

**A biblical and practical response to divorced pastors in ministry
in the churches in the Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia**

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DECLARATION

I, Damas Kamfwa hereby declare that this dissertation represents my original work. I also declare that I have not submitted this dissertation in any form for any degree, purpose, or examination to any university, college or seminary.

Signature:

Date:

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As supervisor, I agree to the submission of this dissertation.

...Dr. Anna-Marie Lockard
Dr. Anna – Marie Lockard

Date: 17 January 2018

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the church in Zambia, and especially to the four churches of this study affected by the issue of divorced pastors in ministry. My prayer is that the church in general and those persons affected by divorce will respond to this important issue from a biblical perspective.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation offers a biblical and practical response to the issue of divorced pastors in ministry in Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia. The research focused on examining how the Zambian church should respond to divorced pastors in ministry. I have argued that, in as much as God hates divorce and His idea for marriage is permanence - due to the hardness of the human heart and the brokenness of this world, there are biblical parameters for divorce.

Furthermore, I have also made strong proposals on how to mitigate the rampant rate of divorce among pastors. Additionally, I have made suggestions on how to respond biblically, to those who are already victims of divorce and remarriage.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.0 General Introduction:

The aim of this research is to offer a biblical and practical response to the issue of divorced pastors in ministry in Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia. Thus, this research examines how the Zambian church, especially those affected in Kawama compound of Ndola, should respond to divorced pastors in ministry.

This chapter will highlight the motivation for this research, the background to the research problem, the key questions to this research, the goals for this research and the methodology to attain the goals.

1.1 Motivation

My greatest motivation in this particular research area has been the issue of divorced pastors in ministry. The issue of divorced pastors in ministry was never a problem in Zambia thirty years ago. According to the older generation of pastors who have been in ministry for over 25 years whom I interviewed and in particular Bishop J.S Kazhila of Life gospel Ministries International, reports that, “The issue of divorced pastors in ministry is a new phenomenon in this country especially that those found wanting in this area still continue in ministry.” He added that, “In years past if a pastor was divorced for one reason or the other, he would stepdown from pastoral ministry on his own, if not the church denomination he belonged to would ask him to do so. In many cases that spelled out the end of one’s pastoral ministry...” (Kazhila 2013).

It appears that the influence of divorced televangelists on Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) has changed the landscape in the recent past in our country in as far as the issue of divorced pastors in ministry is concerned. Many pastors now found in divorced situations have justified their stay in ministry based on these popular divorced televangelists who seemingly are making it in ministry despite their marital status. As matter of fact, pastors in Zambia, who have divorced on any other reason other than the issue of marital unfaithfulness have justified their stay in ministry as they make reference to these televangelists on Trinity Broadcasting Network (*TBN Zambia March*

2013: *Tim Story*). Consequently, this has impacted the number of divorce cases among pastors. Additionally, the problem of divorced pastors in ministry has raised serious concerns among lay people in Kawama compound. They question whether the church has any moral right to challenge the issue of divorce in this particular community seeing the rampant divorce situation that has engulfed it. It is for this reason that I have decided to undertake this research project.

Secondly, I have decided to undertake this research project because of a divorce case involving one of our pastors in our church denomination, Vine Ministries International. The pastor in question is Pastor Grey of vine ministries international. Pastor Grey's wife walked out of her matrimonial house because her husband (Pastor Grey) was influenced by the pressure of ministry demands due to the rapid growth of his church. This time demands from ministry, placed enormous pressure on their marriage. When Pastor Grey was asked by the church leaders to sort out his marital problems, he pleaded with his wife to be reconciled, but to no avail - eventually they divorced. This situation has been pending for ten years now because his denomination does not allow divorced pastors to do ministry regardless of who caused the problem. Consequently, Pastor Grey is unsure of what to do because of the stance taken by his church denomination regarding victims of divorce and remarriage.

Thirdly, I decided to undertake this research project due to the concerns raised by lay people in Kawama compound in regarding divorced pastors in ministry. A large number of lay people in church and outside the church have raised serious concerns regarding the morality of the church in Zambia.

1.2 Background

The issue of divorced pastors in ministry has become a concern to many lay persons in the Zambian church. This issue has raised numerous questions about the purity and integrity of the Christian church in the Zambian church. Furthermore, the body of Christ seems to have different perspective on how to handle issues of divorced pastors in ministry. Some churches teach that once a minister is divorced, that should be the end of ministry for that particular person. Other churches, particularly independent churches, tend to give an opportunity for divorced pastor to continue in ministry.

This problem of divorced pastors in ministry has not just raised questions within the church but more also in the eyes of the community at large. It is noteworthy that the issue of divorced Pastors in ministry is no longer viewed as a distant problem from years ago. Rather, divorced pastors have continued in ministry in nearly every city of Zambia (Kazhila 2013).

This research attempts to deal with the issue of divorced pastors in ministry in the Zambian churches and Ndola district, in particular. It specifically examines four case studies involving divorced Pastors in ministry. The following questions drive this research: What are the challenges the church is facing in Ndola in relation to divorced pastors in ministry? What is the concept of marriage and divorce within Zambian culture? What are the effects of a divorced pastor in ministry on the church and community? What are the biblical guidelines and implications when a minister is found in a situation of divorce and remarriage?

This research paper has employed an integrated theological approach to solving the problem. Finally, this research paper offers recommendations on how the church should respond to the critical issue of divorced pastors in ministry.

1.3 Literature Review

The following works have guided and aided this research:

Atkinson 1979. *To Have and to Hold: The marriage covenant and the disciplines of divorce*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. This insightful book discusses marriage as an important covenant relationship. However, he also acknowledges and discusses the issues of divorce and remarriage. It is remarkable that Atkinson discusses both the Old Testament and New Testament perspective on the topic.

Brewer D.I 2002. *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: the social and literary context*: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. This book provides key insights into all the passages both in OT and NT dealing with divorce. He provides research from the original language and within the literary context. The author seeks to understand what the particular passages meant to original readers before application to our situation today.

Chondoka, A Y 1988. *Traditional Marriages in Zambia: A study in Cultural History*: Ndola: Mission press. This book aids this research as it brings out cultural issues

concerning marriages in Zambia. It identifies the tenets of what comprises traditional marriages in Zambia and factors that affect divorce.

Duty G 1967. *Divorce and Remarriage*: Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publication. This book assists this research as the author discusses at length the exceptional clause in Matthew chapter 19 which brings out the debate surrounding this particular passage of scripture. He also discusses two rabbinical schools of thought regarding divorce.

Ellisen A S 1977. *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church*: Grand Rapids: Zondervan. This book offers key insights concerning divorce and remarriage by providing a broad overview of biblical passages.

Heth A W and Wenham J G 1984. *Jesus and Divorce: The problem with the Evangelical Consensus*. This is a helpful book because it provides insights on how Jesus dealt with the issue of divorce as it was brought before him by the Pharisees of the day.

House W H 1990. *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian views*: Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press. This book was selected because it deals with the subject matter at length. This book highlights four traditional views regarding divorce and remarriage. It is also helpful because it highlights how the ancient world dealt with the issue of divorce.

1.4 Main Problem

The main problem guiding this research project is: How should the churches in the Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia respond to the issue of divorced pastors in ministry?

1.4.1 The key questions

The key questions to consider are as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of the people in church toward a divorced Pastor?
2. What are the attitudes of the people in the community regarding a divorced Pastor?
3. What are cultural issues that surround a divorced Pastor in ministry?
4. What are biblical leadership requirements for a Pastor?

5. What does the Bible say about divorce and church leadership?

1.5 Research hypothesis

Divorced pastors hinder their effectiveness of doing ministry.

1.6 Methodology of research

The qualitative research design for this mini-thesis is Don Browning's four-step approach to practical theology which he calls strategic practical theology (Browning:1991). Browning's model of strategic practical theology follows an in-depth theological analysis of a selected theme, and provides a framework for exploring the practical outworking of the theoretical research in a specific faith community. It entails answering the following four questions:

- (i) How do we understand the concrete situation in which we must act?
- (ii) What should be our praxis in this concrete situation?
- (iii) How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
- (iv)**What means, strategies, and rhetoric should we use in this concrete situation?

To answer the first question, in this research I have used face to face interviews with the concerned pastors. In addition I have also used a random structured questionnaire to interview 100 people in Kawama regarding divorced pastors in ministry. Besides the face to face interviews with the divorced pastors, I also gave them a structured questionnaire to complete just to ensure that all data required for this research project is sufficiently gathered. The data collected has been interpreted and put into categories as reflected in chapter two of this paper.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

This study has been limited to Mount Zion Church ministries found in Kawama compound and three other churches in the same locality. Thus, it has a limited focus on four selected divorced pastors in ministry and the people in Kawama compound of Ndola district of Copperbelt province in Zambia. Chapter two will highlight the current situation in Zambia.

1.8 Chapter outlines

This mini-thesis on divorced pastors in ministry has been divided into five (5) chapters:

1.8.1 Chapter 1

This is an introductory chapter of my mini-thesis and it showcases the current situation of divorced pastors in ministry in Zambia, Ndola Kawama. Furthermore, it highlights how this problem will be discussed in the chapters that follow -based on the data collected through interviews. Chapter one will summarize ways in which the issue is viewed biblically, historically, systematically and practically.

1.8.2 Chapter 2

This chapter describes the current situation of divorced pastors in ministry in Zambia, Ndola Kawama. This chapter notes how the pastors in question found themselves in divorce situations and the negative effects divorce has had on their personal lives and ministry. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates how the churches and the community at large have both responded and reacted to the problem of the divorced pastors in ministry.

1.8.3 Chapter 3

This chapter is a proposed situation as it looks at the biblical, historical and systematic perspectives respectively. It poses the question: How should we move from the current situation highlighted in chapter two towards finding a solution to this problem? In this chapter I have conducted an exegetical study of Matthew 19:1-9, since it is one of the passages that Jesus commented on at length regarding the issue of divorce.

1.8.4 Chapter 4

This chapter suggests proposals and implementation of some of the principles learned through this research. The data for discussion in this chapter has been drawn from chapters two and three.

1.8.5 Chapter 5

This chapter is the summation of all the data collected through interviews and recommendations for solving the problem of divorced pastors in ministry.

The issue of divorced pastors in ministry has questioned the effectiveness of the church. Concerns and questions among lay people in Kawama compound of Ndola district in Copperbelt province of Zambia, will be discussed and evaluated.

CHAPTER TWO

The current situation regarding divorced pastors in ministry in the Kawama compound of the Ndola district in the Copperbelt province of Zambia.

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the current situation regarding divorced pastors in ministry in the Kawama compound of the Ndola district in the Copperbelt province of Zambia. More specifically, four case studies involving divorced pastors in ministry will be the point of discussion to ascertain the current situation.

According to Vyhmeister (2001:144), a case study in pastoral research, “Studies one situation, the activities of one group, or one incident. Naturally, a pastoral case study looks at an event, a person or a situation related to ministry. It analyses the background of the incident and all the factors that contribute to interplay and interaction, and what actually happens.” In this case, we want to find out what caused the pastors under discussion to divorce and more importantly the impact of divorce on ministry. To this effect, Vyhmeister (2001:147) says that the task of analysis is to understand, not to make judgements regarding the rightness or wrongness of anyone’s actions. It is in this same spirit that this research will undertake to try and understand what the Bible says regarding victims of divorce in ministry.

Moreover, Hindson & Haward (2004:81) asserts that, “Scripture alone makes us systematically wise into the commonalities of human life. That wisdom then matures and becomes casewise through practice in applying scripture to our own lives to the counselee, and to things we read. Every wise biblical counsellor engages in lifelong empirical research informally if not formally.”

Thus, this chapter will discuss the research methodology undertaken in these case studies, data collected through a random survey from the community in regard to divorced pastors in ministry and face to face interviews with the concerned pastors (this includes the questionnaire filled in by divorced pastors) to ascertain the causes and the effects of their current situation as it relates to ministry.

Data has been derived from interviews, field observation and documents. And finally, to discuss the significance of the data collected from both random survey and interviews with the divorced pastors in Kawama compound of Ndola district in the copperbelt province of Zambia.

2.1 The purpose

The purpose of this survey regarding the selected topic, is to find out the challenges that surround divorced pastors in ministry, especially the pastor at Mount Zion church ministries in the Kawama compound of Ndola, in the Copperbelt province of Zambia and the other three pastors under our discussion in the same locality. What are the issues that led the pastor in question at mount Zion church ministries and the other three pastors - to divorce? To what extent have their personal lives and ministries been affected because of their divorce situations? On the other hand, how has the community at large and the Kawama compound responded to this particular scenario of divorced pastors in ministry? What is the perception of the community regarding divorced pastors in ministry?

2.2 The case studies

This research paper examines four case studies regarding divorced Pastors in ministry in the Kawama compound of the Ndola district in Copperbelt province of Zambia. The particulars and names of divorced pastors and the churches in question are as follow: Apostle Jay of Mount Zion church ministries, Pastor Bond of Light Ministries International, Pastor Grey of Vine Ministries and Pastor Kams of Jesus is Coming Soon church **(these are not real names for the pastors and church ministries)**. As much as this research paper will address all four case studies, the main focus will be on Apostle Jay of Mount Zion Church Ministries.

2.3 The background of Mount Zion Church Ministries

Mount Zion Church Ministries was founded in 1996, when Apostle Jay **(not real name)** and his late wife felt led by the Lord to plant a church ministry. According to Apostle Jay, the Lord led him to plant the church in a Peril - urban area of Ndola in the Kawama compound. His mission was to uplift the lives of the down-trodden people in this area of Zambia. Since its inception, the church has grown to an average membership of 350 people in attendance on Sunday. Additionally, Mount Zion Church Ministries has

opened ten other branches across the country. The church outreach now extends to three other churches in three different African countries namely; Malawi, Tanzania and Swaziland, thus making it an international church ministry

2.3.1 Apostle Jay

Apostle Jay is not only an influential pastor in the city and the local church, but he is also well known in the political life of our country. At one point when he presided as the chairman for the pastors' fellowship in our city, he had unprecedented opportunity to interact with the former late President of our country and many cabinet ministers. Consequently, his life and ministry came into the lime light in our city to such an extent that whenever the government wanted to start a programme that would involve the church in our city, he was the man they sought for direction in that regard.

Apostle Jay's first wife died before the ministry had come to fruition in our city. After many years living as a widower he decided to remarry. At this point his influence in the city had grown and his ministry was well known in. His wedding ceremony was graced by the former Republican Vice-President of Zambia and several cabinet ministers including many other prominent people in our city were present.

After being in marriage for four and one half years ,Apostle Jay and his wife decided to divorce as they could no longer agree on several issues. Due to the prominence of Apostle Jay's life and ministry their divorce was not a private matter, rather it was in the public domain. This attracted different reactions from different groups of people including Mount Zion Church Ministry. Despite the concerns raised by different groupings, Apostle Jay continued his ministry at the local church and abroad.

2.3.2 Pastor Bond

Pastor Bond of Light Ministries International started his ministry in 1997 with a passion to reach out to the unchurched people group in his community. Pastor Bond and his wife were married for ten years before their marriage ended. Light Ministry has other church branches across the city of Ndola and beyond. The ministry of Pastor Bond has grown over the years in the Kawama compound of Ndola to such an extent that its impact is felt around the community and beyond the city of Ndola.

As the ministry grew, Pastor Bond and his wife started having some marital challenges due to ministry pressure. Unfortunately, Pastor Bond did not have time to attend to marital issues in his house and before he knew it his wife was found having an extra marital affair with another man in the same community. Consequently, this led to divorce after being married for over ten years.

Their divorce raised a lot of concern by many of the church members and those outside the church – particularly, since his wife had a different story as to what led to divorce. To date she denies the issue of marital unfaithfulness, instead she claims that her husband used to compare her with other women in church. She added that; other women in church used to tell her that she was not fit to be a pastor's wife. Reportedly, her husband would side with the church members against her. Consequently, this created a rift between Pastor Bond and his wife. According to her, it was the combination of the above-mentioned problems that led to the dissolution of the marriage.

Despite the divorce, Pastor Bond continued with his ministry and two years later he remarried another woman from within the same local church that he pastors. This development was received with mixed feelings from other church members and pastors in the city. Subsequently, this led to some church members leaving the church while others did not see any problem. Nonetheless, Pastor Bond has continued his ministry in the church and beyond the borders of Zambia.

2.3.3 Pastor Grey

Pastor Grey of Vine Ministries was sent by his denomination in 2002 to do a church plant in the Kawama compound of the Ndola district in the Copperbelt province. The leaders of Vine Ministries were so impressed by Pastor Grey's spiritual gifting and charisma which he exhibited at the head quarter church in Lusaka, Zambia. So, when the church thought of planting a church in Ndola there was no other candidate as qualified for this job as Pastor Grey. Subsequently, when Pastor Grey was approached to do a church plant, he did not hesitate to accept this ministry opportunity.

Thus, in October 2002, Pastor Grey and his family set off for Ndola and started the Vine Church Ministries. Within the short period of three years the church grew to 120 members. It was at this point that Pastor Grey started facing some ministry pressure

which in turn started affecting their marriage. Nevertheless, the Pastor started spending much time trying to run the church and attend to various church demands at the expense of his marital life. As time went by, his wife became frustrated and hence she decided to stop attending the Sunday church service.

This development was not taken kindly by Pastor Grey and the entire church. The church accused her of failing her husband in as far as ministry was concerned. On the other hand, Pastor Grey started accusing his wife that she was becoming a hindrance to the growth of the church. The tension went on for some time until 2005, one day when Pastor Grey returned from ministry at night he found his wife had packed and left home. She decided to go back to her parents in Lusaka.

When this was brought to the attention of the denominational leaders, they summoned Pastor Grey and asked him to make amends in his marital life before continuing his ministry. Pastor Grey tried to plead with his wife to have her come back but she refused saying that she felt humiliated and she was not willing to get back to her husband and do ministry again.

Eventually, they got divorced and Pastor Grey was not allowed to continue his ministry by the denomination leaders. Pastor Grey pleaded with church leaders saying that he was not the one who divorced but his wife walked out of their matrimonial home on her own. To date, Pastor Grey has not been allowed to pastor a church again. Each time he has tried to get back to ministry either in his denomination or any other church, the issue of divorce has been brought up time and again. He has tried to explain to different church leaders that he was not the one who divorced but no one seemed to listen to him. Pastor Grey feels that the church has treated him unfairly in this matter and does not know what to do because his passion still remains to serve God in the pastoral ministry.

2.3.4 Pastor Kams

Pastor Kams of Jesus is Coming Soon church (JCSC) was sent to begin a church ministry in the Kawama compound of Ndola in the year 1990. Pastor Kams and his wife lived in Lusaka before their church denomination asked them to do a church plant in Ndola. When Pastor Kams set off for ministry in Ndola his wife could not accompany him as she was working for the Bank and the company would not grant her the transfer

at that time. Pastor Kams started the work by himself and really struggled for a period of five years just to have the church plant stand in the Kawama compound in Ndola.

When he saw that there was some amount of growth and stability in his church he decided to go back to Lusaka and convince his wife to resign her job and join him in ministry. This was not an easy undertaking, nevertheless his wife had no choice but to go on an early retirement and followed her husband in Ndola to do ministry. As they begun to live together and do ministry Pastor Kams realized that his wife's ministry perspective or approach conflicted with his style on doing things. Not only did they have different approach in ministry, neither did they compliment or rather blend well at home as husband in wife. It appeared the distance of the five years they had stayed apart had a negative effect on their relationship as a married couple.

According to Pastor Kams, his wife started to behave like a single woman, in the sense that she would walk out of the house any time she wanted and come back home late at her convenience. Also, she would go out of her matrimonial home and stay with friends or parents for a period of one to three months without his consent and would only come when she felt like doing so. This behaviour had a negative impact on their marriage as they started to argue over this issue repeatedly. They tried to hide the issue from the church but the frequency of her absence in church caused the church leaders to start speculating. Eventually the leaders sensed that their Pastor had a huge marital problem.

The church elders and pastors in the city tried to intervene in the situation but their counsel could not help in any way to avert the situation. Consequently, the church ministry was badly affected to such an extent that the church which had grown to 215 people over a period of 13 years came down to only 83 people in attendance. Pastor Kams could not stand this scenario any longer as he kept blaming his wife for the downfall of his ministry. He pressured her to explain to him why she was behaving in that manner. To his surprise, his wife answered him that, she never liked the way he forced her to resign her job and be pushed to do ministry which just brought misery in her life. He tried to apologize and plead with her if they could restart afresh but the situation only worsened.

It was at this point that he felt his marriage could not work. To save his ministry he asked for a divorce. Subsequently, they separated but at the same time the church

leaders of that denomination asked Pastor Kams to step down from church ministry until he reconciled with his wife. After five years of staying away from ministry Pastor Kams wanted to get back in ministry but his church denomination would not allow him until he reconciled with his wife. At the same time, Pastor Kams believes he is better off in ministry without his divorced wife. If that does not work, he would rather get married to another woman, but his church denomination is in opposition to that idea. This scenario has put pastor Kams in an awkward situation such that he does not know what to do.

2.4 Research Method

To analyse the above divorce case studies objectively as it relates to life and church ministry, this section highlights the methodology used in the empirical research of this study. It describes methods which were used and how the study was conducted. Thus, the IMRaD model was chosen to bring out effectively the objectives of this research study. Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect the data required. Notably, both sources proved to be helpful to the research as they complimented each other -namely:

1. Structured questionnaire
2. Face to face interviews

It should be noted that face to face interviews were only conducted with the divorced pastors in question. The aim of face to face interviews was to get first-hand information as to what caused their divorce. Furthermore, a face to face interview offers an opportunity to get information that sometimes can be easily overlooked by structured questionnaires which tend to be rigid at times. Similarly, Merriam (2009:90) notes: "The problem with using highly structured interviews in qualitative research is that rigidly adhering to predetermined questions may not allow you to access participants' perspectives and understanding of the world." In addition, Smith (2008:236) notes that interviews permit a deeper and fuller understanding of the attitudes of the respondents. Whereas the survey (using questionnaires) may have only room for 'agree' and 'disagree' answers, an interview can tell the researcher why the person disagrees or agrees. Though, interviewing takes a lot of time nonetheless it provides information not available through a survey."

As noted in the outcome of my face to face interviews, often judgment or blame is passed on by one spouse or the other without listening to parties concerned and thereby making wrong judgment as to who created the problem in the marriage. Also, face to face interviews were conducted with divorced pastors in ministry to obtain information that may not otherwise come through a structured questionnaire. In addition to the face to face interviews, structured questionnaires were given to the divorced Pastors in question just to ensure that all the questions needing answers were attended to.

Other than the interviews with the divorced pastors, a random structured questionnaire composed of seven questions (see appendix A), regarding divorced Pastors in ministry were given to the community at large, at the Kawama compound in the Ndola district in the Copperbelt province of Zambia.

It should be noted that 100 people were singled out for this random structured questionnaire. The number was composed of both married and single people. The aim of this sampling was to find out the community perspective regarding divorced pastors in ministry and the church's response to divorced pastors in ministry especially those in Mount Zion church ministries in the Kawama compound of the Ndola district.

2.5 The outcome

The results of the study fall into two categories: (1) data collected from four divorced pastors (face to face interviews and a structured questionnaire). (2) Data collected from the random sample questionnaire and structured questionnaires.

2.5.1 Divorced Pastors

Data collected from the four divorced pastors varied from one pastor to another as they all had different issues that caused them to divorce. However, all the pastors under discussion had been in ministry at least for a minimum of ten years before they got divorced. Despite many other reasons for the causes for divorce, three stand out clearly as follows:

1. Marital unfaithfulness
2. Ministry pressure
3. Lack of compatibility

Out of the four pastors interviewed only one mentioned marital unfaithfulness as one of the reasons of divorce. The three divorced Pastors brought to my attention the issues of ministry pressure and lack of compatibility as married couples. By ministry pressure the divorced pastors mentioned ministry demands took much of the time and energy until they had no time for family issues - especially time to attend to their wives. Further, ministry demanded their wives to be involved fully in the day to day demand of church ministry. Yet, to the disappointment of the pastors, their wives were not willing or available for such ministry. Consequently, this led church members to say that the Pastors' wives in question were not equal to the task or the ministry they purport to run. This added marital pressure on the pastors in the sense that they were put in the position to choose between their marriages/ wives or serve the ministry demand. Research by London and Wiseman (1993:54) concur that, unrealistic expectations in ministry pull the pastor and the wife away from each other and many times hinder their walk with God. In addition, if these expectations are not handled well and in a timely manner, many pastors' marriages end up in divorce.

As Pastor Grey of Vine Ministries states as follows: "By the time I was trying to balance my ministry time and family time it was already too late to save my marriage." Each time he came home it was one fight after another because his wife could no longer appreciate ministry any more. One day when his wife asked him to attend to some family issues instead he chose to do ministry and by the time he returned home he only found his wife had packed her belongings and left. That was the end of their marriage.

The other issue brought to my attention by the divorced pastors is compatibility in marriage life and ministry. Due to the pressure mounted on the wife by the church members many pastors start to feel that their wives are not suitable for them as far as ministry demands are concerned. This was true in the case of Pastor Bond, who felt that his wife was not suitable companion in ministry. As matter of fact he started accusing his wife that she was a hindrance to church growth as she could not get along with his church members. The church members followed suit by telling him that he had married the wrong woman. As result, the church members developed a negative attitude towards his wife such that whatever problem the church encountered was blamed on the wife. Consequently, this created a huge rift between Pastor Bond and his wife.

Because Pastor Bond wanted to save his good reputation at his church, he began blaming his wife and siding with the church members. To this end several young ladies in his church started portraying a picture that they were better suited for him. This never came as a surprise after he divorced his wife, two years later; he remarried one of the ladies from within the same church. As far as Pastor Bond is concerned, he has now found a woman - or rather a wife who is compatible in life and ministry. In his opinion, in as much as he did not intend to go through a divorce, he had no choice in this matter but just to divorce, otherwise his ministry would have been a failure. This was brought to my attention by the way Pastor Bond answered questions 15 and 16 in my questionnaire (see appendix 1). The questions read as follows:

15. Kindly share ways in which you believe your second marriage is justifiable from a biblical perspective.

16. Please feel free to share any final comments or thoughts you may have on this important topic.

Asked if these pastors would consider reconciling to their ex-wives three out four felt that it was too late for them to do that. However, Apostle Jay had a different view altogether in as far as getting back to his ex-wife was concerned. His view was to get back to his ex-wife because of what he has experienced as a divorced pastor; he does not find any justification for a Pastor to divorce his wife. In as much as his church did not have a problem when he divorced, he openly shared that he had greatly suffered from guilt and shame. He felt that he was a failure because he could not work out things with his wife. In addition, the negative response he got from those outside his church was too unbearable to the point that now he realizes how many outside his congregation were negatively impacted about his divorce situation.

Furthermore, Apostle Jay strongly asserts that, the first ministry field that any pastor has, is his family and that includes his wife. Therefore, if one fails to reconcile with his wife, even in the case of marital unfaithfulness he is not fit to teach about forgiveness. Because of his personal conviction on divorce, he feels strongly that any pastor found in a divorce situation should not think of getting another woman but instead be reconciled to his former wife. Thus, for Apostle Jay at the time of the interview, had already started the process of getting back with his ex-wife.

However, the other three pastors have different views regarding the question at hand. For instance, in the case of Pastor Bond, he just remarried another woman after two years of divorce. He does not see any reason why his remarriage should be an issue, as far as ministry is concerned. As much as certain sections of society may not be happy with his move, that should not stop him from doing the work of ministry. If anything, his position is that one only needs to be open enough to share with other people the lessons he or she has learnt about divorce and help those who may be in danger of it to do whatever they can to avoid such a situation.

In addition, Pastor Grey of Vine Ministries believes that one should not be forced to reconcile with his ex-wife in order to do ministry. Likewise, Pastor Kams agrees with him that it is better for one to remain single and do effective ministry than forced to return to his ex-wife who does not support his ministry.

2.5.2 Random sample

As already noted, 100 people were singled out for completing this random structured questionnaire. This number included both married and singles (male and female) above 20 years old of the Kawama compound in Ndola, Copperbelt province, Zambia. The data collected reflected the following three responses regarding divorced pastors in ministry:

1. Divorced pastors should continue in ministry, if they did not cause the divorce.
2. Divorced pastors should not be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause.
3. Divorced pastors should be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause.

2.5.2.1 Permitted to do ministry provided they did not cause the divorce

Out of a 100 people that were given the questionnaire 52 felt that if the divorced pastor did not initiate or cause the divorce, he should be allowed to continue in ministry. This number represents married people and singles alike. According to this group, one should not be denied continuing in ministry because of one spouse who does not want to comply or reconcile. **What was of interest is how this group answered question two and three (see Appendix 2)**, they didn't seem to have any problem being

pastored by a divorced pastor and to seek marital help if they happen to have one problem or the other in relation to marriage. The questions read as follows:

2. Would you be comfortable to be a member of a church which is pastored by a divorced Pastor? If yes, why and if no why?
3. Should you have your own marital problems, would you be willing to seek help/ counselling from a divorced Pastor?

In both cases the answer was an emphatic “YES”

2.5.2.2 Not permitted to do ministry regardless of the cause

To the contrary, this group of people felt that regardless of the cause of the marriage break-down, the divorced pastor should not be allowed to continue in ministry. Notably, out of 100 people given the questionnaire the 30 felt strongly that divorced pastors should not be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause. Surprising enough, even marital unfaithfulness would not be warranted as an excuse for divorce. If anything, the argument for them is that if a pastor fails to reconcile with his wife because of marital unfaithfulness how can he teach about forgiveness? I should also underline that, out of this 30 people who felt strongly that divorced pastors should not be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause, 23 of them are married women and other 7 were six married men and one single man. This group felt strongly that such a minister is not qualified to do ministry under the circumstances otherwise they would not be comfortable to be under such a minister.

2.5.2.3 Permitted to do ministry regardless of the cause

Out of a 100-people given the random sample questionnaire eighteen felt that divorced people should be allowed to continue in ministry regardless the cause of divorce. They pointed out that divorce is not an unforgivable sin hence why should one not be given an opportunity do ministry after they have repented. In this respect, this group quoted Romans 11:29, “For God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable (NIV).”

Additionally, this group accepts any pastors including a divorced pastor, if he is doing the work of God. They do not have any problem seeking

marital help from such a Pastor. Furthermore, they strongly advocate that a pastor is just like any other person who is prone to error, so he should be treated like any other person even when it comes to the issue of marriage. This group of people believes whether the cause of divorce is marital unfaithfulness by one partner or any other problem which may result in divorce, they will still regard such a pastor in high esteem and will not have a problem sitting under under his ministry. The majority (13 out of 18) in this category are single ladies or men. Richards (1990:219), contends that as much as divorce and its effect on the people involved are bad, there are many other reasons why divorce happens and equally many reasons why people would remarry. He says that we must approach the question of divorce and remarriage from three perspectives:

1. We must study relevant biblical texts with careful attention to the context.
2. We must test our interpretation against patterns seen in the whole Word.
3. We must check the harmony of our conclusion against Scripture's most basic context of the grace our God.

He further argues that people found in divorce and remarriage on grounds other than adultery and desertion should be given a chance to serve the Lord.

Another question surfaces at this conjecture: What should someone do if he is found in a marriage relationship that is characterised by physical abuse and other related problems? Should such a person just stay in that marriage relationship even if the other spouse does not show signs of change? If a partner in such a relationship sought divorce should that person be denied remarrying? Here again we are cautioned, "When we turn to Scripture, we must be careful. We must first note that different views on divorce are held by persons who honour God's word equally. This suggests that the Bible's teaching on this issue is not as cut and dried as some insist. The very existence of different opinions warns us that we must probe deeply and avoid any tendency to accept what may at first seem "obvious" (Richards 1990:219).

2.6 The significance of the data

Upon careful examination of these four case studies, one would conclude that the issue of divorced pastors in ministry is a complicated issue to the people in the Kawama compound of the Ndola district in the Copperbelt province of Zambia.

In addition, the views collected from the random interviews (random questionnaire), reveal different viewpoints in as far as divorced pastors in ministry are concerned. People in and outside the churches have different opinions about divorced pastors in ministry. Suffice to say that, the legitimacy of divorced Pastors in ministry can only be ascertained by looking at the circumstances that led to the person getting divorced.

However, there are many issues that need to be considered as we deal with this subject matter of divorced pastors in ministry. One of the key issues that we need to look at has to do with church leadership. Leadership is critical in church ministry and it should not be over looked. There are many definitions of leadership. A leader is someone who leads by example. Rush (1989:18) said that one of the major roles of a leader is to set the right example and then help others to follow. The apostle Paul put it this way, "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ. Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do" (1Corinthians11:1; Philippians 3:17).

Simply put, a leader leads by example. In this case leading by example does not only mean how one avoids a divorce but also how one handles a divorce situation in his personal life and ministry. However, Williams (1981:81) states that when it comes to a church leader involved in divorce the issue will be dealt with totally different from just an ordinary church member. As much as that is true, it does not mean that one will never lead or pastor a church during his whole life, but what is critical in this regard is to look at the circumstances and others issues objectively that led to the divorce situation. And more importantly, one should look at what the Bible says in the particular scenario.

Nevertheless, for the Kawama people there are also cultural and sociological issues to be considered as far as divorced pastors in ministry are concerned. Thus, whichever way you debate the issue of divorced Pastors in ministry, context means everything in as far as effective ministry is concerned. Boren (2011:201) says that context is everything. To overlook it will mean that you miss the very mystery into which God is calling you. Similarly, Smith (2012:141-142), highlights the importance of grounding our practical theology in a concrete situation as a way of avoiding pithy applications such as, "All Christians should base their life decision on the clear teachings of the scripture." We seek to understand a particular context clearly so that

we might act wisely. In addition, once we understand the concrete situation, we must propose and defend a particular theory of action. In this regard we should try to answer the question: What should we do and why is it the best course of action? (Smith2012:141-142). It does not matter whether some context would allow or not allow divorced Pastors to continue in ministry. The issue at hand for us is how do the people in the Kawama compound in the Ndola district of the Copperbelt province of Zambia view divorced Pastors in ministry? What are the Zambian cultural issues that surround a divorced Pastor in ministry? And more importantly, what does the Scripture teach regarding a divorced person in ministry? Thus, chapter three of this research will help us to think through biblically in as far as this issue of divorce and remarriage is concerned.

In addition, from the data collected, there are also theological issues that need attention, some of which have to do with the understanding of the whole issue of divorce and remarriage from the biblical view point. Furthermore, issues of leaders being above reproach are also relevant. As Trull and Carter (2004:71) observe, "Part of the challenge for ministers and their spouses is that their marriages are considered a model for church families. The failure of a minister's marriage is considered a tragedy, in many cases a fatal tragedy, as far as continuation in the ministry is concerned." Therefore, a point of discussion in this regard is: What does it mean for one to be above reproach as stated in 1Timothy 3:1-7 below:

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless(above reproach), the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ⁴ one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence ⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); ⁶ not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷ Moreover

he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.¹

Guthrie (2000:92) comments that the phrase above reproach means not only of a good report but deservedly so, suitably stands in this position as being indispensable to the Christian ministers' character. However, Grudem (1994:916-917) brings out important discussion points regarding 1Timothy 3:1-7 as it relates to leadership qualifications. Some of the points of discussion he highlights are as follows:

All the other qualification listed by Paul refer to a man's present status, not his entire past life. He goes on to say that for example, 1Timothy 3:1-7 does not mean one who has never been violent instead *one who is not violent now* or one who has never been above reproach but rather *one who is above reproach now*. Simply put, the qualification for elders (Pastors/Ministers) are based on a man's moral and spiritual character, and there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that a man who remarried after his wife died (or divorced) has lower moral or spiritual qualification.

Furthermore, Grudem (1994:917) categorically says that the verses in question say nothing about divorce and remarriage with respect to the qualification of any church office.

2.7 Conclusion

Having taken into consideration of all the views collected through our random interviews and face to face interviews with the pastors, the question remains: Should a divorced Pastor continue in ministry or not? Notably, three positions stand out from our random interviews as follows:

- i. Divorced pastors should continue in ministry if they did not cause the divorce.
- ii. Divorced pastors should **not** be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause.
- iii. Divorced pastors should be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Ti 3:1-7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

To assist the people in the Kawama compound concerning the issue of divorced pastors in ministry, one should consider how the world-wide church has dealt with this issue in the past. In addition, what does the bible say regarding the subject of divorce and remarriage? The aim of this study is to look at what scripture says about the issue in question both from the Old Testament and New Testament. Was the subject of divorce and remarriage an issue in scripture? How was it handled then? And finally, to put together all the teachings one finds from the past and Bible in a systematic way.

CHAPTER THREE

A biblical, historical and systematic perspective on divorce

3.0 Introduction: Proposed Situation

The main concern of this chapter is to examine the biblical examples and teachings that speak to the subject in question. My approach, will be to integrate a historical, biblical, and systematic study regarding the subject of divorce from a holistic perspective.

And finally, this chapter will derive the Christocentric and missional principles in relation to the subject matter.

1.1 A Historical Church Perspective on Divorce

This section of this study is concerned with the history of divorce and remarriage from a historical perspective. As observed in the previous chapter, the issue of divorce and remarriage has attracted different viewpoints from the people in the Kawama compound of Ndola district in the Copperbelt province of Zambia. To be specific, the serious concern of the people in the Kawama compound is: “Should a divorced Pastor continue in ministry or not?”

3.1.1 Literature Review:

The issue of divorce and remarriage is as old as the Bible. For example, a selection of scriptures will be highlighted regarding the issue of divorce:

Exodus 21:10-11

¹⁰ If he takes another *wife*, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights.

¹¹ And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall **go out free**, without *paying* money.²

Deuteronomy 22:13-18

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ex 21:10–11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹³ “If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, ¹⁴ and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she *was* not a virgin,’ ¹⁵ then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out *the evidence of* the young woman’s virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. ¹⁶ And the young woman’s father shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her. ¹⁷ Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, “I found your daughter *was* not a virgin,” and yet these *are the evidences of* my daughter’s virginity.’ And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. ¹⁸ Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; ¹⁹ and they shall fine him one hundred *shekels* of silver and give *them* to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot **divorce** her all his days.³

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of **divorce**, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, ² when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s *wife*, ³ if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of **divorce**, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, ⁴ *then* her former husband who **divorced** her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance.⁴

From the above scriptures, clearly divorce is not only today’s problem, but something that the church fathers also grappled with. Below is an overview of selected church fathers on the issue of divorce and remarriage.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Dt 22:13–19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Dt 24:1–4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

3.1.2 The Church Fathers

Justin Martyr (139 C.E)

Justin Martyr (Brewer 2002:241) is known as one of the greatest church fathers. He shared a similar view with that of Herma that, if one was found in a divorced situation, he was not supposed to remarry under whatsoever circumstance.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria addressed the issue of divorce and remarriage around 192 C.E. He held the same position as Hermas - that remarriage should be avoided at all costs to give room for reconciliation for a divorced couple. However, Clement did not state his position whether there was a possibility of remarriage, if the reconciliation did not take place (Brewer 2002:244).

Tertullian

Tertullian also had a strong position against remarriage except in the case of one found in an adulterous situation as taught by Jesus. However, he maintained a strong stance against remarriage even if one had lost his spouse. It is said that when he wrote on monogamy by 211-215, he believed that remarriage even after the death of a partner was sinful (Brewer 2002:245).

Origen (185-254)

Origen believed that a divorced person should not be allowed to remarry no matter what caused the divorce. If anything, remarriage was only considered after the death of a spouse. Nevertheless, he did not force his position on others; instead he allowed people to come to their own conclusion (Brewer 2002:246).

Ambrosiater

Ambrosiater is said to be the first Church Father to argue a case for remarriage. He argued that according to Paul's teaching based on 1 Corinthians 7, it allows the deserted believer to remarry. Additionally, in the book of Ezra 9-10 the Israelites were

told to separate from foreign wives who somehow implied that they could remarry. In short Ambrosiater advocated for remarriage if a marriage was dissolved for whatever reason, but especially for adultery (Brewer 2002:250).

Augustine

Augustine is said to have established a theological basis for teaching that adultery is the only ground for divorce and it did not allow remarriage. He maintained that the marriage bond between husband and wife could only be broken by death. However, after many years of reflection Augustine is said to have changed his position on remarriage (Duty1967:116).

The above overview gives us insights into the issue of divorce and remarriage as grappled with by the church Fathers who equally expressed different views. Next, we will examine the views of the Reformers.

3.1.3 The Reformers

The reformers took a slightly different approach to the issue of divorce and remarriage among Christians. They advocated that a person was free to remarry even if his spouse was still physically alive. They were not as rigid as the church fathers who insisted that a person could not remarry and more also that only death was the legitimate reason for dissolution of a marriage covenant. Besides that, they also rejected the idea of elevation of marriage as a sacrament by the catholic priests (Atkinson 1979:50). Below are views of selected reformers:

Erasmus

He is said to be one of the first reformers who strongly opposed the idea by the church fathers that when you are divorced you were not supposed to remarry. He said that the scriptures on divorce particularly Matthew 5:32 should not be interpreted legalistically. Simply put, he said that there was room for divorce and remarriage for any Christian on grounds of adultery and desertion. He contended that both Jesus and Paul allowed divorce and remarriage on two grounds of adultery and desertion (Brewer 2002:259).

Luther

Luther, the great protestant reformer, also contended that divorce and remarriage was permissible on grounds of adultery and desertion by a spouse. “In order to be faithful to the Fathers, who said only death could truly end a marriage; Luther argued that the adulterer or unbeliever was spiritually dead” (Brewer 2002:260).

Zwingli

Zwingli argued that besides the two grounds adultery and desertion as grounds for divorce and remarriage, there are other grounds such as mental incompatibility and by mutual consent (Brewer 2002:262) . Simply put, besides what can be found in the pages of scriptures there are other contemporary issues that would necessitate divorce and remarriage.

3.1.4 The contemporary scholars

Modern scholars such as: Brewer (2002), Currid (2006), Sproul (2013), House (1990), Laney (1992), Keener (1993) Heth and Wenham (1984), Ellisen (1977), have also argued at length on the issue of divorce and remarriage within Christian circles. Clearly, we may conclude that not all scholars agree on this issue of divorce and remarriage. They each hold different perspectives on the issue depending on biblical interpretation and cultural mores’.

Generally, there are four biblical views that are held by scholars: (1) J. Carl Laney advocates that, marriage is intended to be permanent and there is no room for divorce and remarriage. (2) William Heth argues that while there are legitimate biblical grounds for divorce, there are no legitimate grounds for remarriage after divorce. (3) However, Thomas Edgar contends that scripture allows divorce and remarriage in cases of adultery or desertion. (4) Larry Richards asserts that, while scripture is against divorce and the pain it causes, a God of grace will not condemn those who divorce and remarry (House 1990:17-21, 73,188, 219). In other words, Richards asserts that there is room for both divorce and remarriage if the concerned couple fail to leave each other in harmony.

3.2 A biblical perspective

Having looked at this issue of divorce and remarriage from a historical perspective, this research will now turn to the biblical perspective. What should divorce, and remarriage look like from a biblical perspective? This study will bring to the forefront an exegetical undertaking on Matthew 19:1-12 as it is one of the prominent New Testament passages regarding divorce and remarriage.

3.2.1 The question

The Pharisees asked Jesus the following question on the issue of divorce: *'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?'* The motivation for this question was to test Jesus on how he would respond to them in view of what Moses had said in Deuteronomy 24: 1-4. The same story is recorded in Mark 10:1-12 and Luke 16:18. Guthrie (1981:949-950) asserts that, "In both Mark and Luke there is prohibition of divorce, whereas in Matthew passages an exceptive clause is introduced (except for unchastity)."

However, Mark tells us that it was in the context of teaching that some Pharisees came to test him with the question on divorce. Adeyemo (2006:1148) asserts that, "The background to this question was the debate that raged between two schools of theological thought, both of which took Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as their starting point." Cole's (1999:226-227) comment on this passage helps readers to understand the motivation for this question: "What was in the mind of the Pharisees, in asking this question about divorce? Their answer to Jesus in verse 4 shows that they were already well conversant with the law in this regard. From the wording of verse 2, to test him, it was obviously only a trick question designed not to obtain guidance, but to make Jesus compromise himself. If they could trap Him into some rash pronouncement, then He could be accused of having contradicted either the Law of Moses or its interpretative tradition." Notably, the question was posed to him when he was within the region of Judea. How significant was Judea in relation to the question on divorce?

The question of the Pharisees was hostile in the sense that it was for unlawful divorce and remarriage that John the Baptist denounced Herod Antipas and Herodias which in turn cost him imprisonment and subsequent death.

Since Jesus was within the same place some Pharisees may have hoped that Jesus' reply to their question on divorce would cause the tetrarch to seize him as he had John (Mark 6:14-28). Notably, the Jewish community in this region was experiencing an impact of the divorce and remarriage of Herodias who had just divorced her husband Philip and then remarried to his brother who happens to be King Herod Antipas.

The Pharisees were determined to embroil in the dispute about divorce current in their day - thinking that whatever he said he must alienate some hearers, or perhaps even give grounds to accuse him of contradicting the law (Powers 1987:171).

France (1985:280) asserts that, knowing Jesus' views, they could expect him both to incriminate himself by apparently making light of the law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and lose popular support by condemning the divorce which was freely practised by his contemporaries. As already alluded to, one of the contemporaries was Herod Antipas whose divorce situation and remarriage had drawn fire on John the Baptist and subsequent death.

This was not a simple question at all. "The question in Matthew's version is about the permissible grounds of divorce (will any cause do, or are there limits?). But the underlying issue here is the whole question as to whether divorce is permissible at all on any other ground (which is how the question reads in Mark)? It is at this level that Jesus answers their question. How does Jesus answer this question which is well calculated by the Pharisees? Will he be trapped by their hidden motive? It should be noted that there were two schools of thought prevalent among the Pharisees regarding the issue of divorce. The schools of thought that existed were **Shammai** and **Hillel**. The school of Shammai argued that a divorce may be given only for an unseemly act, whereas the school of Hillel said that divorce may be allowed on any other ground". The point to note though, in this culture, is that only the man or rather the husband had the right to give the document of separation and not the wife (Currid 2006:389).

3.2.2 The response

Jesus response to the question does not immediately focus on Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which attracted different interpretation and conclusions from different schools of thought. For instance, Hillel took a flexible view of the shameful or indecent matter

mentioned in Deuteronomy 24:1 and permitted divorce for any reason, whereas Shammai interpreted the same passage strictly as a reference to sexual impropriety.

However, Jesus' reply takes them to Genesis 1:27; 2:24, stressing God's original purpose for marriage. Turner (2008:461) argues that, "The gist of his teaching is that the original divine plan for monogamy is normative, not subsequent concession to human sinfulness (Deut 24:1). The "one flesh" relationship in marriage (Gen 2:24) makes divorce wrong unless there has been illicit sexual union outside marriage. When God has united two people, humans may not split them apart. When two people are married, their identity as their parents' children is altered and their new identity as husband and wife is permanent unless ruined by human sinfulness."

Furthermore, Jesus reply to them is to show them that they have not read the creation account correctly. In citing Genesis 1:27; 2:24; Jesus wanted to highlight God's original intention for marriage, that is, permanence. Similarly, Turner (2008:459) further argues that here Jesus was not bringing in something new, but rather something that was there from the beginning and prophets like Malachi also made mention that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

Furthermore, Jesus makes a comment regarding Deuteronomy 24:1-4 when the Pharisees presented a further question as to why Moses allowed husbands to write a certificate of divorce when they found '**something indecent**' in their wives (Matthew 19:7). Murray (1961:31) asserts that, "The situation that provided occasion for permission was one of moral perversity and obliquity; it arose from insubordination to and rebellion against the will of God."

However, scholars have argued as to what exactly is meant by this phrase, '**something indecent.**' Currid (2006:389) says that, those two words in the Hebrew literally mean, '**a thing of nakedness**' but what they refer to is uncertain. It is this vagueness in meaning that led to a significant rabbinic debate between the schools of Shammai and Hillel.

The school of Shammai argued that a divorce may be given only for an unseemly act, whereas the school of Hillel said that divorce may be allowed on any other ground. Suffice to say that marriage was meant to be a lifelong covenant relationship between husband and wife until death separates them. However, verse 8 points out the reason

why Moses permitted divorce among the Jewish people. *‘Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not like this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality and marries another woman commits adultery.’* Again, the question is: What does the Lord Jesus mean by marital unfaithfulness? To put it differently, what is marital unfaithfulness? Before this paper answers that question, let us first look at what is called “**the exceptional clause**”.

3.2.3 The exceptional clause (Matthew 19:9)

Jesus response to the question raised by the Pharisees as to why then did Moses allow them to give a certificate of divorce to a wife found wanting, has raised a lot of debate. The debate is based on what Jesus meant when He said divorce is only permitted on the bases of **sexual immorality** or as other versions of scripture calls it, ‘**unchastity**’ (Matthew 5:32; 19:9):

⁹“And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries commits adultery.”⁵

One school of thought believes this phrase should not be attributed to Jesus as that would imply that Jesus was contradicting God’s original intentions on marriage which is: the permanence of marriage. Additionally, this school of thought questions why this phrase is not found in other parallel passages like Mark 10. To counter this school of thought, Powers (1987:172) points out that this phrase is found in all the ancient Greek manuscripts of the gospel of Matthew, and there is no reason to doubt that this passage was written by Matthew.

The other school of thought feels that Jesus allows divorce in a situation where there is adultery (except for unchastity). This word, ‘unchastity’ in Greek is **porneia** which does not mean adultery. Instead, it implies any sexual misbehaviour in general. It can mean adultery since it is a synonym for adultery in the Greek, but it can also mean other sexual sins. Notably, the Greek word for adultery is ‘**moicheia**’. However, the

⁵*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Mt 19:9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Greek word **porneia** has the same meaning as the Hebrew words, **ervath dabhar**, used in Deuteronomy 24:1(Powers 1987:173).

However, it should be noted that the phrase **sexual immorality** encompasses several other inappropriate sexual relationships other than just sexual intercourse. In this regard, Powers (1987:175) makes another interesting observation regarding the phrase in question. He says that the word “**except**” in the exception clause (19:9) is a mistranslation for there is no word “except” in the Greek text of this verse. He further says that, the word which is found here is the Greek word “**me**” the ordinary word for “not”. This word “me” in Greek or “not” in English. It is found in New Testament more than a thousand times and at no time is it translated “except”.

In addition to this debate on “**the exception clause**”, Richards (House 1990:229) argues that, to understand adultery as the exception does not fit with the testimony of the rest of scripture. On the one hand, the law’s penalty for adultery is death by stoning, not divorce (Lev20:10). On the other hand, the way to treat a wayward spouse, as illustrated by God’s treatment of adulterous Israel and Hosea’s treatment of his adulterous wife, Gomer, is to seek reconciliation and renewal (Hosea 1, 11). According to Richards, adultery may be grounds for forgiveness, but it is not grounds for divorce! Nonetheless, adultery can also cause divorce if the couple concerned fail to forgive each other in a marriage relationship.

Therefore, Jesus’s immediate response in Matthew 19:4-6 would communicate to every Bible-believing Christian that divorce should never be entertained or allowed to happen. In these verses 4-6, Jesus underlines the original intentional of marriage as that of a life time as such divorce does not come into this equation. However, in verses 8 and 9 Jesus brings out the exceptional clause for divorce in a marriage context. According to this passage, divorce could only occur if there is marital unfaithfulness in a marriage relationship. Marital unfaithfulness does not only imply sexual intercourse outside a marriage setting but any other sexual misbehaviour in general that might be injurious to a marriage. Therefore, from a biblical standpoint, this situation calls for legitimate divorce to occur between the married couple.

Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 7:12 -15 the apostle Paul points out another legitimate ground for divorce: desertion. These verses bring to the fore the question about which the Lord Jesus did not speak directly while here on earth. Adams (1983) elaborates:

By the Spirit's inspiration the Lord's word on that new matter is now about to be written by the apostle himself. That word deals with the additional question of the marriage of a believer to an unbeliever. The believer is to continue the marriage if the unbeliever so desire. However, because the partner has now become a Christian, the unbeliever may no longer wish to continue living with him, in such cases the believer is to let him or her go. Whenever this happens, Paul says, the believer is no longer in bondage (60).

In this respect, Paul spells out that if the non-believing spouse decides to walk out of marriage or to divorce the believing spouse, it is fine and the believing spouse in this case is free and not bound at all. The Old Testament also spells out grounds for divorce in Exodus 21:10-11, such as, material neglect, unfaithfulness, emotional neglect and infertility in a marriage setting.

Consequently, if there are legitimate grounds for divorce as outlined above, it simply means that there are legitimate grounds for remarriage. To put it differently, a legitimate divorce would call for a legitimate remarriage. In this regard, it can be safely and biblically said that not all divorce is illegal and not all remarriage is illegal. If a Christian marriage couple fails to agree or reconcile based on the issues stipulated above, they are free to legally divorce and at same time free to legally remarry. To this end, Richards (House 1990:223) states that Jesus' statement in Matthew 19 and the very existence in the law of provision for divorce, should make us hesitate.

'If God treated human frailty so graciously in the age of the law and permitted not only divorce but also subsequent remarriage, how can we, in this age of grace, treat divorce and remarriage so legalistically?' According to Richards, this is not to say that we should not strive for the permanence of a marriage relationship or rather the ideal as God intended it in Genesis 2:24 with God's help, but just to acknowledge that in this fallen world there will be failed marriages and as Christians we should treat such cases from a solid biblical view point, especially on how Jesus dealt with people who found themselves in situations that may be referred to as not '**ideal**' as it were.

However, divorce and remarrying another person should be the last thing that happens to a Christian couple. No one should divorce with a view to marrying another person. Instead, if such a thing were to happen it should be as result of imperfection/brokenness of the world into which we live. Henceforth, couples found in a divorce situation should be treated with grace, should they seek to marry another person, knowing that there a God of a second chance, who will graciously welcome them in their brokenness. It is in the same spirit that even the views of those who may have a different opinion or different theological perspective regarding divorce and remarriage (such as, against marriage to another person) should be respected.

3.3 A Systematic Perspective

Building from both the historical and biblical perspective, this section of the study will focus on the systematic perspective of divorce and remarriage. It is clear from both the Old Testament and the New Testament that the issues of divorce and remarriage were wrestled with in the ancient world. Notably, the Old Testament seems to allow for divorce and remarriage on grounds other than adultery and desertion by a spouse (Exodus 21:10-11; Deuteronomy 22:13-18; 24:1-4). It is important to note that the Old Testament does not teach divorce and remarriage, but it does acknowledge the practice and somehow gives a legal framework within the Jewish community.

3.3.1 Apostle Paul's teaching on divorce

The apostle Paul does a more extensive teaching on marriage than any other apostle in the New Testament. Paul also emphasizes the permanency of marriage in verse 10 of 1 Corinthians 7: *A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And the husband must not divorce his wife.* This is done in line with the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 19 as he referred to the Pharisees of his day and to the original intention of God as to the permanence of marriage (Genesis 2:24). However, in 1 Corinthians 7:15 Paul points out that in case the unbeliever wants a divorce, the believer should let him or her have it. That means that the believer is free to remarry, and it should not create a conflict by trying to force the unbeliever to stay, especially in view of him or her becoming a Christian (Nelson 1996:27).

According to Paul's teaching, the dissolution of marriage can also happen when one partner decides to leave the other partner. It should be emphasized that the issue here involves a scenario of one partner in marriage who gets converted to Christianity while the other partner is still a non-believer. Similarly, Morris (2000:107-108) comments that, "God has called us to live a life of peace probably refers to the whole of the treatment of mixed marriages, not simply to the last clause. Paul's point is that the believer is called by God into a life where peace in the widest sense is his concern. In this matter of mixed marriages, the line should be followed that concludes to peace. In some cases, this will mean living with the pagan partner, in some case it will mean accepting the pagan partner's decision that marriage is at the end. The underlying concern for peace is the same in both cases."

However, this verse does not by any means encourage Christians to marry a non-believer, as that would mean that the apostle is contradicting himself. For we know that in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 he teaches against being unequally yoked with a non-believer:

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols?⁶

However, the situation here (1 Corinthians 7) is different in the sense that the couple got married before either one of them became a Christian. Even then, the apostle Paul does not say it is mandatory for the Christian partner to depart from the marriage. However, if the unbelieving partner departs, the Christian is free to walk out of that marriage.

⁶The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. 2001 (2 Co 6:14–16). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Additionally, there are other circumstances for grounds for divorce, which may not be found directly in the Bible. For instance, in today's world there are contemporary issues that have been raised regarding divorce.

Some of which are: lack of compatibility, violence in a marriage life, pornography and abusive partners. Regarding violence and abuse in a marriage life, Brewer (2003:93) cites a story of a young lady whose life was always under threat by her abusive and violent husband: "one afternoon, he came to her with a shotgun while she was visiting her sister. After chasing her out into a field, he pinned her down, put the shotgun to her head and pulled the trigger, but the gun jammed."

What advice would you give to this young lady in such a circumstance? To stay in that marriage or to leave? This may sound extreme, but the truth of the matter is that there are several women who feel abused emotionally by their husbands. For example, the story is told regarding one of the divorced pastors (chapter 2) whose wife left, because he did not pay attention to her emotional needs.

These stories underline the fact that in today's world we are not just dealing with issues of divorce which are black and white as written in the Holy Scriptures, but there is a complexity of issues and reasons for divorce. Unfortunately, the church is not immune to issues surrounding divorce. The pastoral ministry is no exception to such situations prevailing in our global society today.

However, Richards (1990:216-217) cautions that, "here are two dangers to guard against if we are to come to a correct conclusion on the sensitive and vital issue of divorce and remarriage."

The first issue that Richards raises is that we should avoid being swayed by sympathy to hurting people to the point that we ignore what scriptures teach. The point he makes is that we should not be carried away emotionally to one extreme by a person who is going through marital problems to the point that we become blind to what the scripture says regarding the subject of divorce and remarriage. On the other hand, he points out that we should not go the other extreme that we misunderstand the scriptures or quote them out of context such that a person who is found in a troubled marriage feels that divorce is unforgivable sin.

He further contends that we should guard against using proof texts or developing a legalistic approach that turns biblical principles into inflexible rules. In addition, we must guard against drawing conclusions from scripture without regard to the whole counsel of God and without consideration of various interpretations of relevant Bible passages. Importantly, we must put aside our preconceptions. To this end, it should be emphasized that somewhere in the middle of these two extremes, truth can be found as taught by scripture regarding divorce and remarriage.

It is always wise to look at the subject of divorce from the perspective of what Jesus taught and modelled, and from what he revealed concerning the nature, character, values, principle and priorities of the Godhead. In other words, Jesus should be considered as the Revealer of what the Bible says, instead of the Bible being seen as the revelation of Jesus Christ (Peppler 2012:168).

Therefore, when it comes to a study of divorce and remarriage, attention should be given to what Jesus taught and demonstrated regarding this subject matter. For example, when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees whether it was lawful to divorce on any other ground or not, how did Jesus respond?

As noted already, the Pharisees were not trying to ask whether divorce was permissible or not; instead they wanted to find out on what grounds it should be done. As noted, Jesus points out the original intention of marriage is permanency. At the same time, he does not rule out the issue of divorce and remarriage in the case of marital unfaithfulness in a marriage setting.

With that in mind, we should not forget the redemptive aspect when it comes to the mission of Jesus Christ here on earth. Jesus puts it this way:

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17).

¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

The above scriptures indicate clearly to us the mission of Jesus here on earth is to seek and save that which is lost. This includes those who are in divorced situations. The best illustration regarding the mission of Jesus is found in John chapter eight on how he deals with the case involving a woman caught in adultery:

8⁵³ They went each to his own house, ¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. ³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst ⁴ they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" ⁶ This they said to test him that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷ And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."⁸ And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

Two issues stand grab our attention in this passage: First, Jesus does not condemn this woman, even though she was found sinning. Second, Jesus does not condone sin in this situation, as he told the woman not to sin any more.

What the church needs today regarding divorced pastors is to hold these two poles (not condemning and not condoning sin) in tension. The point that I want to underline here is that people found in the situation of divorce and remarriage should be treated with mercy and not condemned or judged, as though they cannot have fellowship in church again or have committed unpardonable sin. We should ask ourselves what Jesus would do given this scenario.

3.3.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the biblical, historical and systematic perspective pertaining to divorce and remarriage. It emphasized that there are biblical parameters for divorce such as: sexual immorality, abandonment, violence, addiction to pornography abuse and other contemporary issues that many necessitate divorce. In view of the above arguments, we need to come of up with concrete suggestions that would act as a guide on how to handle this sensitive issue.

Thus, the purpose of chapter four will be to examine strategies and ways to respond in our current situation. The research will demonstrate to the church leaders in the Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia, ways to think biblically in relation to divorced pastors in ministry. And finally, to treat each case on its merit taking into consideration the circumstances and the context in which such incidences happen.

CHAPTER FOUR

A biblical and practical response to divorced pastors in ministry in the Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia

4.0 Introduction: Proposed Strategy/ Action Plan

The aim of this chapter is to outline some suggestions and strategies to mitigate the rampant occurrences of divorce, with special reference to the issue of divorced pastors in ministry in the Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia.

Recommendations will be offered on ways to deal with attitudes and perceptions which are portrayed by people within and outside the church regarding the victims of divorce and remarriage. This chapter will discuss the following sub-topic or titles:

- Holistic Premarital teaching ministry
- Married couples' ministry
- Accountability (for Pastors) ministry
- Pastoral care ministry
- Rehabilitation and restoration ministry

4.1 Holistic Premarital teaching ministry of the church

One of the ways in which the church can reduce the rampant occurrences of divorce among pastors and church members is to strengthen the teaching ministry of the church. Just as the church finds it of great importance to teach its congregants on many other biblical doctrines and related issues, it should also attach great importance on the issue of premarital counselling. As Augsburger (1986:210) asserts:

Marriage is an institution created for humanity, not the reverse. Marriage is a servant of justices, fidelity, and love, not a tyrannical system that absolutizes finite covenants between fallible humans. Christian marriage proclaims values, serves human need and unites in fellowship: Thus, it participates in Kerygma, diakonia and koinonia of the church.'

Furthermore, Arnold (1982:199) asserts that:

... in premarital counselling, questions and information about warning signals help them to become aware of things to watch for in their relationship. A careful pastor may discover that some of the signals are already present and may initiate several conversations before even consenting to perform the wedding.

As reflected on a random survey (Appendix1) one divorced pastor cited that he was not adequately prepared for marriage and more importantly the expectation of pressure that comes with pastoral ministry. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to promote godly and strong marriages through the process of premarital counselling to those who would be married in the church.

Adams (1986:72) also stresses the importance of teaching biblical principles that are critical to both immediate and lasting change to would-be married couples, when he says that:

Unless the counselee is taught not only how to get of trouble, but also how to stay out of trouble in the future, he (1) will be ripe for future failure and (2) will develop a tendency to depend upon the counsellor rather than upon God's truth and the Holy Spirit.

In addition, for those who are already married, the church should create avenues to give encouragement to the married couples by godly examples of marriage, particularly to those who are in the positions of leadership and authority. In this regard, the church should additionally, assist those who face severe difficulties within the bounds of marriage by providing competent and compassionate counsellors for those seeking divorce.

Therefore, holistic teaching on divorce and remarriage during premarital and post marital counselling is vital. Brewer (2003:170-171) states: "Marriage counselling is often hampered by the lack of coherent biblical approach to divorce and remarriage".

However, if Christian premarital counselling can be done holistically then the issue of divorce can be adequately addressed. Consequently, in as much as God's ideal for marriage is permanence, there can, therefore, be room for divorce if one member of the married couple intentionally decides not to hold to their marriage vows. During premarital or post-marital counselling, the marriage counsellor should not be afraid to talk about negative consequences in marriage, should there be perpetual unfaithfulness, abusive life style or any other issue that can negatively affect the Christian marriage. One of the negative consequences may include; dissolution of marriage, if one does not seem to change for better. In this regard, Brewer (2003:170) asserts that:

This sort of teaching during a premarital or post marital counselling session empowers a Christian counsellor to say with confidence that believers do have grounds for divorce in cases of adultery, abuse or neglect but that Jesus however, asks us to forgive partners who repent after breaking their vows.

As a result, this kind of teaching gives people who are suffering within marriage both encouragement to persevere and a safe net when they cannot cope with it.

Collins (1980:189) asserts that, as much as divorce is allowed biblically under such circumstances, forgiveness and reconciliation should be preferred. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that no one can expect divorce to bring happiness, although sometimes divorce could be necessary to end the sinfulness of the repeated and unrepentant breaking of marriage vows (Brewer 2003:171). Therefore, church leaders and Christian counsellors should endeavour to reconcile the erring couples. Thus, divorce should never be the required response to sexual immorality, desertion or rampant abusive marriage life style; rather, repentance, forgiveness and restoration should be encouraged. Since one's own view of a situation is subjective and often distorted, objective, compassionate and wise counsel should rather be sought to determine the legitimacy of divorce in every case. In this regard, any party involved in a divorce or separation should be encouraged to seek the advice of the ministers or the elders of the church.

4.2 Married Couples Ministry

The local church should work on strengthening the couple's ministry in the church. Every married couple should appreciate the realities of married life, as described in the Holy Scriptures. Marriage is a wonderful institution sanctioned by God, but it is not without its spiritual, emotional, physical or social distractions or problems. Married couples in the church should commit to encouraging each other in terms of spiritual growth, even if it may mean being willing to sacrifice their own needs, desires, or expectations for the sake of their partner. They should help each other to put God first in their lives as individuals. They should also find time to encourage each other in their marriage.

In this regard, the purpose of this ministry in the local church is to create a forum where couples can encourage each other and share marriage challenges that they face daily. Listening to other people's experiences in a marriage setting, will help struggling couples to appreciate that they are not the only couple facing difficulties in their marriage. This in turn creates a safe net where those facing challenges can share freely and seek counsel from other married couples on how they can overcome their marital problems. Sometimes people end in divorce simply because they do not have other mature couples to share their marital problems with.

Therefore, strengthening married-couples' ministry in a church will help in mitigating divorce in the church and the community at large. In addition, couples' ministry will create a platform for prayer ministry for families in the church resulting in having strong marriages in the church. The apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-5 notes the qualifications of Church leaders, which includes the importance of one who rules his household well:

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)

4.3 Accountability (for Pastors) ministry

Whenever divorce occurs, many people are surprised as to why such a thing happened when no one anticipated that such a thing would ever happen to the couple in question. One of the reasons why people get surprised or shocked is because we live in a community that conceals things, especially when it comes to issues surrounding marriage. It becomes even worse for those who are in pastoral ministry because they find themselves in a position where they are considered as men and women who do not face marital challenges. Furthermore, most Pastors find it difficult to share their marital challenges with church members for fear that they may be perceived to be less holy. It is important therefore, for the local church to develop a ministerial code of conduct that would somehow compel pastors to create accountability groups. Indeed, some pastors find it difficult to be accountable to their people on the pretext that they are accountable only to God.

Consequently, Trull and Carter (2004:195) maintain, “the overarching purpose of a ministerial code of ethics is accountability. Ministers sometimes resist codes and regulations because they want to be answerable to no one except God.” However, it should be noted that God’s will is that we are not only accountable to him but also to our fellowmen. The church should be intentional in creating an environment of accountability, especially among pastors. These accountability groups should be safe enough for whoever has marital problems to feel free to share, without feeling that he or she would be seen to be less spiritual.

Furthermore, these accountability groups should be used as counselling conduits for those in need of marital counselling. London and Wiseman (1993:70-71) point out that, “Ministry may be hazardous to your marriage especially if work and home ministry is not balanced” (1993:70-71). If anything, most marital problems that pastors have today come as result of failing to balance the demands of ministry work and that of home. In many cases, pastors tend to spend more time sorting out ministry problems than being with their spouses. It is important, therefore, for a local church to ensure that pastors are given enough time to be with their families by giving them sabbatical leave.

However, during sabbaticals pastors should never be loaded with other church responsibilities. They need the time to help them get connected with their spouses in a more intimate manner. And more importantly, by the time they resume work they will be more focused and energised to do the work of God.

4.4 Pastoral care ministry

Pastoral care ministry is about leaving the 99 sheep and going to look for the one sheep that has gone missing. It is an attitude of saying that, if one of us is found in sin or fails, it should be the concern of the body of Christ or the local church to find ways and means of restoring such a one into fellowship. And those who are found in situations of divorce and remarriage are equally no exceptions to the means of grace found in the church of Jesus Christ. However, Nathan (*2014 positional paper on LGBT*) points out, "Pastoral theology is not just a method; it is also a *tone*. When dealing with real human beings; with all their complexities and ambiguities, pastoral theology speaks with a tone of humility and much less than 100% certainty concerning all things."

Often, it is not what the pastors or leaders say that is so off-putting. It is their tone which is sometimes haughty, absolutist and severe. A humble tone, which acknowledges ambiguity, as well as the reality of profoundly difficult pastoral situations, and looks to the Holy Spirit for wisdom and direction, should be the premises on which we interact with those found in situations of divorce and remarriage. In other words, Pastoral theology is theology applied to people, not just issues.

Consequently, when dealing with the issue of divorce and remarriage one needs to be sensitive knowing that we are dealing with real people who have feelings, and with whom we often mingle. However, Arnold (1982:9) stresses that, "Good pastoral care must be grounded in good theology. Theology without concrete expression is dead. Pastoral care carried out as mere technique without substantive "reasons" is shallow and subject to aimless wandering among news fads and approaches."

In addition, the other issue that needs to be dealt with is judgemental attitudes (Matthew 7:1-2) from within and outside the church regarding victims of divorce and remarriage.

The church should avoid the self-righteous approach - like that of the Pharisees- towards the victims of divorce and remarriage as illustrated in the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector by Jesus:

⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted ⁷(Luke 18:9-14).

Therefore, pastoral care ministry calls for an extended hand of mercy and compassion to those who have found themselves in divorce situations, assuring them that there is no sin that is beyond redemption and furthermore, irrespective of their situation, since God is a God of the second chance and they can graciously find an opportunity to serve again in the local church or any other para- church organisation.

In addition, being found in a divorce situation is not the end of one’s life and ministry. The church should therefore create a ministry of rehabilitation and healing for both the victims of divorce and the church community. The church is supposed to be compassionate, non-judgmental, accepting those who have been divorced. In this regard, the church should desire to minister to and welcome those who have gone through the trauma of divorce and remarriage. The doors of the church should be wide open to the divorced people.

⁷The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2001). (Lk 18:9–14). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Those who are divorced should realise that they are not second-class Christians just because of a failed marriage. Adams (1980:24) states that:

... it is important, therefore, to develop a balanced, biblical attitude toward divorce on the one hand, hating all those things that God hates about divorce, while recognising that in this sinful world there those situations in which God (as God Himself demonstrated) it may be necessary to obtain a divorce.

Therefore, the church should remember that we are all sinners and fall time and again into various sins. But more important is the fact that, if someone has done wrong in the past it is important to ask for forgiveness, that is, repent of our sins and forsake them, and go on with life and try to accomplish something for God before His Return. In the same vein, anyone found in a divorce situation should do the same and move on with life. Thus, the church should realise the redemptive ministry of Jesus as Luke puts it:

²⁹ Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. ³⁰ And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."⁸ (Luke 5:29-32; Matthew 9:10-13) ... ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."⁹ (Luke 19:10).

In view of the above scriptures, it should be noted that the redemptive ministry of Jesus is anchored on the transforming power of Jesus Christ and the cross. Notably, the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ upholds the biblical standard of lifelong marriage and at the same time recognizes that divorce is the result of sin on the part of one or both partners. In this regard, divorce should never be put in a special category of sin.

⁸The New King James Version (1982). (Lk 5:29–32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹The New King James Version (1982). (Lk 19:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Sin is sin and, if any other sins can be forgiven, then divorce too should be forgiven. The victim of divorce and remarriage should be given an opportunity to serve God like any other person in the body of Christ.

Therefore, we should remind ourselves that Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. Consequently, if a murderer, a thief, a prostitute, sorcerer, a drug addict can be forgiven and have their sins washed away by the blood of Jesus, then in the same manner the divorced person can be forgiven too and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, any other sinner who comes to repentance should be given a hand of fellowship and ministry by the local church and community at large. In the same vein, victims of divorce and remarriage should be treated in the same manner. In this regard, Richards (1990:245) says:

When a decision to remarry is made, it is time for us to stand with our brother or sister. We need to make our church available for the wedding and encourage the local body of Christ to celebrate with the couple. We need to affirm once more God's amazing readiness to forgive us when we fall and then enable us to stand.

4.5 Rehabilitation and restoration ministry

As we think of the ministry of rehabilitation, we should bear in mind that whenever a divorce occurs, it does not only affect the couple involved, but many other people grouping, such as, the immediate family, the church, the community, just to mention a few. As such, when one thinks of getting back in any form of ministry in a local church, there is need to make allowances for all those affected in one or other way to be healed from pain caused by divorce.

This should not be viewed in anyway by the victims of divorce as punishment by the church or that the church just trying to deny them the opportunity to get back into fellowship and do the things they used to do. To this end, victims of divorce and remarriage should be helped to embrace what the writer of Hebrews says:

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it¹⁰ (Hebrew 12:5-11).

Church discipline is a process aimed at restoring people not only to God but also to fellow believers and other people concerned in the community. The MacMillan English Dictionary defines the word discipline as a practice of making people obey rules of behaviour and punishing them if they do not (2002:417). No wonder, each time we hear the word, 'church discipline', most of us think of it in a very negative context. Dever observes that, "Whenever we hear the term church discipline, we tend to think only of the negative aspects of discipline, such as correction." He further notes that most of us may even become defensive to such an extent that we would even say that Jesus cautioned us about judging one another (2004:169).

However, Grudem points out that when the church exercises discipline, it is acting in love to bring back a brother or sister who has gone astray, re-establishing that person in a right fellowship and rescuing him or her from destructive patterns of life (1994:894). In other words, church discipline is about correcting a brother or sister in whatever way they may have gone wrong, so that they may be brought back in the right direction. Therefore, "Discipline in the church is not like a policeman arresting a culprit; rather, it is like a father chastening his son. The first motive is to help the sinner, to show Christian love in seeking to bring him to repentance" (Wiersbe 1992:431).

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Heb 12:5–11). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Therefore, victims of divorce and remarriage should realise that when they got divorced, other people got injured, disappointed or simply got affected negatively in one way or another. Hence, they should be given enough time to heal and change their perceptions regarding the victims of divorce and remarriage. Thereafter, any pastor or minister who has undergone through divorce should be allowed to continue in ministry after he or she has undergone rehabilitation, dealt with all the issues that led to divorced. When the local church has been healed from the pain of divorce, including the community at large, then he or she should be allowed to continue to do ministry, if he or she is willing to continue.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided several proposed strategies to mitigate divorce among pastors in Zambia. Recommendations were given to assist divorced pastors in returning to pastoral ministry. The strategies included: Developing a holistic premarital teaching ministry; Developing a church ministry to assist married couples in strengthening their marriages from a biblical perspective. It also included a proposal for providing accountability for pastors in ministry. The churches in the Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia require a pastoral care ministry where ministry leaders may find encouragement before stress or marital distress escalate. Lastly, these churches should develop a rehabilitation and restoration ministry for divorced pastors to be able to return to pastoral ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Review of Objectives

The main objective of this thesis is to offer a biblical and practical response to the problem of divorced pastors in ministry in Kawama compound of Ndola in Zambia, which has raised serious concerns by lay people in the churches affected and the general populous. To achieve the stated objective, this research focused on examining how the Zambian churches, especially those affected in Kawama compound of Ndola should respond to divorced pastors in ministry. Thus, the thesis endeavoured firstly, to examine the concrete situation in which the church must act (the prevailing situation in Kawama compound); Secondly, what should be the practices in this given context? Thirdly, the research identified biblical and historical support for divorced pastors to continue in ministry. In addition, cultural and social concerns for people in Kawama compound of Ndola, were discussed. And fourthly, the research looked at what means, proposals, and strategies should be used or practised.

The research carefully examined four case studies involving divorced Pastors in ministry in Kawama compound of Ndola. First, an empirical study was undertaken by interviewing the pastors in question to understand their story of divorce. Both oral questions and written questionnaires were used. Secondly, interviews were also conducted with church members and the community at large to determine their concerns and viewpoints on divorced pastors. What challenges are the churches facing in Ndola in relation to divorced pastors in ministry? What are the effects upon the churches of a divorced pastor in ministry?

Chapter three of this thesis explored the historical and biblical guidelines for a pastor/minister and church members in the situation of divorce and remarriage. The purpose of this chapter was to find the best praxis that could be employed in the churches in the Kawama compound of Ndola.

5.1 The main Problem

The main problem in this research was to evaluate the response of the affected churches and community at large in Kawama compound of Ndola regarding divorced pastors in ministry - whether or not their responses aligned with biblical teaching. Consequently, chapter two focused on interviewing the pastors concerned, church members and the community at large. The first step in this research was to provide background information regarding the pastors in question on how they got into ministry and their marital status before the breakdown of their relationship.

This important information was obtained through personal interviews and interaction with the concerned pastors.

Additionally, a small-scale qualitative empirical research was conducted using 100 people taken from both the churches and the community, to establish how they responded to the scenario in question. The data collected was analysed and revealed the following responses:

- I. Divorced pastors should continue in ministry as long as they did not cause the divorce.
- II. Divorced pastors should **not** be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause.
- III. Divorced pastors should be allowed to continue in ministry regardless of the cause.

Furthermore, face to face interviews and structured questionnaire were used to gain information from the individual divorced pastors in ministry. An analysis of the collected data identified the following three main causes for divorce:

- i. Marital unfaithfulness
- ii. Ministry pressure
- iii. Lack of compatibility

Chapter two identified different viewpoints from both the church and the community - on ways they reacted to divorced pastors in ministry.

At the same time, the affected divorced pastors had different reasons why they found themselves in a divorced situation. Additionally, they gave reasons why they felt they should continue in ministry.

Chapter three argues from a historical, biblical, systematic and practical perspective to assess whether the responses advanced by both people in the churches and the community complies with the biblical perspective. In addition, the chapter also evaluates from a biblical perspective, the reasons advanced by divorced pastors in ministry. Chapter three concludes that, in as much as the Bible advocates permanence of marriage and that God hates divorce, there are biblical parameters for divorce such as: sexual immorality, abandonment, violence, addiction to pornography, abuse and other contemporary issues that many necessitate divorce.

It should be acknowledged that in this fallen world there will be failed marriages and, as Christians, we should treat such cases from a solid biblical view point, especially on how Jesus dealt with people who found themselves in situations that may be referred to as not 'ideal', as it were. However, chapter three points out that, divorce and remarriage should be the last thing that happens to a Christian couple after all/other means of reconciliation have failed.

Furthermore, chapter three argues that there are legitimate grounds for divorce, as observed through exegetical undertaking of scriptures that speak to this subject matter. It simply follows that there also legitimate grounds for remarriage. Hence, it can be safely and biblically said that not all divorce is illegal and not all remarriage is illegal. Consequently, victims of divorce and remarriage should never be denied an opportunity to minister again depending on the circumstances that led to their divorce. In this regard, divorce should never be regard as the unpardonable sin. In addition, divorce and remarriage should never be put in a special category of sin, but rather be treated like any other sinful behaviour.

Chapter four brings this argument to its logical conclusion by suggesting strategies and means to mitigate the rampant divorce rate among pastors and church members in general. The chapter also suggests ways to deal with those who are already victims of divorce and remarriage.

Several suggestions are made to mitigate the rampant occurrences of divorce among pastors and laypersons such as:

1. The local church should embark on a holistic premarital teaching to those would-be married couples.
2. The local church should strengthen married couple's ministry, which could serve as a safe net for strengthening married couples in church, and as an avenue for married couples to share their marital challenges with others.
3. The local church should create accountability systems for pastors and married couples in general.

On the other hand, the research suggests the following regarding those who are already victims of divorce and remarriage:

1. The local church should embark on pastoral care ministry. It should be the responsibility of a local to care for those who feel rejected and wounded by the effects of divorce so that they can once again find acceptance and fellowship in the church of Jesus Christ.
2. The local should again embark on the ministry of Rehabilitation and Restoration for the victims of divorce and remarriage.

5.2 Summation of this research

This research focused on the four case studies of divorced pastors in ministry in Kawama Compound of Ndola in Copperbelt province of Zambia. Hence, the results obtained are not exhaustive and this research could be expanded beyond the community in question.

However, the finding of this research is that God's original intention for marriage is permanence and that God hates divorce. Nonetheless, due to the fallen nature and hardness of man's heart divorce and remarriage happens. Consequently, victims of divorce and remarriage who genuinely come back seeking fellowship and ministry in the church should never be denied that opportunity. However, this gesture should not be rushed; consideration should be given to those affected by the effects of divorce and remarriage, that includes family members, the church and finally the community at large.

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APPENDIX 1

SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE (For the Divorced Pastor)

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at South African Theological Seminary; my names are Damas Kamfwa (Rev) collecting data for my research project. This is a requirement for the submission of a mini-thesis on my research topic for the partial fulfilment of the seminary qualification (MTh). My research is on, *'Divorced Pastors in ministry' in Zambia, Ndola in particular: A biblical theology of Divorce and Remarriage: the challenges of divorced Pastors in ministry in Zambian church. Is there biblical support for divorced Pastors to continue in ministry? What should be the response of the church to this problem?*

You have been selected to take part in providing information for this research project. The purpose of this research is to identify some of the challenges faced by divorced pastors in ministry. Kindly share how divorce may have negatively impacted your ministry today. This research will enable other pastors to understand this important topic from a biblical perspective. Thank you very much for taking your time to complete this questionnaire.

Please be assured that the information you share will be held in strictest confidence.

Oral Questions:

Part One:

Personal profile

- i. What are your full names?
- ii. For how long were you married?
- iii. Did you have wedding ceremony (not necessary a white wedding)?
- iv. For how long have you been divorced?

Part two:

Ministry Profile

1. For how long have you been in ministry?
2. Do you have accountability partners that offer you prayer support?
3. Kindly share the circumstances that led to your divorce.
4. Did you seek help from other Pastor regarding your marital problem? If yes, how did that go? If no, kindly share the reasons you did not seek help.
5. Kindly share whether your divorce has affected your ministry both in the church and in the community.
6. In what ways do you feel competent to counsel troubled marriages?
7. Kindly share your reasons for believing that married couples will be confident to seek your counsel with their own problems.
8. Please share whether your church members accepted your divorce in a positive light.
9. Please share the responses/reactions of your fellow pastors and community members upon learning of the dissolution of your marriage.
10. Kindly share whether your fellow pastors and community members treat you well presently.
11. Kindly share the challenges you have faced as a divorced pastor in ministry.
12. Have you ever felt the need to reconcile with your ex-wife? Kindly explain your answer.
13. If reconciliation with your ex-wife is not possible, do you believe you will remarry another woman?
14. Please share ways in which your second marriage may have negatively affected your ministry and standing in the community?
15. Kindly share ways in which you believe your second marriage is justifiable from a biblical perspective.
16. Please feel free to share any final comments or thoughts you may have on this important topic.

Thank very much for taking your time to complete this important research questionnaire.

APPENDIX 2

SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE (Mount Zion Church members)

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at South African Theological Seminary; my names are Damas Kamfwa (Rev) collecting data for my research project. This is a requirement for the submission of a mini-thesis on my research topic for the partial fulfilment of the seminary qualification (MTh). My research is on, 'Divorced Pastors in ministry in Zambia, Ndola in particular: A biblical theology of Divorce and Remarriage: the challenges of divorced Pastors in ministry in Zambian church'. Is there biblical support for divorced Pastors to continue in ministry? What should be the response of the church to this problem?

You have been randomly selected to take part in providing information for this research project which will help to find out the general feelings of people towards a divorced Pastor in ministry in Kawama/Pamodzi compound in Ndola district of Zambia. The information you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality

Please assist the research process by filling in this questionnaire as openly and honestly as possible

Instructions:

Please fill in the spaces provided

Part One:

Personal details

- i. Name.....
- ii. Gender.....
- iii. Marital status.....

Part two:

Religious status

- i. Do you hold any leadership role in your church?
- ii. What is your leadership role?

Part three

1) Should a divorced Pastor continue in ministry? If yes, why? If no, why?

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2) Would you be comfortable to be a member of a church which is pastored by a divorced Pastor? If yes, why? If no, why?

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3) Should you have marital problems, would you be willing to seek help/ counselling from a divorced Pastor?

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4) What is the general feeling of the people in the community concerning the church pastored by a divorced Pastor?

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5) If you were a member of a church and your Pastor divorced for one reason or another, would you still hold your Pastor in high esteem (explain your answer)?

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6) If you were a member of a church and your Pastor divorced for one reason or another, would you continue to be a member of that church? (explain your answer).

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7) What do you think will be the reaction of church members, if their Pastor got divorced?

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