glory. Revival and reformation will come in the power and efficacy of prayer as it should. Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish.

² White, *Selected Messages*, 1:121.

³ White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 509.

Recommendations

After treating the fascinating theme: “How Unhappy Marriages Affect the Spirituality of Members of WCM,” the researcher hereby makes the following recommendations:

1. Every local church and company should elect a Family-Life leader during the time for church elections to cater for this ministry.
2. No pastor should bless any marriage if they have not undertaken the premarital tests which HIV/AIDS is part.
3. In order to avoid young people being married without proper knowledge and preparations; no pastor should be allowed to bless any marriage without at least 3 months of premarital counselling.
4. For the enrichment of marriages, the Family Life leader of the local church must organize or invite some more qualified persons to present at least a seminar, workshop or retreat per year.
5. Every pastoral district should have a Family Life coordinator that promotes the activities of the ministry in the district.
6. The mission should allocate during her budgetary meeting sufficient fund that the Family-Life leader can use to cover all the pastoral districts for the promotion of the department.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARRIED PERSONS

Male _____ **Female** _____

- 1) Do you have some marital problems that affected your spirituality negatively in the past 12 months? Yes/No

- 2) Have you had some problems in your marital life that had led you to be absent during the Lord's Supper for the past 12 months? Yes/No
For how long were you absent? Circle the right choice, One, Two, Three, Four (quarters).

- 3) Have you had some problems in your marital life that is making you not to return tithes faithfully? Yes/No
For how long did that last? (1 – 3 months); (4 – 6 months);
(7 – 9 months); (10 – 12 months).

- 4) Have you had some problems in your marital life that is making you not to pray together with your spouse? Yes/No
For how long did that last? (1 – 3 months); (4 – 6 months);
(7 – 9 months); (10 – 12 months).

- 5) Have you had some problems in your marital life that have prevented you from having regular sex with your spouse? Yes/No
For how long did that persist? (1 – 4 weeks); (5 – 8 weeks);
(9 – 12 weeks); (13 weeks and above).

- 6) Have you had some problems in your marital life that has impaired your communication with your spouse during the last 12 months? Yes/No

- 7) Have you attended a seminar or workshop on Family Life during the last 12 months? Yes/No

8) Would you be appreciative and attend regularly if a Family Life Seminar is organized in your congregation? Yes/No

9) How long have you been married? Circle that which concerns you:

(1 – 5 years); (6 – 10 years); (11 – 15 years); (16 – 20 years);

(21 – 25 years); (26-30 years); (31 years and above).

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARRIED PERSONS, TWO MONTHS
AFTER THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
FAMILY LIFE SEMINAR

Male _____ **Female** _____

- 1) Do you still have some marital problems that negatively affect your spirituality after the last Family Life Seminar? Yes/No
- 2) Have you had some marital problems that prevented you from participating in the last Holy Communion service organized in your congregation after the last family life seminar? Yes/No
- 3) Have you been returning a faithful tithe since the last seminar on family life? Yes/No
- 4) Do you pray regularly with your spouse since you participated in the last family life seminar organized in your congregation? Yes/No
- 5) Have you been having regular sex with your spouse since you participated in the family life seminar that was organized in your congregation? Yes/No
- 6) How do you rate your communication pattern in your family after participating in the last family life seminar that took place in your congregation? (most effective); (effective); (less effective)
- 7) How often do you want a Family Life Seminar or Workshop to be organized in your congregation? (Quarterly); (Every Semester); (Yearly)
- 8) For how long have you been married? Circle that which concerns you:
(1 – 5 years); (6 – 10 years); (11 – 15 years); (16 – 20 years);
(21 – 25 years); (26 – 30 years); (31 years and above)

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VITA

Personal information

Name: Pastor Jean Nenko Chentu

Date of Birth: August 21, 1955

Place of birth: Buea, Cameroon.

Marital Status: Married

Children: Agnes Pouansi, Matilda Toumeni, Joan Djietcheu and Ferdinand Iyambe Chentu.

Education

Master of Arts in Leadership candidate, Adventist University of Africa Nairobi, Kenya.

Bachelor of Arts in Theology, 1998, Adventist Seminary of West Africa (now called Babcock University), Ogun State, Nigeria.

Work Experience

District Pastor of Bonaberi 1 and Director of the Secretary of Ministries and the Family Life Ministries of the West Cameroon Mission: 2013-Present.

West Cameroon Mission Field President: 2008-2010.

Adventist Mission in Gabon Field President: 2000-2010.

West Cameroon Mission Director of the Douala District, Personal Ministries, Sabbath School and the Children's Ministries: 1998-2000.

West Cameroon mission Director of the Ministries Department: 1987-1993.