

An Analysis of Pastoral Counselling Practices for Married Persons among Selected Christian Churches in Gweru Urban

M. Kurebwa*, J.P. Matyatini and N. Wadesango**

*Zimbabwe Open University, Midlands Region, Zimbabwe

**University of Fort Hare, East London Campus, East London, RSA

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ABSTRACT The study investigated the effectiveness of pastoral counselling practices for married persons among selected Christian churches in Gweru Urban. The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The research used a convenient sample of 70 ordinary church members to respond to the counsellor effectiveness questionnaire, 5 pastors/priests responded to the pastors questionnaire and 12 ordinary church members participated in the focus group discussion making a total of 87 research respondents. Data were collected by use of questionnaires and focus group discussions. Results indicated that church members present marriage issues that are found in any other population for counselling. Marriages within the church are traditional, civil or church based. To deal with issues presented, pastoral counsellors use mostly group counselling and individual counselling to a limited extent. Training of pastors does not include counselling though clients think it is part of the training. These findings agree with reviewed literature though there is conflicting direction as to the influence of culture and how it should be handled within the church. The study therefore recommends that research be conducted into pastoral counselling which should also include observation of how pastoral counsellors do their work in addition to use of other instruments to get a clearer picture of what takes place.

INTRODUCTION

Very little is known about the successes and failures of pastoral marriage counselling within the Zimbabwean population, yet it is known that a larger percentage of the population practise Christianity of one persuasion or another. Signs of significant family dysfunction are obvious and widespread, for example addictions, abuse, domestic violence, abortions, bankruptcy, divorce, desertion, suicide, murder, legal battles, etc. These affect traditional African marriages just like Christian marriages. Recourse to counselling in troubled marriages has always been an open way for families in Zimbabwe where aunts and uncles counselled and advised families. Pastoral counselling on the other hand is provided by clergy and includes special attention to a client's spirituality which other counsellors may not provide. In fact there is growing consensus among professional counsellors that personal and family spirituality and faith plays an important part in maintaining health and family functionality. It appears in Zimbabwe, Christianity and traditional cultural practices are used in times of need though there is no documented evidence to support or disagree with the utility

of either of the two. Given that acculturation is taking place due to exposure to other cultures, and religions, it is important to determine the successes, failures and obstacles of pastoral counselling in helping married couples.

Background to the Study

Marriage in African Zimbabwe is considered a very serious stage in human development. It is a period when a young man or woman can now share in the life of adulthood. Though Zimbabwean society is changing, marriage between two people is not the presence of the two but a family issue thus the one who is marrying, is marrying for the whole family and pays the bride price to the bride's family not to individuals. According to Kuefler (2007) marriage in Zimbabwean society was so important that it was not left to chances or experimentation by the young people. Chavhunduka (1987) says that prior to marrying; young men and women were counselled by aunts and uncles about married life. This was to ensure that the couple lived a happy life which happiness extended to the family as whole.

However, the role of aunts and uncles of advising about to marry men and women seems to have diminished. Firstly, many families no longer consider "family" in the extended sense but in the nuclear sense. Secondly, immigration

Address for correspondence:
Dr. N. Wadesango
E-mail: nwadesango@ufh.ac.za

and migration has led to less contact between traditional counsellors (aunts and uncles) and their charges. Thirdly, globalisation has led to acquisition of new cultural practices and beliefs which are divorced from the traditional Zimbabwe culture. Ngundu (2010) and Kapolo (2009) have questioned the efficiency of pastoral counselling in dealing with African marital issues arguing that pastoral counselling is westernised as is Christianity from which it is derived. They add that pastoral counselling degrades and disregards the upbringing of the African man and woman.

In Zimbabwe many have turned to pastoral counselling in times of need. Elsewhere, Smith (2008:73) cited one pastoral counsellor declaring that he did not want divorced people and single parents in the church. "Let them go to someone else's church". In the United States, for example, Rosenblatt (2006) noted that the highest divorce rates are in the Bible Belt: Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama and Oklahoma where rates are about 50 percent above the national average. Interestingly, those are the same states with the highest concentration of African Americans. Kuefler (2007) added that 11% of American adults are divorced, 25% of all Americans have had at least one divorce. Among Christians, 27% of born-again Christians have had at least one divorce, 24% of all non-born again Christians have been divorced, 21% of atheists have been divorced, 21% of Catholics and Lutherans have been divorced, 24% of Mormons have been divorced, 25% of mainstream Protestants have been divorced, 29% of Baptists have been divorced and 24% of non-denominational, independent Protestants have been divorced. These statistics can be used as a rough barometer of the effectiveness of pastoral counselling within these churches. However, such statistics are not readily available within Zimbabwe nor are statistics about family marital problems. One can only guess about the Zimbabwean situation. It is therefore questionable why churches are failing to provide truly practical and life-changing support and counselling for marriage (Bowers and Al-Rehda 2013). Of late there has been an influx of churches particularly Apostolic and Pentecostal healing/counselling focused ones and evangelical churches which profess to provide spiritual and material success. Of particular interest to this research is whether families benefit from their counselling sessions.

Many authors differentiate pastoral counselling from psychotherapy though most pastoral counselling associations demand a thorough grounding in psychology for its members just like counsellor's associations in general. In Zimbabwe training for counsellors and subsequent registration with professional associations is still in the formative stages though major steps have been taken. On the other hand training of clergy has been going on for years but there is no recognised pastoral counselling training or registration body. Rallnick and Miller (1995) have suggested that pastoral counsellors are there to listen and help clients go in the direction that God has called them to go as a solution. Thus pastoral counsellors, besides applying psychotherapeutic techniques, are also trained in providing spiritual guidance for clients. Collins (1988) differentiates between pastoral counsellors and Christian counsellors in the sense that Christian counsellors provide spiritual guidance, to enable clients to touch base with their creator while pastoral counsellors provide both spiritual guidance and psychotherapy. It appears, therefore, that training could be an issue to resolve among Christian counsellors who according to Collins (1988) are many in Zimbabwe. Pastoral counsellors may be few in the same country.

Pastoral counselling effectiveness can be measured when clients are able to clarify and rank-order their needs and options, clarity and affirm perceptions, roles and strategies, want to learn and apply relevant new information, dissolve impasses respectfully, facilitate effective communication, and lend temporal emotional, spiritual and social support (Rosenthal 2013). This criteria is useful in that it enables one to measure the effectiveness of therapy and if need be compare with other therapies. Attempts have been made elsewhere to measure the effectiveness of therapies. For example, psychoanalytic therapy has been tested in the United Kingdom with results showing that dream analysis has very short term gains while cognitive behavioural therapy has been found to be useful with certain psychological disorders. The focus on pastoral counselling is motivated by firstly the large number of churches that profess to help clients overcome their difficulties, secondly the obvious marital problems that also prevalent in churches, thirdly, the emergence of counselling training in Zimbabwe and fourthly and most im-

portantly the undocumented evidence that large numbers of people now turn to pastoral counselling in times of need and lastly, the desire to have a clear insight of what is happening in pastoral counselling circles in Zimbabwe.

Kanyowa (2003) says family therapy is concerned with interactions within families. This is because family members interact and influence each other negatively or positively. Any maladjustment of one family member affects the whole family system. While many forms of the family exist in Zimbabwe, infidelity, abuse, in-law interferences, disagreements about sex, money issues, jealous, even religion are constant sources of problems for many families including Christian ones. When families have problems such as mentioned above they may seek help or it is proffered from counsellors of various persuasions including pastors, priests and church elders. Whether the counselling and advice they receive is effective is of concern, as this has a bearing on the wellbeing of a substantial portion of the population of the country (Epstein and McCrady 2012).

It is important that marriage be discussed here as it results in a family which may have problems which pastoral counselling eventually deal with. Gallagher (2002) sees marriage as a social or legal contract between people that creates kinship. Kanyowa (2003) adds that for a marriage to be said to exist, permanence and sexual exclusivity are essentials. It does not require legal or governmental recognition for marriage to exist. Sue and Sue (2002) added that counsellors of any theoretical orientation must take clients as they are irrespective of their cultural or religious beliefs and practices. The present research attempted to find out whether pastoral counsellors display these characteristics. These various families display different problems, hence, the need to be accepting and emphatic.

In "Mission Churches and African Customary marriage", Ngundu (2010: 10) noted that African Christian couples are faced with three issues. Firstly the traditional African culture to which they belong, secondly the legal or civil world under which they live and thirdly the westernized culture which prevails within the church in which they worship. It appears this couple belongs no more to the three, due to globalisation. This ambiguity results in the married couple facing a dilemma. Lack of recognition of customary marriage by the mission churches for

church and government purposes has not resulted in couples entering into civil or church marriages which they have not planned for nor do they care for. They are torn between the three corners of a triangle; the claims of African tradition, the claims of a new found faith and the claims of the state. The counselling question is to whom do such couples turn to in times of need? In the event that they turn to pastoral counsellors, how do pastors handle them if they have a traditional marriage? Kapolo (2009) lamented that pastoral counsellors have failed to deal with couples because they ignore the couple's Africanness; their culture and upbringing. In Zimbabwe while many couples accept and use pastoral counsellors, they also consult their traditional counsellors, thus being torn between two worlds. Ngundu (2010) noted that marriage has always been a social undertaking rather than a religious or legal undertaking. He argues that Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana should not be taken as the Christianisation of an otherwise customary practise to which he was expected to attend according to Jewish custom just like the traditional Zimbabwean marriage ceremony of handing over a bride by in-laws (*kupereka*) has nothing to do with being a Christian or not being one.

METHODOLOGY

Probing into people's innermost feelings, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs requires one to use a research method that enables respondents to express themselves. Introducing some treatments such as infield experiments or laboratory experiments can lead to artificial results. As a result, a descriptive survey method which made use of questionnaires and from group discussions was made in use of in this research. Data which was obtained after informed consent had been sought from respondents was mostly qualitative though most demographic data was quantitative. Effort was made to make to obtain valid and reliable data though the most important aspect of this research was to get authentic data which captures the essence of counsellor/counselee relationships in pastoral counselling. It is therefore evident that reliability of the same research was compromised though the questionnaire was piloted. The research adopted for this study is the descriptive survey design as it was deemed essential that respondents

are described adequately their experiences during counselling as well as explains the outcomes of such sessions. This was enabled questions contained in the questionnaire and form group discussions held with two groups of research participants.

Research Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data on the effectiveness of pastoral counselling in helping families overcome issues preventing them from living happy, fruitful lives. The first instrument (questionnaire) was designed for individuals who were married presently or had been in marriage before. The second instrument was for pastors so that data they provided could be compared to that provided by those who are supposed to benefit from the counselling provided by counsellors. A focus group discussion was held with a mixed group of married couples and some who could not come to the discussion as couples. So triangulation was done to ensure that data was authentic by collecting it from both pastors and the clients they serve. The population also included divorced men and women as well as widows and widowers who were practising Christians attending the same churches as they were seen as all able to prefer the required information. The total number from the records made available was 2710.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Ten respondents were conveniently sampled from each church denomination. The criteria for inclusion was that the first 5 women and the first 5 men from each church who agreed to be respondents became participants as long as they were married, divorced or widowed. All pastors or priests of these churches automatically became respondents. For the focus group discussion, the first 6 men and the first 6 women who were approached and agreed to be part of the focus group discussion became participants. However, only four men had the time to participate so the group ended up with 8 women and 4 men who were married, divorced, or widowed. Therefore, the research used 70 ordinary church members to respond to the counsellor effectiveness questionnaire, 5 pastors/priests who responded to the pastors questionnaire and 12 ordinary church members to participate in the focus group discussion making a total of 87 research respondents.

Data Analysis

Results were treated using percentages, tables, graphs and histograms. This was deemed sufficient as the aim was to get authentic views which are not amendable to inferential statistics. Thus, there was not attempt to hypothesise.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to Table 1, 35% of the parishioners who responded to the questionnaire were male and 65% were female. Also, 75% of the priests/pastors who responded were male and 25% were female. In addition, 63.64% of the focus group members were female and 36.36% were male. This appears to be a balanced distribution whose responses are likely to be very reliable.

Table 1: Basic information on respondents (N=70)

<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Church Members</i>		
Males	28	35%
Females	52	65%
<i>Priests/Pastors</i>		
Males	6	75%
Females	2	25%
<i>Focus Group Discussion</i>		
Males	4	36.36%
Females	7	63.64%

Table 2 illustrates that the majority of respondents, 47.5%, married in church. The second largest group was 33.75%, this comprised of those who had customary marriages and the third group of 18.75% comprise of those who married in court.

Table 2: Types of marriages (N=70)

<i>Type of marriage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Church	38	47.5
Court	15	18.75
Customary	27	33.75
Total	80	

Table 3 illustrates that the most common problems that couples bring for counselling are associated with infidelity, these comprise of 27.97% of the respondents. The second largest group is of those who present problems with in-laws, these comprise of 27.12% of the respondents. The third largest group is that of those who pre-

sented problems of spirituality these comprise of 18.64% of the respondents. The fourth largest group is that of those who presented problems of divorce these comprise of 15.25% of the respondents, the last group is of those who presented problems of ill-health these comprise of 11.02% of the respondents.

Table 3: Common problem that couples bring for counselling: N=70

<i>Common problems</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Divorce	18	15.25
Infidelity	33	27.97
In-law problems	32	27.12
Ill-health	13	11.02
Spiritual	22	18.64

The majority of the respondents 54 in Table 4 indicated that they hold qualifications in Pastoral training. Also, 27.27% indicate that they hold counselling qualifications. Also, 18.12% indicated that they hold qualifications in Theology. The results show that some Pastors receiving training in both Pastoral and Counselling.

Table 4: Pastors' qualifications: N=5

<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Pastoral	6	54.55
Theology	2	18.18
Counselling	3	27.27

The Most Important Role/Responsibility

Some priests/pastors stressed that the most important role is to provide education, to ensure that married couples endure the test of time. Married couples need continuing education. The instructions given to couples prior to the celebration of the sacrament of the matrimony are also important because some couples do not approach priests for help until it is too late. It is also the responsibility of the priests/pastors to build trusting relationship that encourage people to talk about their marriages.

Marriage Programme in Church

All participants indicated that there are marriage counselling programmes in their churches. Furthermore, 62.5% of the participants indicated that they carry out their counselling session any where appropriate, depending on the situa-

tion. Also, 37.5% indicated that they carry out the counselling sessions in the priest/pastor's office. None of the respondents indicated that they conduct counselling at the priest's house and at the parishioner's house.

According to Table 5, 37.5% of the respondents use retreats as an activity to facilitate marriage counselling. The second largest groups comprise of those who use focus group discussions and renewal of marriage vows/jubilee to provide marriage counselling, these comprise of 25% each. The third largest group is 12%, this group uses marriage encounter group to provide counselling to married couples.

Table 5: Activities used for marriage counselling

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Retreat	3	37.5
Marriage encounter groups	1	12
Renewal of vows	11	25
Focus groups	2	25

Is Counselling Helpful?

All respondents indicated that marriages counselling was helpful. They indicated that couples were helped to deepen their spirituality and to realise the sacramental nature of marriage. Many marriages which were shaking have been strengthened. The use of family based examples from scripture helps couples to be devoted to their marriages. Marriage is an important issue in the Christian life so the counselling provided by pastors/priests equips couples and families with ways of dealing with life challenges. Other than the spiritual aspects Pastors/priests some respondents indicated that they also encourage couples to honour their cultural requirements such as paying *lobola* and the involvement of the paternal aunts in their marriages. They also indicated that the encourage couples to have sound relationships with their in-laws.

Opportunities and Problems Encounters

Some respondents identified several problems during marriage counselling as follows:

- ♦ Many couples although they attend church services lack a religious back ground.
- ♦ They do not understand the meaning of the marriage sacrament and marriage vows.
- ♦ Their culture has instilled certain values that contradict with Christian vows and it is difficult to undo.

- ♦ Many couples are cohabiting and the priests indicated that they have to be practical by accepting these couples and encourage them to Christianise their marriages. The use of scriptures and activities such as retreats help them to overcome the problems.

Formal Counselling

All priests/pastors indicated that formal counselling qualification enables them to assist couples and families better. Without formal training, pastors/priests end up advising instead of counselling. Pastoral training alone is not adequate to address counselling issues.

Are Priests/Pastors Approachable?

Seventy five percent of the respondents indicated that couples are comfortable to approach them for marriage counselling while 25% indicated that couples are not comfortable to approach them for counselling, they cited reasons that in mixed marriages, whereby the other spouse is not a church member it becomes difficult for such couples to approach the pastor for counselling. Some people would rather go elsewhere rather than the pastor for fear of their weaknesses to be known. Other participants indicated that they try to always avail themselves to people but for reasons not known to them people do not bring their marriage problems. The Priests/Pastors accompany the couples so that they focus on Christian life throughout their activities so that they will be reminded of their vows. Jubilees offer the opportunity to renew marriage vows and to be exemplary to other young couples. This strengthens their relationship and even those who attend the ceremonies. Couples also have group discussions concerning their marriages. Relevant Bible verses are used to guide the discussion.

Pastoral Training

The training that pastors/priests receive includes Pastoral work and counselling. In main line churches, they undergo intensive training. They spend some years learning and practising pastoral work. The group members showed that they were not comfortable to have priests/pastors who were employed somewhere else. The parishioners have a duty to fend for their pastor

while he concentrates on pastoral work. The 10% of your earning which go towards tithe should be used to support the pastor. Pastors must stay by the word of God.

In conclusion the group members said that generally they were satisfied with the work done by pastors/priests in maintaining Christian marriages. Pastors use biblical verses to support their counselling. Some people are not free to approach pastors for counselling lest they will be used as an example to support the pastor's sermon in church.

Desirable Qualities

- ♦ We want Pastors who had a calling not those who want to earn a living from the pastoral work.
- ♦ The age of the pastor determines whether he/she is going to be helpful to the clients. The marital status of the pastor is also another factor to look at besides full pastoral training. People prefer pastors who lead by example, who lead Christian life.
- ♦ One who is a full time pastor.
- ♦ Should not engage in income generating projects which compromise his pastoral duties.
- ♦ Should always be available for his/her parishioners.
- ♦ Must have adequate training to handle marriage issues because marriages form families and it is from these families that parishioners come from.

Counselling Strategies Used

- ♦ Family life sessions, couples fellowship. These groups have a lot of activities which create confidence in married couples. They organise sporting activities, Prayer sessions. Trips to tourist resort areas and sharing of marriage experiences.
- ♦ Couples are encouraged to attend weddings. They take over the parental and aunt's role and in a very negative way. They consider the church to be their home. They disown their parents if they do not go to the same church. They turn against their parents in such a way that they do not involve them in the preparation for marriage. Pentecostal churches are undermining culture, in this case the counsel-

ling offered by such pastors does not incorporate the African way of marriage preparation.

- ♦ As parents the group members said the teachings of these pastors are causing harm to the African interdependent family society.
- Some pastors are not easy to approach but some are very easy to approach. It is much easier if the couple is known to the pastors. The age of the pastor has some bearing on whether to approach or not. The behaviour of the pastor is another determining factor. Some pastors are reserved, this makes it difficult for parishioners to approach them and open up.
- ♦ The media has also contributed to some people failing to approach their pastors for marriage counselling. Some stories in the newspapers indicate that some pastors have taken advantage of their parishioners' problems ending up abusing them in the name of treating them.

Focus Group Discussion

The respondents explained what goes on during counselling sessions. One of the group members responded by explaining what exactly takes place in their church. She said Pastors are very instrumental in shaping church youths in preparation for happy future marriages. The youths are involved in church activities which direct their energies towards productive activities instead of them to be exposed to bad behaviour which is likely to affect their marriage life. Another respondent said that Pastors/Priests assist a great deal. They emphasise on respecting marriage vows. They have a task to assist those who need pre-marriage counselling to understand what married life involves, this include taking care of relatives both the wife's and husband's without showing any bias. She explained that Pastors/Priests are now taking aunts and uncles' roles. They include all marriage aspects such as, how people live, what transpires in the bedroom and caring for the whole family and challenges which they are likely to face. The mainline churches incorporate in the African culture whereas other Pentecostal churches their Pastors are young and without adequate Pastoral training. Their teachings shun the African culture in such a way that the youths end up not respecting their cultural teachings.

DISCUSSION

Data was collected from 8 pastors and 91 Christians attending four mainline churches and four Pentecostal churches. Of these respondents, 38 were male and 61 were female. Results suggest that generally, respondents thought pastoral counsellors were providing effective counselling to married people. This is in contrast to Collin's (1988) noted, that pastoral counsellors were ineffective. While Ngundu (2010) and Kapolo (2009) have suggested that churches ignore cultural practices which makes their counselling unfriendly to clients, respondents noted that within mainline churches, clients cultural background is respected. This is seen through encouraging clients to pay *lobola* (bride price) and involvement of aunts in marriage issues. However, with Pentecostal churches, clients found problems were they are not allowed to involve aunts and uncles particularly when they are not Christians. Thus, the pastors completely take over the responsibility of aunts and uncles.

Providing pre-marriage counselling and marriage counselling among the Zimbabwean population is the preserve of uncles and aunts. It is hazy how such counselling and pastoral counselling wedge to help couples. The explanation could be that Christian couples may not be comfortable to approach aunts and uncles whose religious beliefs and practices are not in agreement with Christian values and practices. While geographical separation has limited the frequency of family contacts, it is still relevant that couples remain in touch with their cultural practices. Both pastors and church members noted that some couples are not fully committed to the church. All respondents did not indicate any alternative to counselling if they could not approach the church which suggests that when they have problems they try to solve them on their own.

Pastors were aware that formal counselling training was necessary to enhance services they provided, though not all of them had counselling qualifications. In contrast church members took the long training undertaken by mainline priests/pastors as evidence of counselling training. They even questioned the ability of young pastors to provide services. Makore – Rukuni (2003) noted that counsellor characteristics such as age of counsellor and qualifications of coun-

sellor play an important role in whether clients use them or not. It can be argued that clients will use pastoral counsellors whose age they are comfortable with. Pastors indicated that they did not use youth leaders to provide either pre-marriage counselling and marriage counselling maybe in recognition of clients' needs and of the in-experience of youth leaders who have not experienced marriage themselves.

Kanyowa (2003) pointed out that there are new family forms such as those cohabiting. These are also found in the church though this is in direct conflict with biblical teaching. It seems what pastors termed cohabiting is where couples have not married in church. Thus, while somehow accepting such couples into the church, their marriages are only tolerated (Rosenthal 2013).

Other church members provide counselling (church elders, men and women's fellowship and catechists). Whether this counselling is helpful or not is not subject to this research, but the question of training. Aunts and uncles are not formally trained to carry out marriage counselling but rely on their gut instincts. It is apparent that lay persons also provide counselling. Given the scarcity of trained people such cadres may need basic training in counselling for them to be more effective.

Within the church, clients present issues that are also found elsewhere, these include, divorce, infidelity, spiritual, in-law problems, and ill health. These issues affect families on a daily basis. To help clients pastors use group counselling and individual counselling though the forms vary from conferences, Valentine's day, jubilees to couples fellowship. Prior to marriage, prenatal counselling is provided. Providing pre-marital marriage counselling has always been practised. Chavhunduka (1987) explained in detail how the Shona provided marriage guidance to youths. This practise is now remotely practised among the Shona. The church now plays a key role in providing that service.

Both pastors and church members indicated that group counselling within the church strengthened marriages. This is in line with practices offered elsewhere, were clients facing the same issues share their experiences and explain how they cope with their challenges such as Alcoholics Anonymous. However, there is always the danger that the less vocal and less open members remain with unresolved concerns

as they are not inclined to share. In practice, therefore, such clients can be helped with individualised counselling. While most church members said they were comfortable discussing their marriage concerns with their pastors/priests, pastors not all were forthcoming. This is not surprising given that among Pentecostal churches pastors/priests were seen as young and therefore unapproachable and that they had inadequate training.

There is a shift from use of traditional marriage counsellors such as aunts and uncles given that some church members who did not use pastors also did not use traditional counsellors. As such, such clients are neither traditionalists nor modernists. They are yet to decide where they belong and make use of personal abilities and resources to deal with issues of concern to them.

There seems to be growing consensus among professional counsellors that personal and family spirituality and faith plays an important part in maintaining holistic health and family nurturance levels. A unique aspect of pastoral counselling is the primal belief that clients' issues can be reduced or resolved through pure faith, penitence and humble worship. Unfortunately a substantial portion of the church members' respondents (a quarter) said the church has no influence on their marriages, while three quarters of pastors/priests noted that clients who approached them had limited belief in the power of prayer to help in resolving issues. Even Victor Frankly who said he survived the horrors of Hitler's Dachau concentration camp suggested that spirituality is important in helping clients come to terms with their problems. One explanation of these respondents' beliefs is that they could be practising both traditional religion and Christian religion though they do not want it known. They are not decided as to what is useful to them. They are not committed to either completely. It has already been noted that pastoral counsellors use group counselling and individual counselling but it is not clear that within their practice definite techniques other than prayer, are used. It is important that pastors/priests are aware of other techniques such as providing congruence, empathy, acceptance, care, listening and confrontation. These are used in other approaches with varying degrees of success. Psychodynamic therapy and person centred approaches use them. This is not to say

they are not being used by pastors/priests who participated in this research but that awareness of what one is using is important.

While training of pastors/priests varies in length in terms of time frame depending on each church's requirements, counselling theories have to be incorporated into such training to avoid achievement which in most cases makes clients dependant on counsellors if things do not work out as advised. A criterion for evaluating counselling success was suggested in the reviewer literature, pastoral counselling should pass that litmus test just like any other therapy. One of the difficulties of encountered doing this research was the apparent unwillingness to discuss church issues. This has connotations for counselling. How, for example, do such counsellors then open to clients who are non-believers? Christianity is foreign to Zimbabweans; as such it is important that it is not used to denigrate local cultural and religious practices. Mainline churches have realised this and have incorporated Christian practices with relative success. An attempt to ignore cultural practices which are age old can only meet with resistance and weak attempts at accepting pastoral counselling.

Collins (1988) suggested a very useful distinction between pastoral counselling and Christian counselling. He says pastoral counselling has formal counselling training in addition to pastoral training while Christian counsellors do not have formal counselling training. This makes most pastors/priests Christian counsellors, those who use the power of prayer only to help clients resolve issues. What then needs to be pointed out is that Christian counsellors would be more comfortable dealing with believers, but interestingly undocumented evidence shows that Christian counsellors help even those who have a different faith from their own.

The use of questionnaires and focus group discussions not backed by purely quantitative methods presented problems in analysing data. While one could have coded data, this was not done because of the manner in which questions were structured. This prevented the researcher from using inferential statistics which would made it possible to establish whether results were significant or not. However, the essence of this research was to get into people's minds and be with them which is not easily quantifiable. In addition, observations would be more useful to pry into the private counselling agendas which people like Freud and Skinner used. In this way a researcher does not set the agenda for research-

ing but is guided by what goes on within the counselling sessions. This gives a real picture of how pastoral counsellors do their counselling.

The study has therefore established that counselling within the church usually involves attempts to enable clients to touch base with their creator. The proliferation of a multitude of faith based churches who profess to offer healing and the equally large numbers of people who now make use of such services suggests that some healing is taking place. It became necessary to find out whether such counselling/healing is effective in dealing with marriage issues. This was prompted by the fact that people who attend church face the same marriage problems as non-Christian people, in fact, some of their reactions to family problems are extreme, not expected of a Christian by the ordinary person. It was deemed essential that counselling undertaken to be pastoral counsellors. Literature is inconclusive as to whether pastoral counselling is effective in dealing with family or marriage issues or not. Results suggest that for those who receive pastoral counselling, the outcomes have been positive while those who do not seek such services seem to use their own resources to deal with issues confronting them. There is evidence to show that a substantial portion of the population is not comfortable being counselled by young and inexperienced pastoral counsellors. Church members noted that young pastoral counsellors have inadequate training though this was a result of limited knowledge about the training undergone by mainline priests/pastors as compared to that undergone by Pentecostal priests/pastors. Pastors reported that clients who seek counselling and have strong spiritual beliefs (belief in God's power) tend to overcome their difficulties better than those with limited faith. Results also show that other than pastors/priests, other church members also provide counselling within the church. Within the church, therefore, both pastoral counselling and Christian counselling are offered. It was evident that pastoral counsellors were not aware of specific techniques they were using which may be an

CONCLUSION

As result of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- ♦ Within the church both pastoral counselling and Christian counselling are being offered and they are differentiated by the fact

that pastoral counsellors undergo pastoral training and counselling training while Christian counsellors do not necessarily need any training. The degree of success of pastoral counselling outcomes is a function of the degree of a client's belief in God.

- ♦ Not all churches have taken aboard their members' cultural and religious beliefs which have a negative effect on the expected counselling outcomes. The age of the pastoral counsellor and the length of his/her training have a bearing on clients' beliefs of his/her counselling abilities. The younger the pastoral counsellor and the less pastoral/priesthood training he/she has undergone the less clients think he/she is effective.
- ♦ Generally pastoral counselling has been useful to married couple in time of need, though there are areas that church members felt need to be addressed.
- ♦ Pastors and other counsellors within the church use both group counselling and individual counselling to help those who seek service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ♦ There is need for counselling training for both pastors/priests and other church members in counselling. Such training can be sourced from individuals or/and should be part of the pastoral/priesthood training. Pastoral counsellors should strive to understand themselves as this makes them aware of their strengths and weaknesses which make them better counsellors as they can then recognise their limitations and areas of competence.
- ♦ Churches should put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that training and practice are not compromised.

- ♦ Pastors/priests and other church counsellors need to practise what they preach. That is, no discrimination, so that even those who do not believe can benefit from their counselling irrespective of cultural beliefs and practices.

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