

MF NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: AN ETHICAL AND PASTORAL CHALLENGE TO THE
METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA.

BY:

MATI SUSAN GATWIRI

SUPERVISOR:

PROFESSOR GUNNAR HARALD HEIENE

A MASTER THESIS PRESENTED TO MF NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, OSLO
NORWAY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE MASTER
OF THEOLOGY.

SPRING, 2013.

DEDICATION

To my beloved husband Benjamin Mati, and our three sons Victor Kimathi, Prosper Karani, and Joshua Mugambi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I most sincerely want to thank God for the far He has enabled me. Indeed He is my Ebenezer. I also want to thank all those who have tirelessly helped me complete this thesis. I want to thank all the MCK Bishops, my colleague ministers and the members for their cooperation and the efforts they made especially during my field work study.

I also want to thank the Faculty of MF Norwegian School of Theology for collaborating with the Methodist church in Kenya and considering me for this noble course. God bless you. I wish to thank the Ex-Presiding Bishop Dr Stephen Kanyaru, the current Presiding Bishop Joseph M' Mburu on behalf of the Methodist Church in Kenya for giving me a study leave for this course. Special thanks go to Professor Gunnar H el ene whose challenges and careful guidance has led to the completion of this thesis. Moreover, I want to thank professor Karl Olav Sannes, Professor Tormod Engelsviken, professor Roar Fortland and professor Knod for their tireless walk with me through this academic journey. I wish not to forget my friends here and abroad for their great encouragements.

Special thanks to the following esteemed friends: Isaac Kaberia and Dorcas Kanana, PhD students for their great inspiration, sacrificial and tireless efforts towards the completion of this thesis. You have played a key role in my studies! May God bless you always. Others include Dr Johanna Akujarvi, Reza, and Allan who proof read part of this thesis. I also owe lots of gratitude to the Norwegian government for offering me a quota Scheme Programme Scholarship which funded my studies. My heartfelt thanks go to my dear parents Erastus and Esther, all my dear brothers and sisters for their constant prayers and encouragements. Mum Esther, God bless you so much for your sleepless nights of prayer and fasting. Were it not for your prayers, I could not have come this far. May you live longer Mommy.

My deepest appreciation goes to my beloved husband Benjamin Mati. You allowed me to leave you for two years with our young boys whom you baby seated until they are now big boys. You are my true love! God bless you. Thanks so much our son Victor for your encouraging text messages reminding me to persevere the cold winter and work extra hard. Prosper and Joshua kept inquiring when I would finish and go to be with them. I will soon be there boys.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

ARVs-Anti-Retroviral Drugs.

HIV- Human Immune Virus.

MCK- Methodist Church in Kenya

MMF-Methodist Men Fellowship

MWF-Methodist Women Fellowship

MYF-Methodist Youth Fellowship

NGOs- Non- Governmental Organizations

NIV- New International Version Bible

THE MAP OF KENYA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION-----i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-----ii

MAP OF KENYA -----iii

ABBREVIATIONS -----iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS-----v

1. 0 INTRODUCTION-----1

1.1 Background and Motivation -----1

1.2 Statement of the problem----- 3

1.3 The main problem of the Thesis-----3

1.4 Objectives/ Purpose of the study-----4

1.5 Theoretical Framework as part of the study-----4

1.6 Methodology and approach of the Thesis-----5

1.7 Research Ethics-----7

1.8 Work Plan-----7

1.9 Chapter Development-----8

2.0 DOMESTIC / FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE OCCURENCES IN KENYA -----10

2.1 Introduction-----	10
2.2 Domestic violence and abuse occurrences in Kenya-----	10
2.3 Types of domestic violence and abuse-----	12
2.3.1 Physical abuse-----	12
2.3.2 Sexual abuse-----	12
2.3.3 Psychological/emotional abuse-----	13
2.4 Causes of domestic violence and abuse-----	14
2.4.1 Learnt behaviors-----	14
2.4.2 Poverty-----	14
2.4.3 Individual (Intrapersonal) explanation-----	15
2.4.4 Interpersonal interaction theories-----	15
2.4.5 Patriarchy-----	15
2.4.6 Denial of sex-----	16
2.4.7 Jealousy and possessiveness-----	17
2.4.8 Social tolerance to violent and abusive behavior -----	17
2.5 Effects of domestic violence and abuse-----	18
2.5.1 Fear of intimidation-----	18
2.5.2 Abusive behavior becomes future habit-----	19

2.5.3 Permanent scare /and or loss of lives-----	19
2.5.4 Destitute / and abandoned children-----	19
2.5.5 Psychological effects-----	20
2.5.6 Separation / and or divorce-----	20
2.5.7 Single parenthood-----	20
2.6 Conclusion-----	21
3.0 AFRICAN VIEW OF FAMILY, AND THE MCK RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE--	22
3.1 Introduction-----	22
3.2 African view of family-----	22
3.2.1 Some marital problems and the way they were handled -----	23
3.3 MCK Response to family violence and abuse-----	25
3.3.1 MCK Constitution (Standing Orders and Agendas) -----	25
3.3.2 MCK marriage service liturgy-----	29
3.4 Conclusion-----	33
4.0 ANALYSISOF INTERVIEWS-----	34
4.1 Introduction-----	34
4.2 Field work experiences-----	34

4.3 Bishops’ deliberations-----	35
4.3.1 Misconceptions of dowry and African patriarchy system-----	35
4.3.2 Drug and drug abuse-----	37
4.4 MCK ministers’ and the members’ Response-----	39
4.4.1 Pastoral Care to the ministers’ families -----	39
4.4.2 Forced /organized marriages-----	41
4.4.3 Children in African (Kenyan families) -----	43
4.4.3.1 Children’s sex-----	44
4.4.3.2 Number of Children-----	45
4.4.4 Misinterpretation of gender equity/ equality -----	47
4.4.5 Lack of Mutual fulfillment in marriage -----	50
4.4.6 HIV/ AIDS and other related illnesses in Christian families -----	52
4.5 Conclusion-----	55
5.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: AN ETHICAL CHALLENGE AND DILEMMA TO THE MCK ----	56
5.1 Introduction-----	56
5.2 The Contemporary Context of Christian Ethics -----	56
5.3 God’s intent for families and marriages-----	57
5.4 Domestic violence and abuse in the Bible -----	57

5.4.1 Sin of disobedience as a source of violence -----	58
5.4.2 Violence and abuse among family members -----	59
5.4.3 Domestic violence and abuse in the New Testament-----	61
5.5 Domestic violence and abuse as an ethical challenge and dilemma in MCK -----	63
5.5.1 The question of patience, and forgiveness in marriage among the abusers-----	63
5.5.2 When can the victims seek legal measures? -----	65
5.5.3 The impacts of patriarchy system in MCK -----	67
5.5.4 Cultural quandary in the Church -----	68
5.5.5 The existence of marital violence and abuse among MCK Christians and clergies’ families-----	70
5.5.6 A need for a Revised MCK Marriage Service Liturgy, and MCK Standing Orders 169, on Marriage, Separation, and Divorce involving a Methodist Minister -----	71
5.5.7 Family and sex education programs in Church _____	74
5.6 Conclusion -----	76
6.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: A PASTORAL CHALLENGE TO MCK -----	77
6.1 Introduction -----	77
6.2 MCK Church Membership -----	77
6.2.1 Full Membership -----	77
6.2.2 Associate Membership -----	79

6.3 Theological basis for pastoral care -----	80
6.4 Pastoral Care Essential Guide -----	81
6.4.1 Pastoral Wisdom -----	82
6.4.2 Pastoral presence -----	82
6.4.3 Pastoral guidance -----	83
6.5 How should the MCK meet with this pastoral challenge? -----	84
6.5.1 Pre-marital counseling -----	84
6.5.2 Providing comfort and counsel to those hurting/ Church rescue centers -----	86
6.5.3 Addressing domestic violence and abuse as a National Pandemic -----	87
6.5.4 A Minister as a specialized counselor -----	87
6.5.5 Burned –out Servants -----	88
6.6 Conclusion -----	89
7.0 SUMMARY OF THE THESIS -----	91
7.1 Introduction -----	91
7.2 Limitations of the Thesis Materials -----	92
7.3 Further Research -----	92
REFERENCE/ SOURCES -----	94

INTERNET SOURCES-----98

APPENDICES-----99

Appendix 1-----99

Appendix 2-----99

Appendix 3-----100

Appendix 4-----101

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation

Domestic violence cannot be limited to only one action in family relations. This means that it involves a variety of actions. Oyekanmi notes that domestic violence is a term that is used to describe a variety of actions that occur within family relationships. (Oyekanmi, 2000:25). She further explains that it may take the form of physical and sexual violations, such as punching, checking, stabbing, scalding and burning with water and acid, or setting a blaze. The result of which can range from bruising to death. It is an abuse or misuse of power in a household whereby one, partner misuses or abuses the other/others in the family. Furthermore, domestic violence cannot be thought to exist only in cases where the abused victims are only women. Moreover violent behaviors in most cases result to abuse. In this thesis therefore, domestic violence will be discussed together with abuse.

Domestic violence and abuse may exist within other family members like the children and in the current situation; amongst the house-helpers. Kunhiyop observes that, in America according to Psychological Association, some 40 to 60 per cent of men who abuse women also abuse children (Kunhiyop 2008:244). McClure and Ramsay, also notes that it is likely that in most churches on Sunday morning, there are batterers or child abusers and many other victims of sexual or domestic violence. (McClure & Ramsay 1998:1). They further say that statistics of sexual and domestic violence have escalated in recent years, and that awareness of the same has increased though less than 10 percent of sexual assaults are reported to the police. Domestic violence and abuse therefore cannot only be limited to married or cohabiting partners but it may be evident to many others living in the same household. Those who fall victims also include children, househelpers, and inlaws (for those living with them among others). The inlaws could be from both sides. Either from the husband's or the wife's family. They may include sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts or even parents.

Domestic violence and abuse include both the young and the old. Elderly people may also be abused by their care givers. The NCCB/ USCC General Membership Committee saying: "Although we focus here on violence against women, we are not implying that violence against men, youths, the elderly, or the unborn is any less vicious." (NCCB/USCC 1992:1). Children may be abused by those who take care of them as babyseaters and sometimes by their own parents as noted earlier. Kunhiyop further refers domestic violence among the married couples as "abuse of power in intimate relationships" (Kunhiyop 2008:243). This implies that

domestic violence is an abuse which can be perpetrated by either males or females. In this case, both males and females can be victims of domestic violence. Victims of violence can be anyone of any sex, age, race, culture, religion, education, employment and marital status. In most cases, violent behaviors lead to people becoming abusive to those they are close to. In this paper therefore, domestic violence and abuse will be used closely together because they relate in one way or the other. The household in this case does not only comprise the nuclear members but in this paper, I discuss the African understanding of family which may include extended family members.

Clarke argues that the Law enforcement has not kept up with legal changes on domestic violence cases. (Clarke 1986: 25). She maintains that while believing that a man's home is his castle, many police would not interfere with domestic violence cases. Thatcher notes that, a relation, like marriage, may be socially and ecclesiastically approved, while it could be a source of distress. He notes that an enormous number of sanctioned unions are a framework for violence and human destructiveness on a disturbing scale.

This could explain how deep the problem of domestic violence has engulfed many families and households.

Although I was born and reared in a Christian family, domestic violence in Christian families was not as rampant as it is today. I mean currently domestic violence and abuse cases have intensified. In the late 80s for instance when I was young, I rarely witnessed family violence cases. If there were, then they were handled secretly. Such problems were solved amicably by the neighbors and sometimes by the clan and they were never again to recur. However I suggest things have changed with time.

My main interest in pursuit to this type of thesis became evident during my pastoral duties in various circuits that I served. I was both a pastor and a counselor to Christians with various problems and needs. Among the most common problems were family or domestic related. It was during my first few years in the ministry of the church; hence I was limited in practical counseling. I was therefore at a fix because I had no family experience besides my young age. Those who came to see the minister for pastoral guidance and counseling were both young and old. The problems they presented were indeed practical in marriage. One time I approached my senior colleague who assisted me in counseling some couples. I noted that counseling requires more than just theory. Additionally, I noted that most of the members

who reported to the office for guidance had serious family issues related to violence and abuse. My curiosity was to make an inquiry of the existence of violence and abuse among the Christians where the society could expect God's love. Both old and the young and the issues being those of family or domestic related. The women were the majority with stories of various kinds of violence and abuse. Some were church leaders. Many think that Christian families never quarrel or are never violent. This was my naivety. It came to my realization that pastoral care to the members is a necessity in the MCK and that it requires knowledge for one to be able to address the family issues relevantly.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Barnett points out that, domestic violence and abuse is not a new phenomenon, although among children, spouses, and elderly Persons, it was recognized recently as a social problem by professionals and society at large (Barnett 1997: xix).

This implies that it has not been a social problem until recently though it has existed for decades. A report compiled by NCCB/USCC reveals that domestic violence is the most common form of violence in our society and the least reported crime. (NCCB/USCC 1992:3). They further maintain that since violence occurs in the privacy of people's homes, it is often shrouded in silence. It may also sound naïve to think that domestic violence only takes place among non-believers. This could be a mere self deceit because majority of Christian families are suffering silently due to stigma. This is why Gichinga notes that some neighbors and friends might be aware that a particular family is undergoing marital problems, but when the couple is approached they deny and say people are maligning their marriage (Gichinga 2005:28) .It is believed by many that marriage is not a "bed of roses" Which literally implies that no marriage is perfect and without shortcomings. In fact these shortcomings at times may result into domestic violence which Christians are not prone to.

In Kenya today, some argue that domestic violence and abuse is on the rise compared to the past years. Some sources maintain that while there are no official statistics of violence against men, experts are worried over the rising number of cases .As a Church there is a great pastoral challenge and a responsibility in providing guidance to the people in and out of the church.

1.3 The problem of the thesis

The main problem of the study will be dealt with by answering the following question: How can the Methodist Church in Kenya from an ethical and pastoral perspective, address the problem of domestic violence? In order to address the question above, the following questions

will first be tackled: Firstly, what ethical guidance can MCK offer to the churches and the society on domestic violence and abuse? Secondly, what pastoral guidance can the MCK offer to the churches and the society on domestic violence/ and abuse?

1.4 Objectives /purpose of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To examine why domestic violence and abuse is evident and has increased among the MCK Christian families where God's love is expected to prevail?
- 2) To investigate how domestic violence and abuse are currently ethical and pastoral challenges to MCK.
- 3) To identify and propose possible recommendations, on how to deal with the challenge of domestic violence and abuse in MCK and the society.

1.5 Theoretical framework as part of the study

This thesis shall endeavor into social constructionist perspective. This perspective holds that societal reactions are central to the process of redefining a social condition as a social problem. Barnett from a social constructionist perspective argues that, there is no way of identifying 'social problems' objectively. He further explains that societal reactions include the ways individuals within a society respond to social conditions. He further suggest that those societal reactions may originate from any of a number of sources such as: Churches, social movement organizations, political interest groups, and the media to name but a few (Barnett Ola M, 1997:5).

Straka argues that social problems are social constructions, which come as products of claim making. (Straka Silvia, on the social construction of family violence). She further observes that different claim makers have different agendas, and that there are debates on how to define the problem and its solutions.

Straka further maintains that, social problems are constructed at many levels namely: Culture- which includes cultural images, categories, and stereotypes. Mass media- which includes both the primary and secondary claims-making.

She further discusses practitioners' roles in the social construction of social problems. She notes that, workers and organizations define who is a client or the one with the problem.

Examples of these include the following namely: Victim of abuse – as a perpetrator.

Child abuse –as normal spanking or physical abuse.

In Kenya and most of the African countries, where domestic or family violence and abuse has existed for decades; it has not been taken seriously, until recently. An example of this is whereby a husband could beat his wife with a stick or pinch her thighs for a mere claim of burning food, or putting excess salt. This was not a very big problem among the Meru tribe. Many women expected this and sometimes if some got married to humble and 'soft' men who neither beat nor pinch them; there was always a tendency for what some viewed as 'un-becoming' behaviors among the women. It is believed that to some, pinching and beating with a stick was a sign of love by their husbands.

Currently in Kenya, domestic violence is no longer something to be tolerated. It is feared that such cases are getting worse among men as victims. The justice and advocacy organizations for some groups are now set in place. Some of these include: Development for Men and Women commonly known as 'Maendeleo Ya Wanaume', and 'Maendeleo ya Wanawake' respectively. Something that looks quite unusual is the behavior change. Many years back in Kenya and among the Meru people, a wife could not even point a finger to her husband. This was unheard of. Today there are several instances of husbands being battered by their wives.

Nderitu Njoka, the group leader of Men development in Kenya observes that there were at least 460,000 reported cases of men being battered by their wives in central Kenya alone the year 2011. He further notes that those reported in Nairobi alone were 300,000 cases (Njoka 2012, February 19th on Kenyan Men threaten to boycott food).

In this thesis, this theory will help to understand how these domestic violence and abuse problems have come to be the concern of many. This is because as Barnett notes, these various interest groups, or claims-makers are actively involved in the process of raising awareness about a particular social condition. Domestic violence and abuse is therefore such a social issue which has attracted a lot of concern to many people,

1.6 Methodology and approach of the thesis

In this thesis, the following methods were considered namely: primary and secondary. In the primary level, qualitative interviews were done. These were semi –structured interviews which entailed a list of interview guide questions. The guide questions were in two categories

namely: Questions for the Bishops and the Ministers, and those for the members. The interviewees were in focus groups whereby groups of five people were interviewed. The criteria of selection were through snowball sampling technique as described by Bryman. (Bryman 2012:424). This method involves a small group of people who are relevant to the research questions. In this thesis, a small group of MCK women, men, youth, Bishops and ministers, were selected, who later suggested others who were also incorporated in the group for the interviews.

The questions to the Bishops and the minister differed from the members' due to differences in interview guide questions. The questions set for the members were not used for the Bishops and the ministers and the vice versa.

The total number of members interviewed was approximately twenty five (25). These include twenty whose interviews were done through focus groups, and five, who were interviewed individually. Those five were free to share their experiences with me through door to door interviews. The focus group was comprised of ten (10) women who were divided into women fellowship categories A and B, interviewed in groups of five. The men fellowship group comprised of five (5) men who were interviewed together as one focus group. The other category of members were the Methodist Youth Fellowship who were interviewed under members category C. Others include a few who were interviewed individually and the questions were the same. The other category of people interviewed was the five (5) MCK Bishops and eight (8) MCK Ministers. In total those interviewed through focus group interviews were thirty three (33), plus five (5) other members who were interviewed individually, making a total of thirty eight (38) interviewees all together. In all the groups, face to face interviews were conducted.

Five (5) Bishops, who included the MCK Presiding Bishop, were interviewed through focus group. Eight Ministers were interviewed. Although similar questions were asked to both the Bishops and the Ministers, the ministers were interviewed separately from the Bishops.

The secondary sources of data collection entail the literature. More data was gathered through relevant literature like books, magazines, MCK documents like the MCK Standing Orders, the MCK marriage service books, and the MCK Minutes of the conference, among others.

Furthermore, the thesis has endeavor into thematic analysis of data as described by Bryman. The interview analysis has been done thematically. Moreover, the discussion of the materials

is presented in themes. Different themes have been developed from the analysis, then later discussed at a higher level, in discussion chapters five and six of this thesis.

Moreover, this thesis uses the inductive theory as described by Bryman. In this view, the implications for theory findings that prompted the whole exercise are inferred. They are then fed back to the stock of theory and the research findings associated with a certain domain of inquiry. (Bryman 2012: 24).

1.7 Research ethics

Throughout the research, field research ethics were observed. This is by assuring the key informants and the interviewees together with other participants of my ethical principles. This entails being responsible, respecting the interviewees, speaking ethically, acting and writing morally. This entails honesty, accountability and care, privacy dignity and telling the truth of all that is said and written as noted by Jones (Jones J, 2005:86). The Norwegian Social Science data services is also aware of my research because I reported to them about it.

1.8 Work plan

The research was carried out for approximately two (2) months. This was between from July to September 1st 2012.

On 10th July 2012. The interviewees were identified, and the researcher had brief meeting with them deliberating on the interview analysis, and explaining research ethics. Further more appointments were made and the schedules for the interviews.

On Saturday the 21st of July, interviews with the first group of women fellowship was made. They discussed various forms, causes, and recommendations on how to curb domestic violence and abuse in Christian families. On 28th of July, interviews were conducted on the second group of women fellowship. On 4th of August, the men fellowship focus group interviews were made. On the same day in the evening, another interview was conducted with the youth group (Note that, the same guide questions were used for all the members interviewed either individually, or in focus groups). In some places, individual interviews with some members were conducted one on one. This was through home to home visitations to those who were free to share their experiences of family violence. I interviewed a young man on Sunday 12th August, who confessed to have been severally abused by his wife. Also

interviewed was a middle aged lady on 13th August, who shared her experiences with a husband who had sexually abused their daughter twice when she was away. On 15th of August, I visited and interviewed another MCK member, who shared his family experience with a promiscuous wife whom he later divorced.

Another member on this same day was a young lady who shared her real life experience with a husband who sexually abused their house help. (These individual interviews were quite helpful. They shared much of what they could probably not disclose in focus groups). Afterwards, I moved on to focus group interviews which were conducted in different groups of 5 members. In these groups similar and different experiences were shared. The groups were divided into various categories and the names of the members interviewed are anonymous. Coding was considered for the purposes of confidentiality. It was done in alphabets A, B, C, D, E... in that order.

1.9 Chapter development

Chapter two focuses on domestic violence and abuse in Kenya. It endeavors to discuss the development and occurrences of domestic violence and abuse. It also examines types of domestic violence. Nevertheless, it examines the causes and the impacts of domestic violence and abuse. Chapter three focuses on African view of family, and the MCK response to domestic violence and abuse. Moreover, it examines some marital problems and the way they were handled. Furthermore the analysis of MCK documents is made hereby showing some guidelines on marital issues. Chapter four will endeavor into presenting the reactions and the reflections from the interviewees. These are presented in themes.

Chapter five examines the ethical challenge and dilemma of domestic violence and abuse in MCK. It discusses the contemporary context of Christian ethics. Additionally, it endeavours into examining God's intent for family and marriage. Furthermore, it examines traces of domestic violence and abuse in the bible. It also identifies and discusses ethical challenges, thereby proposing ways on how the church should meet with the challenges. Finally, I will draw a conclusion of the chapter. Chapter six discusses domestic violence and abuse as a pastoral challenge to MCK. It discusses the Church membership which is necessary for understanding the Church membership to whom, pastoral duties are disseminated. (Note that In MCK, pastoral duties to members differ with the category of membership). Moreover, it

examines the theological basis of pastoral care. Furthermore, this chapter will endeavour into describing the essential pastoral care guide as presented by John Patton. Additionally, it shall identify and discuss the pastoral challenges thereby giving proposals on how the MCK should meet with them. Finally, a conclusion of the chapter will be made.

Chapter seven gives a summary of the thesis. It however identifies the study limitations and makes recommendations for further research.

2.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE OCCURENCES IN KENYA

2.1 Introduction

This research was carried out in the Methodist Church of Kenya (MCK). The Methodist Church in Kenya was begun in Kenya by the British Methodist Church which arrived in Kenya during the year 1862. The MCK later became autonomous in the year 1967 with a Membership of 15,377 and 323 congregations (Nthamburi, 1982:138). Currently, the church has grown to a population of a million plus members. There are 342 Methodist Ministers and 12 Bishops including the Presiding Bishop, 11 synods, 139 circuits and 1346 Congregations (MCK statistical returns. Although there are no clear domestic violence statistics in Kenya, I wish to cite some few occurrences in the following paragraphs below. The data collection was made in Meru district (currently Meru County). Meru is in the central part of Kenya. The county has the majority of MCK members. The reason is that, the MCK took its roots in Meru as early as 1910. (Nthamburi 1982: 139). The first British Methodists settled at Kaaga, which is located along Meru town. Since then, the Church has grown with many primary schools, secondary, colleges and Universities along the same area.

2.2 Domestic violence and abuse occurences in Kenya

It sounds unbelievable to note that there are few statistics on domestic violence and abuse in Kenya. These statistics may not be reliable because the numbers keep changing with time. I suggest that the absence or the inadequacy could be explained by the fact that marital or family issues are treated with privacy. Another possible reason could be that until recently, family violence and abuse has not been taken seriously. This means that many abuses and violent act happened unreported. Among such were viewed as normal probably because majority of the victims were women and children. Currently things have change with the influence of modernity and westernization. Currently the media is unfolding what has been veiled for long. Many human right organizations are coming up and in this way breaking the long silence.

In Kenya today, there have been cases and incidents of both men and women who have been abused by spouses or other family members living with them. Other reported cases of abuse in families include: Cases of rape, child abuse by their care givers and their parents, abuse to physically and mentally challenged members of the family among others. The fast selling Newspapers have evidence of such. It is also very rare to find the local newspapers lacking reports on this. This shows that family problems are becoming intolerable unlike the last few

years ago. In central province of Kenya, violence against husbands by their wives has lately become the order of the day. In one of the Saturday Magazine, a man is quoted saying..."What is society coming to when battered men feel free to run to the police, media and men's groups instead of taking their beating on the chin- and in stoic silence?"(Saturday Magazine February 25, 2012 page 10).

Domestic violence and abuse in Kenya has increased tremendously. In 1990s when I was young; I severally witnessed family violence along the neighborhood. Among the most observed rules were 'never to insult back or hit your husband'... 'If you get annoyed and feel like insulting, when he is about to get into the house, take a mouthful of water and retain it into your mouth, you should neither swallow it nor spit it off, this will keep you away from insulting your husband back!' This was the advice frequently given to the Meru girls who were preparing for marriage by their grandmothers and at times by their mothers. I always remember what my mother used to tell me in Kimeru (...*kanyua kendagia ruthia*). This literally means that 'it is the mouth that sells the cheek'. In other words meaning that when a woman swells up in anger against her husband and insults or keeps nagging, she is like asking for some beatings and eventually she will be slapped. This may explain why majority of the AMeru women will remain silent amidst their quarrelsome husbands. Currently, in Kenya, there is reverse of behaviors in which men are battered by their wives after short domestic quarrels or misunderstandings.

Therefore, violence and abuse is not just about women and children as victims as it used to be, but modern domestic violence and abuse in Kenya is more common for men as victims. However, while former reported rates of violence of men against women are much higher than those against men, experts are worried over the rising number of cases ...says Abdi Latif (on domestic violence against men in Kenya rises edition). He further maintains that "while there are no official statistics of violence against men, media reports of victims assert that the trend is raising of women abusing men". (Dahir 2012, June 8th).

Additionally, this does not mean that domestic violence and abuse does not take place among other family members. In Kenya it is evident from both men and women; and any other member within the family who may be related to the victim in one way or the other. Children for instance are being abused by their parents or their care givers. Siblings are also abusing their own. Those living with the abusers fall victims. These include the house helps, the land attendants among others. Dr. Timothy Njoya, the Executive Director for Men for the Equality

of Men and Women (MEW) notes: “Today, men do not only sexually assault their mothers, they assault their daughters and grand-daughters” (Njoya 2008:69). Some of these abuses and violent behaviors take place in closed doors hence are not reported. In the following paragraphs, we shall examine different types of domestic violence.

2.3 Types of domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse may take different forms .As already noted, domestic violence is a pattern of behavior which is used by an individual to establish and maintain coercive control over his/her partner. Gichinga observes that it consists of physical, sexual, psychological, and/or emotional abuse in which with time the abusive behavior may become frequent and severe(Gichinga2005:182). Let us look at each of these in the following paragraphs below.

2.3.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may take many forms. The most commonly experienced in Kenya includes the Following as noted by Gichinga: pushing, shoving, slapping, hitting, punching with the fist, pulling the hair, pinching, biting, head shaking and banging, choking, throwing against the room and the floor, kicking with shoes on or off; wrestling, twisting the arms, legs and fingers, throwing objects, burning, attempting to drown, use of knife, gun or any lethal weapon, rubbing salt into wounded parts, and putting soap in the mouth among others. She observes that the last two are used by a number of parents on their children (Gichinga 2005:42).There are also some baby cares/babysitters or house-helps who abuse the children in absence of their parents. Kunhiyop observes that violence against children may not only be physical, but can also include teasing, bullying, intimidation and psychological and sexual harassment (Kunhiyop 2008:244). There are therefore a variety of incidents of family violence in Kenya today.

THE EYE’ Magazine has a file picture of a young lady who lost her both arms due to domestic violence with her husband. It says...Ms Wanja lost her hands in a domestic attack, where her husband was jailed for 20 years for the offence...” (THE EYE 261st Edition, July Special 2010).

2.3.2 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse does not only affect those who are in relationship. There are different forms of sexual abuse within the family setup. Sexual violence in families may therefore affect all those who are in the family. These may include the couples, the children under all age and sex, and anybody else living in the family where it occurs. This means that also the house-helpers and the farm attendants may be victims. Such abuse goes unreported probably due to fear of losing their jobs among others. This is common in cases where one spouse is working away from home or sometimes works at night, and the other partner takes the advantage of abusing those within his/her reach. In some cases the parents go to an extent of sexually abusing their own children. THE EYE 261st Edition July Special Edition 2010 has a report of a sodomized 13 year old boy by his father (The Eye 261st edition July Special Edition 2010).

Gichinga also observes that sexual abuse and harassment exhibits such behaviors like the following: unwanted sexual advances, unwanted sexual gestures and lewd remarks, taking advantage of power relationship, indecent exposure of private parts to unsuspecting victims, unwanted direct sexual requests, hostile attitudes towards members of the opposite sex, unwanted sexual touching of clothing and body, unwanted physical and touching of specific genital areas, any sexual touching of a child, threats of or forced sex of any description, sexual assault, subtle or overt solicitation of a personal relationship or sexual activity by promising benefits (Gichinga 2005:43). This is a clear evidence that domestic violence though may have few or no statistics, exists 'behind closed doors'. Sometimes drunk husbands get home demanding for sex and some will not even listen to their wives.

During a counseling session for church couples, one young lady had this to say "... Pastor I am deeply confused because my husband comes home drunk and forces me to have sex even when I am sick... (She continues after a deep breath), failure to which leads to thorough beatings or verbal insults". Others within the family may remain silent due to stigma or fear of losing their jobs /benefits among other repercussions. It is therefore true that:

"Men do not like to identify themselves as victims of abuse out of fear of being ridiculed. Society has taught men that a woman cannot abuse a real man. When this happens, the affected man will be laughed at as an indication that he is not manly enough to handle his wife" (Gichinga 2005:43).

2.3.3 Psychological abuse/emotional

In most of the families where a member is violent and abusive, there is a tendency of creating fear amongst other family members. If the husband come home drunk and starts beating up the wife and the children, they will be affected psychologically whereby they (victims) will always be in fear of the violent father/ husband. Kunhiyop notes that a man practice psychological abuse in which he shows no appreciation for his wife and instead make her fear his humiliation of her in public and before the family (Kunhiyop 2008:244).

In some cases where family abuse is severe, children start crying hysterically immediately they hear the voice of their perpetrators. Others hide themselves under the beds for fear.

Having discussed the types or forms of family abuse, in the proceeding paragraphs below, an examination of the causes of family abuse will be made.

2.4 Causes of domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse does not occur without a genuine reason. There are a number of theories which explains possible causes of domestic violence as discussed in the following paragraphs below:

2.4.1 Learnt behavior

There is a common Kiswahili saying which says ‘mtoto mlewavyo ndivyo akuavyo’ which literary translates that ‘the way a child is brought up, that is is how he/she grow’. Some behaviors and character traits are learnt quite early especially when one is young. Barnett refers this as **social learning theory or modeling**. He observes that this is through imitation of observed social and cognitive behaviors (Barnett 1997:32). Nevertheless, such are difficult to change when one grow up. Children at an early age and especially those living with their parents, learn by imitating other people’s behaviors. If for instance a boy grows up in an abusive home, he is likely to be abusive in future. Whether the child experiences abuse directly or indirectly he/she is affected. I thus concur with NCCB/USCC General membership saying that domestic violence is a learned behavior. (NCCB/ USCC 1992: 2). They further observed that in many cases, men who become abusive and the women who are abused grew up in abusive homes. Additionally, they pointed out that a child can grow up believing that violence is an acceptable behavior. Kunhiyop believe that, the environment in which the child grows up in is perpetuated in his/her own adulthood and marriage, hence maintaining the vicious circle (Kunhiyop 2008:245).

2.4.2 Poverty

Sometimes violent behavior which later turns out to be abusive may arise due to poverty in a family. This happens when the family is not able to sustain itself due to lack of funds. This brings about conflict and quarrels in families. Barnett observes that a substantial body of evidence does show higher rates of family violence in lower socio-economic groups (Barnett1997:13). In Africa for instance, men are believed to be the family's bread winners. If they fail to provide, there may arise violence. Poverty may arise due to unemployment or loss of job for those who are working. In incidents where people who are working lose their jobs through retrenchment, this may have a negative impact on their families.

2.4.3 Individual (intrapersonal) explanations.

Sometimes it is believed that family abuse may arise as a result of mental illness among the perpetrators. This is whereby one may be mentally sick hence as a result abuse other family members. Barnett refers this situation as psychopathology. Psychological traits theories attribute family violence to individual variation in personality traits. He further explains Biological theories which are as a result of certain physiological, genetic or neurological abnormalities which may lead to family violence (Barnett 1997:32). Some people may be violent naturally. This could be understood as character trait which perpetrators cannot help themselves out.

2.4.4. Interpersonal interaction theories

Barnett observes that sometimes the way partners interact and relate with each other may provoke violence amongst them. He therefore looks at such theories as interpersonal interaction. This may occur between a husband and his wife / between two people cohabiting. This may also occur within same sex marriages. In this case violence results from both of them and not only one particular person (Barnett 1997:30). This theory thus explain that domestic or family violence and abuse occur when two people relate with each other.It may be true because people are not the same though they try to live harmoniously with each other. They have different opinions and view of things in life. To many this may cause tension and misunderstandings in families.

2.4.5. Patriarchy

Patriarchy may be understood as historically institutionalization of men's dominance over women. Hodgson observes that patriarchy is among the dominant American culture that is

salient in American law (Hodgson 2011:58). In Africa, women are believed to be the properties of their husbands. In this case there is a tendency to dominate over them. This is why Kunhiyop observes that a man in his home is therefore like a Lion; hence he will not tolerate any insubordination by his wife or children, and resorts to physical and verbal violence to assert his control over them (Kunhiyop 2008:244). This explains why most of family violence are perpetrated by men more than women. I concur with Muthoni a Kenyan journalist who she argues that in many African traditions, men beat their wives to show their superiority.

She further maintains that in some customs, women are equated with children and men discipline their wives just as they would their children (Muthoni, 2012 June 13 on Poverty, alcoholism blamed for the rising domestic violence against men in Kenya). Njogu, an executive director of the centre for Rights, Education and Awareness in Kenya (CREAW, also says: “ deeply engrained beliefs about gender roles and marriage have encouraged the practice...in patriarchal society, domestic violence is actually recognized as a way of disciplining one’s wife” (Njogu, 2010 4th March, on domestic violence in Kenya). Wamue and Getui points out that: “the ideology of patriarchy presupposes that men are strong, aggressive, domineering and forceful. This places social power exclusively in their hands and reinforces the distortions of the actual relations between the sexes...” (Wamue and Getui 1996:51).

Lita- Lou also notes that patriarchy provides a social structure of ownership of women by men which makes it possible for men to do whatever they want with their women. (Clarke 1986: 24). She observes that some husbands either beat, stab, shoot, choke, rape and even kill their wives because they perceive them as their own properties.

2.4.6 Denial of sex.

In African culture, sex in marriage is considered as something unnegotiable. This means that the African men are cultured to think that it is their right to demand sex any time and sometimes anywhere from their wives. It is not something that they need to ask for. Sometimes when drunk they will openly demand it even before the children. This is embarrassing, especially in Africa where sex is a private bedroom affair, performed when the children are away, and with the lights off. In some instances when their wives are not willing to offer due to illnesses, this may result to quarrel leading to violent and abusive behaviors. In

most cases, the husband may call the wife insulting names, start beating her or at times force her into it.

2.4.7. Jealousy and possessiveness.

Some people are just too jealousy in nature such that they feel uncomfortable whenever their partners talk to someone else. For instance, there are some men who will quarrel their wives by a mere suspicion that they talk about love affairs with other men. In most cases, men who are jealousy and possessive would always monitor the movement of their wives. Kieran Scott maintains that in some instances, he may take her to work, lunch, and bring her home at the end of the working day. (Kieran 2007: 290). He further observes that in extreme cases the batterer escorted his wife to the door of the ladies' room in public facility they visited. This in most cases, causes great mayhem to the families which may even result to death.

There have been several instances of people who have murdered their spouses simply because they suspect that they have extra marital affairs. For polygamous marriages, there could arouse envy and jealousy among co-wives who quarrel and create problems in the family. This may lead to one of them being abused by the husband. Sometimes such women compete for the favor of their husband hence in the process they may accuse others falsely to win favor. This is why Kunhiyop observes that a wife may claim that her rival has stolen a yam from her farm or is trying to poison her husband. Such accusations he argues often lead to confrontations and beatings or verbal abuse (Kunhiyop 2008:245).

2.4.8 Social tolerance to violent and abusive behavior

Most of the African women are socialized to tolerate abuse. In several occasions, when a girl runs to her paternal home after a quarrel with her husband, the family members encourage her to go back and take care of her husband and children whom she is not allowed to take to her paternal home. This to some extent encourages abuse because the husband knows that even if she goes back, she will soon come back and there is nothing which will be done to him.

There are no measures on the perpetrators of domestic violence among most of the communities in Africa. This means that domestic violence to most of the communities in Africa is not taken seriously. In some there are no measures for controlling or punishing those who abuse their wives. In Kenya for instance, when a woman ran to her paternal home due to

quarrel which resulted into a serious battering, she would stay with her parents for few days before she was taken back to her matrimonial home in the company of two or more relatives.

Additionally, others believe that being battered by their husbands is a sign of love for them. This explains the reason as to why Njogu says: ...in fact even the society socializes you as a woman to anticipate this discipline...we have women who say when they have not been beaten that their husbands have stopped loving them” (Njogu, 2010 4th March, on domestic violence in Kenya).

Nevertheless, the relatives from both sides expected the problem to be solved through feasting together. Therefore both relatives and the village elders sat in a circle and tried to solve the problem amicably as they sipped beer from one pot. This was meant to bring about unity and forget the former anger. This way, the woman was technically reconciled to her husband.

Moreover, women were discouraged from running away from their matrimonial homes. It was believed that if she developed the habit, her husband may think that she does not qualify to be good wife hence consider remarriage. Additionally, some women were always convinced that their husbands abuse them because they are not in their normal senses especially when they take alcohol. In this view, their wives are reminded that their husbands are so good but occasionally fall victims due to alcoholism. This is true when Kunhiyop observes that their behavior is explained away as a character flaw involving bad temper or lack of self control (Kunhiyop 2008:245).

Having looked at the theories behind the causes of domestic violence and abuse, we look at the effects of the same in the preceding paragraphs below.

2.5 Effects of domestic violence

Domestic violence has far reaching effects especially on the victims. This implies that the victims may be affected to the extent that some situations can never be reversed. In the following paragraphs below a discussion of some main effects will be made.

2.5.1 Fear and intimidation

Once abused, there is a probability of the victims to live in fear and intimidation throughout their lives. Those who have experienced violence and abuse, no longer feel secure. This

means that those abused always feel intimidated. This situation , may lead to low self esteem. Kunhiyop observes that the constant insecurity with which they live may even lead to problems in sleeping (Kunhiyop 2008:2). In most cases, when the children to abusive parents senses that their abusive parents is coming home, many go into hiding for fear of being abused. Children may grow in constant fear when they are in the midst of other children and even their own agemates. Others start crying hysterically when the father starts abusing their mothers. This may further explain why children who grow up in abusive families, develop similar habits later in life.

2.5.2 Abusive behavior become a future habit

Research findings show that since children learn and imitate what they see from the surrounding environment, they are likely to become abusive either from their experience of being abused or by experiencing abuse within the family. According to NCCB/USCC, abuse counselors say that a child raised in a home with physical abuse is a thousand times more likely to use violence in his own family. (NCCB/USCC 1982: 2). Therefore among the effects show that children or other abused member in the family may become abusive in future. Kunhiyop notes that children who have been abused often become delinquent and abusive in their relationships with other children. He further maintains that the bullies in the streets are often those who have been abused at home (Kunhiyop 2008:246).

2.5.3 Permanent scare and/ or loss of lives

Some family abuse may result to physical disfigure and even death. Domestic violence has left many victims crippled. Majority missing some parts of their bodies like eyes harms, feet or with disfigured faces. These are in situations whereby the victims are confronted with sharp/blunt objects like knives, an axe, stones or even burn with hot water, acid, and oil among others. Sometimes perpetrators may even decide to strangle the victims to death. NCCB/USCC observes that women are at a most dangerous point when they attempt to leave their abusers. (NCCB/USCB 1992: 10). They further pointed out that according to the research findings, women who leave their batterers are at 75 percent greater risk of being killed by the batterer than those who stay. Other forms of abuse may lead to the victims committing suicide due to stigma and low self esteem. These may be as a result of sexual abuse where a girl/ boy may be sexually abused by the father among other family members.

2.5.4 Destitute children/ or and abandoned children

In instances whereby wives run away from their abusive husbands, children are left without the loving care of their mothers. Moreover those who may be left behind with their fathers may fall victims of violence and abuse. It is believed that husbands who abuse their wives will also abuse other members of the family who live with them. This is probably the reason why there are reported cases of fathers sodomizing their own sons and sexually abusing their own daughters. Further more, some children in abusive families end up dropping from school due to lack of school fees, clothes among other basic needs. This is how they are deprived of their rights at early ages. Among other basic needs include: Education, health, good shelter, clothing and proper parental care among others.

2.5.5 Psychological effects

Those who experience domestic violence and abuse may be affected psychologically. This is due to the trauma. Children for instance who may have witnessed murder may develop some mental disorders. There is again as noted earlier a possibility of those victims to be abusive later in life. This is a theory Barnett refers to as psychopathology. These theories propose that various forms of family violence, such as child abuse or spouse abuse, are committed by individuals who are seriously disturbed by some form of mental illness, personality disorder, or some other individual defect (Barnett 1997:28).

2.5.6 Separation/and or divorce

Root notes that, since 1970s, divorce has become a common cultural reality. (Roots 2010: xvi). He further maintains that for a generation of young people born in the late sixties and after, divorce is as familiar as Froot Loops and cable television.

Although in some African societies divorce is common and easy, there are other parts as Mbiti observes where, in traditional setup; divorce is either very rare or completely unknown (Mbiti 1969:145). Today separation and divorce are very common in many parts of Africa; and in the world as a whole.

A number of people who break out of their marriages do so following family/domestic violence. This is because not many will tolerate violent abuses in the family and some opt to flee for their safety. Since domestic violence is currently on the rise, this probably explains the reason as to why separation and divorce rates are equally high.

2.5.7 Single parenthood

In most parts of the world today, many women prefer to be single than to bare all the abuses experienced from their husbands. Some who separate from their husbands remarry whereas others prefer remaining single due to their former experiences with abusive spouses. Others would prefer to have children with a man but never to be married. These are sometimes referred to as single parents by choice because they choose that kind of life.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter endeavored to discuss various forms / types of domestic violence and abuse. It further examines the possible causes and the theories behind the practice. Nevertheless, it also discusses the effects of the practice in the entire family members and /or those who live within the family reach not necessarily the family members. In chapter three that follows, a discussion on African view of family, the way some marital violence were handled , and the MCK response to domestic violence and abuse will be made.

3.0 AFRICAN VIEW OF FAMILY, AND THE MCK RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed domestic violence cases and incidents in Kenya by evaluating different types of family abuse and violence. Furthermore, different causes and effects were similarly evaluated. In this chapter, I will discuss the African view of family; identify some marital problems and the way they were handled in Africa and Kenya in particular. Finally I will examine the MCK response to domestic violence and abuse. This will include a description and analysis of MCK church domestic violence related documents. These documents will include MCK Standing Orders and Agenda, the MCK Annual Meeting Minutes for the year 2012 and the Marriage Service Liturgy which is found in the Methodist Service Book and a description of the MCK discipline as provided in the MCK Standing Orders and Agenda. These documents have a lot of guidelines on family issues hence they are relevant for this thesis. Let me begin by giving a brief description of an African family.

3.2 African view of family

In Africa, a family is made up of many people besides the immediate members who include the husband, his wife and children. This is because some relatives are viewed as the members of the family. These may include brothers/sisters/uncles/Aunts/Nieces/Nephews from either the husband or the wife's family. This is why Mbiti adds that these could also be having their children (Mbiti 1989:104). This implies that even if they maybe having their own families, they are still part of the larger family. This explains the close bond between the relatives hence marriage is a communal act which includes the larger family members or the extended families.

During the marriage in Africa, the bride and the groom become part of the larger extended family which may include the whole clan. This means that marriage and family life is not a private but rather a communal responsibility whereby all the relatives are fully involved. I therefore agree with Kunhiyop saying: "At an African wedding, it would not be unusual for the pastor to tell the bride, "You are married not to your husband Paul, but to his family. That means you have to indentify completely with all his relatives, look after them, care for them, go out of your way to make them happy. If you do that, you will have no cause for regret." And to the groom he says. "You, Paul, will have to do likewise with Mapule's relatives. Her

people are your people (Kunhiyop 2008:190). This therefore explains the strong bond between families and relatives among African families.

I do remember during the first few months of my marriage, I was welcomed warmly into the family and was introduced to all family members and relatives. My brother-in-laws, cousins and other close relatives from my husband's family even to date call me "our wife". This again explains the strong bond between the families.

3.2.1 Some marital problems and the way they were handled in Africa and Kenya in particular

Family issues were entirely handled by the entire clan. This I mean that in cases of problems between a husband and his wife, the matter was made known to the clan and the village elders who were believed to be the custodians of peace. Such family issues include violence in the family which could be as a result of misunderstandings between a husband and his wife. This could be as a result of several issues which were ironed out before the larger family members.

In cases of infertility whereby the wife was unable to conceive and give birth, the family members including the first wife could find another fertile wife and marry to keep the family extending. The first barren wife was not divorced but was still the wife to the husband and she was respected as the first wife. I do remember before the death of my mother-in-law how she as the first wife to my father-in-law, used to love and care for her step children. She frequently made the African porridge commonly known as gruel to the second wife's children who loved her dearly. The marriage was organized after a series of deaths to my mother-in-law's children who all died as infants and she was survived by the one and only boy who later became my husband.

In some instances whereby the husband was unable to fertilize the wife due to infertility, his brother or any other from the family could have sexual intercourse with the wife hence saving the family. This explains the reason why Mbiti observes that divorce was rare or totally unknown in African marriages (Mbiti 1989:141). Nevertheless, I should note that in Africa, patriarchy system has taken the upper hand whereby although family problems are solved by the clan, the community favors mostly the men or husbands more than their wives. This was evident especially when the cause of the problem is clearly the husband. In some cases which involved wife battering among other abuses, the blame is mainly openly laid on the wife that she should take care of her husband and be submissive to avoid being battered in future. On

the contrary, the elders and the family members sternly warned the husband alone without the presence of the wife. Here it should be noted that, before the clan and the elders, the blame is laid on the wife who could not argue before them since it could be seen as a lack of respect. Later on she was allowed to go to the kitchen to be with children while they cautioned the husband.

One may wonder the reason behind all this? This is in order to maintain the integrity of the husband because it is believed that the husband is like a Lion in the family hence his weaknesses are not to be exposed in public otherwise his wife will have no respect for him. Other domestic violence related issues were especially when the wife threatened to poison the husband, or when some people within the neighborhood sensed signs of the practise of black magic or witchcraft to some family members. In most cases, those who practised such were the women. However when one was proved guilty, she was immediately drove out of the matrimonial home to her paternal home by the whole clan. Some women were also believed to possess charms. When people suspected that some possessed them, they were isolated from other groups and children were cautioned against them.

The most popular charm among the Meru women was known as '*kawiria*' which literary means 'love' but later nicknamed as love potion. This potion was believed to work magic on some families where there were evidences of misunderstandings. Some people believed that when this charm was carefully administered to husbands who were violent, it could reverse the habit. The women who were occasionally battered by their husbands or who suspected that their husbands were having some extra marital affairs with other women approached the medicine men for help. However, since these practices were not acceptable in Kenya among other African countries. The whole practice was a taboo and those involved were immediately evicted from their matrimonial homes. The women common believe among the women was that these charms were curative for their marital problems.

Other marital problems which resulted to the clans' mass action among the Ameru people were: intentions of/or cases of abortion. Abortion was/ is considered criminal and murder, which was / is punishable. Those women who fell victims were unconditionally evicted from their matrimonial homes permanently and never to come back again. This is because they were associated with murderers who were not fit to be good wives and mothers. In most

cases, the who family where such women originated was branded as 'evil' hence most young unmarried men were cautioned against marrying from such families.

3.3 MCK Response to domestic violence and abuse

As noted earlier the analysis of MCK documents will include the MCK Standing Orders 2011 revised edition, the MCK Annual Conference Minutes of 2012, and the MCK Marriage and liturgy Service Book. Let us first of all look at the MCK Standing Orders and Agendas in the following paragraph below.

3.3.1 MCK Standing Orders and Agendas

The MCK Standing Orders and Agendas is a book which constitutes the constitution of the church. It actually acts as a guide to the running of the church on matters of decision making. Besides the Bible, this constitution is of great significance to MCK. The issue of family falls under the Christian and Social Responsibility Committee. This committee oversees the welfare of the MCK families and aims at giving guidelines on issues involving MCK families. It endeavors into making Christian homes a place of love and fidelity, to witness to the Christian standard of family life, and to promote better conditions for the housing and home life of the MCK community.

This committee oversees the social habits of the MCK members. Among them is to exercise restraint or abstinence in matters concerning alcoholic drink and gambling, and to maintain clean sexual relationships. To eradicate the evils of drink, gambling, and sexual impurity and to oppose the commercial exploitation of all three (MCK Standing Orders and Agendas Revised edition 2011: 180). In this case, the MCK constitution prohibits alcoholism and condemns the evils associated to it. This committee thus appeals for all MCK members to abstain from alcoholism which may bring problems to the families and maintain alcohol free Christian lives.

The MCK Standing Orders and Agendas discuss Marriage in Chapter XIV, which I think is relevant in this thesis. This is because; a family is part of marriage. In this chapter, a detailed discussion on various issues affecting Christian families is made. These includes the following namely: S.O 164 which discusses the permanence and the sacredness of marriage vows, S.O.165 which explain how marriage is conducted, S.O.166 provide the procedure of marriage for those who are already married by customary Law, S.O.167 gives the procedure on the preparation for marriage and which I see of great importance in this thesis because it

explains in details the expectations of Christian marriages as given in the Bible .Furthermore, it discusses the procedure for handling various marital problems in Christian families and among MCK members. S.O. 168 deliberates on membership status of separated and divorced persons. S.O.169, discusses the fate of marriage separation and divorce involving a Methodist minister.

I will discuss this in more details because it is relevant in this thesis whereby the procedure and the fate of clergies who face marital violence and abuse is discussed. In this thesis, I mentioned earlier that some MCK clergies /ministers do experience family violence, a challenge which the church should pursue to address because, they (the ministers) are viewed as people who provide counsel to the members experiencing various problems yet they have become the victims. S.O.170, gives guidelines on Polygamy and Church Membership, and finally S.O.171, which gives an appeal. In the following paragraphs I will concentrate with the following S.O.167, which deals with the Preparation for marriage, and S.O. 168, which discusses the Membership Status of separated and Divorced Persons, and S.O. 169, which gives guidelines on marriage separation and divorce involving a Methodist minister.

A) Standing Order 167. Preparation for Marriage

This MCK Standing Orders gives a lot of emphasis on the preparation for marriage. Before officiating the marriage, the officiating Minister who is supposed to be licensed by the Kenyan government organizes for interview between the bride and the groom in which he/she shall explain the meaning of Christian marriage and the marriage service (MCK Standing Orders and Agendas 2011:188). The minister emphasizes the importance of temperance which is important for the growth and welfare of any Christian family. In order to lead a good family life, the parties should have self control. This is because, as the saying goes ‘error is to human’, and the fact that ‘no man/woman is an angel’. There is therefore a need to have self control, failure to which may result to great mayhems in the families. Secondly the issue of modesty is emphasized by the minister. This aspect is of great importance too because each person needs to be humble to each other and accommodate the weaknesses of the other party in order to solve marital problems amicably. Thirdly, is the issue of stewardship.

This word means ‘taking care’ of, or being in-charge. This is a topic that the officiating minister should discuss with the bride and the groom before the wedding day. Here the

minister reminds the party that it is their responsibilities to take care of each other. The care should not only be expected from one party but from both. They are further reminded that they should be responsible for church properties and for the properties of their families. In other words therefore, the prospective couples are reminded that they are soon entering into the world of greater responsibilities which also includes children that God will bless them with. This again is not the responsibility of the wife who will become the mother of the children, but the responsibility of both.

Fourthly the minister will also put emphasis on the error of extravagance. This concerns overspending and misuse of funds. In families this may be problematic especially where couples spend more than what they earn. Sometimes they end up laying blame on each other. The officiating minister reminds the duo about the danger of being extravagant. During the interviews, they are reminded to arrange a simple wedding which they are able to cater according to their abilities without getting into huge debts. This is important because majority of newly married couples start their families with lots of pressure which results from being extravagant during wedding preparations. Some take loans to have exorbitant weddings. This may create a lot of problems in marriage leading to self blames or the partners. Poverty may set into the new family. The minister thus cautions them against this and advice them to consider less expensive wedding.

Moreover, the minister is required to explain the legal implication of marriage. He/she should explain the fact that marriages conducted under the Law of Kenya cannot be dissolved except by a valid judgment of divorce , which can only be given by a court, and in no circumstances by the church (Standing Orders and Agendas 2011:188).This implies that the church does not allow divorce under whatever circumstances. In other words, this helps the party to make concrete decisions on lifelong union of marriage. When the two enter into this union, it is expected to be terminated by death alone. The popularly referred text during the many weddings in MCK is 1Corinthians 13: 4-8 which states that love is patience... love endure all things.... This again is in accordance with the biblical teachings that ‘what God has joined together, no man should put asunder’. However the question is, should one be patient in an abusive marriage/ relationship even to the extent of risking his/her life?

B) S.O.169 Marriage Separation and Divorce involving a Methodist Minister

In this standing Order, detailed discussions about the ministers’ families are made as follows:

1) Rules and guidelines for dealing with Methodist Ministers experiencing marital unhappiness with their spouses.

Under this, a preamble to the guidelines and the Rules which govern separation and divorce of Methodist ministers (clergies) is made. There is a high expectation of the Ministers' families. This is in reference to 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Romans 2:21-24) that the ordained ministers will set a good example to the flock as far as marriage is concerned. This therefore implies that the ministers/clergies should be above reproach as the apostle Paul says "We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry" (2 Corinthians 6:3). It is therefore expected that if a certain minister is facing marital unhappiness, he/she should seek help from a Methodist Church minister or Bishop for counseling. The reconciliation becomes paramount where the two spouses involved are both ministers /clergies in the ordained ministry (Standing Orders and Agendas 2011:193).

2) Guidelines on cases whereby clergies face marital unhappiness.

It states that clergies who experience marital stress and happiness should strive to amend the problem amicably by exploring all avenues available to the couple which include: seeking counsel from trusted friends, family members and fellow ministers in the ordained ministry, seeking specialized Christian counseling from competent Counselors who are themselves men and women of integrity, or consulting with one's superiors in the ministry. One may wonder what happens if the two are not able to reconcile even after exhausting all possible means and avenues? Must they continue living together to safeguard the ministry, or what should be done since they should set a good example for the flock, and that the church under no circumstance does not allow separation or divorce?

3) Guidelines for dealing with ministers who are involved in physical fighting with their spouses.

It states that under whatever provocation, Methodist ministers should not result to fighting with their spouses. It further states that if such is reported, it will automatically lead to discipline by suspension from duty without pay until the case is reviewed by the Ministerial Pastoral Committee and the situation is reverse (Standing Orders and Agendas 2011:193).

This therefore is evident that physical fighting among the ministers' families is not allowed in the Methodist Church of Kenya for the reason that they should live above reproach as servants of God.

4) Guidelines for dealing with divorce involving Methodist Ministers.

That since divorce is not permissible by the Methodist Church in Kenya and remains a sinful declension from the divine ideal, any ordained minister who divorces, shall automatically be defrocked from the ministry (defrocking is a term commonly used by the Methodist church in Kenya to refer to exclusion from the active ministry, however the defrocked minister remains a member of the local church but he/she is not allowed to transact any document under the Methodist church in Kenya). Having looked at the MCK Standing Orders, in the following paragraphs I shall explore the MCK Marriage Service Liturgy.

3.3.2. MCK Marriage Service Liturgy

The MCK Marriage liturgy is found in the Methodist Service Book. The MCK service Book contains all the Methodist worship liturgies as it was adopted from the Methodist Church in Great Britain. In the Marriage liturgy, there are three types of Marriage service liturgies which include the following: the Marriage Service and the Blessing of a Marriage previously solemnized, interfaith marriages and the marriage involving unmarried partners (spinster and a bachelor) of the same Christian faith.

According to the MCK tradition, marriage is solemnized by a Methodist ordained minister who is officially licensed by the government of Kenya to do so. The marriage is to be solemnized in a church building during daylight (it should be before 6 o'clock in the evening), in presence of the congregation (though not mandatory) and in the presence of some witnesses.

The persons to be married stand together; the woman on the left hand side of the man in the presence of at least two witnesses. The officiating minister says the following words as a declaration of purpose, "We are gathered here in the presence of God to witness the marriage between A.B and C.D and to support them with our prayers and to share their joy"(the numbers A.B, and C.D, represents the names of those getting married). The Minister continues, "Marriage is given by God. It is not entered upon or thought of lightly or selfishly but in the love of God" (Methodist service Book 1987:133).This is a caution to those entering

into marriage union that it is given by God Himself hence it should be regarded with much respect and dignity. The officiating minister continues to remind the couple that according to the teachings of Christ, marriage is a lifelong union of one man and one woman. The Minister thus quotes the letter of Paul to Ephesians saying:

“It is His will that in marriage, the love of man and woman should be fulfilled in the wholeness of their life together, in mutual companionship, helpfulness and care. By the help of God this love grows and deepens with the years, such marriage is the foundation of true family life and, when blessed with the gift of children is God’s chosen way for continuance of mankind and the bringing up of children in security and trust . The union of husband and wife is in scripture compared to the union of Christ and his church for he loved the church and gave himself for it” (Methodist Conference Office,1987:133).

The minister then proceeds saying, “I require you and charge you both in the presence of God and of this congregation that if either of you know anything to prevent you from lawfully married you can confess it”. He emphasizes on any individual impediment which may act as a stumbling block against their union in marriage. They both respond each at a time beginning with the man saying, “I do solemnly declare that I do not know of any lawful impediment why I A.B may not be joined in matrimony to C.D” (Methodist Conference Office 1987:133). The minister then may read the Bible verses provided for the marriage service or choose some others related to marriage and family life.

After the bible readings and expository sermon, the minister then leads the duo into exchange of marriage vows. He starts with prayer saying, “Oh God, as you have brought together A and C in love and trust, enable them through the power of your Holy Spirit to make their vows through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” The minister asks them the questions about the vows to be exchanged later in the marriage service process each at a time. Starting with the man, the minister asks, “A.B, will you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife, to live together according to the law of God in the holy estate of marriage? Will you love her, honor her and keep her and forsaking all others, be faithful to her so long as both shall live? In order to confirm that each will fulfill all the questions stated; each answers, Yes, I will” (Methodist Conference office, 1987:134).

The minister then inquires the person who is to give the bride in marriage, either the parents if they are alive or any of the close family members can respond saying, it is i/we in case of

both the mother and the father. However it should be noted here that due to patriarchy system, the fathers are considered to give out their daughters in marriage although in the actual sense, both present (the father and the mother of the girl should do it).The minister then leads them into self pledge and public vows to each other as they each say, “ I call upon these persons here present, to witness that I A.B, do take thee, C.D to be my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward , for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God’s holy law; and to this, I pledge myself”(Methodist Conference Office 1987:135).

It should be noted that this kind of pledge to oneself to the other has currently received a lot of criticisms from some MCK members. Some think it should be discussed with minister on what they would prefer as they pledge themselves to each other. The MCK should re-visit this pledge of troth because to some it may be problematic and unclear.

After the solemn vows and pledges of troth, they both exchange rings as a symbol for their love for each other and the minister legally declares them as a husband and wife. Thereafter the couple signs a certificate which is a legal document and a symbol of their marriage. The marriage vows are binding considering the fact that marriage is conducted in the church and that a legal document is signed before the witnesses .Normally, there are two copies of the marriage certificate which upon presenting one to the couple, the other one is surrendered to the government registrar for marriages in Kenya for record purposes.

The marriage certificate safeguards both the husband and his wife. This is in cases whereby in future any of them may decide to withdraw from marriage without the consent of the other; one has the right to claim by producing a copy of marriage certificate which is a legal document. Having therefore analyzed the MCK marriage liturgy, in the following paragraphs I will examine the MCK Annual Conference on issues of marriage and family. I will examine the latest minutes for the last conference which was in the year 2012.

I wish to give a reason as to why I have chosen to analyze these minutes. First of all, there was an issue arising from the ministerial session of the conference regarding marital problems among the MCK clergies.This was in reference to S.O 120 which was discussed in the ministerial session on item 4. (a) Has any case of Ministerial discipline arisen? If so, what is the report of the Pastoral Committee and what is the decision of the Conference upon it? A

case of marital unhappiness amongst the ministers which was referred for many years was brought to the ministerial session of the conference for review.

It was reported that there were some ministers who had frequently quarreled and fought their wives. It was also discovered that they had separated and each were living in the ministers' Manses where their spouses had no access to. Both happened to be ordained MCK ministers. According to S.O169 (2), which gives Rules and guidelines for dealing with ministers involved in physical fighting with their spouses, the following recommendations were made:

a) Cases of physical fighting within marriage

Whatever the provocation, Methodist ministers should not result to fighting with their spouses. Any reported physical assault by a Methodist minister to his/her spouse will automatically lead to discipline by suspension from duty without pay until the case is reviewed by the Ministerial Pastoral Committee and the situation is reversed.

b) Cases of separation due to marital unhappiness

Separation of married couples for a considerable length of time due to marital unhappiness or for whatever reason is contrary to the teaching of the Methodist Church and a violation of God's will for marriage. Where separation is due to marital unhappiness and inability to cohabit together, rules shall apply:

i) Separation of married spouses involving a Methodist minister (Clergy) is not encouraged under any circumstances.

ii) If a Methodist minister separates from his married spouse for three (3) consecutive months due to marital unhappiness, then, that minister automatically will be suspended from duty without any pay until the case is reviewed by the Ministerial Pastoral Committee and the situation is reversed. The Methodist church in Kenya therefore does not encourage separation or even divorce. It rather encourages that the parties seek reconciliation by all means in order to promote ideal Christian families.

However the church recognizes the fact that there are courses of conduct which violates the pledges and the obligations of marriage and which may destroy it as a union of heart and soul. The intolerable marital unhappiness they cause, and the wrong they do to innocent partners and children make divorce the only remedy. It is the judgment of the MCK Conference due to the above circumstances therefore to permit a member of the MCK, in an action in which divorce has been granted, permission to remarry (MCK, 1996:121).

3.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have evaluated the African view of family. Furthermore, we have looked at the way some marital problems were handled; further more, I have analyzed the MCK documents among them the MCK Standing Orders and Agendas, the MCK marriage service liturgy and the MCK Annual Conference Minutes. In the following Chapter, I will present the analysis of research findings.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the African concept of family. I further analyzed the MCK domestic violence and abuse related documents. These include the Standing Orders, the Marriage service liturgy and the latest Conference Minutes. I analysed the guidelines provided for Christian families and how MCK deals with marital problems. In this chapter, analysis of data will be made. The materials will be analysed thematically. The qualitative interview was carried out among the following people: Five (5) MCK Bishops among whom the Presiding Bishop was included, eight (8) MCK ministers who included those with domestic violence related problems and were affected in one way or the other, and about twenty five (25) lay MCK members, among who were interviewed individually. The lay members included five (5) men, five (5) youths, and ten (10) women who constituted the majority of the church members. The total number of those interviewed in focus group, and as individuals was thirty eight (38).

(See 1.6 of this thesis).

I will share some of the field work experiences during the interviews in the following paragraphs below just before analyzing the data gathered.

4.2 Field work experiences

During my two months research, I encountered limitations and opportunities. Among the opportunities were that a number of the interviewees were welcoming and cooperative. The key informants and the ministers were cooperative as they availed themselves for the interviews. However, I cannot deny the fact that there were some few limitations. Among them include some interviewees who were non cooperative. A number of them were not time conscious, which interfered with our time schedule. Others whom we had appointments with sent regret messages for other appointments .This I suggested was due to fear of self disclosure. Some may have mistaken me for a spy. I took some times explaining to the church members about my academic research which entails research ethics among others.

Moreover, I noted the element of stigma especially when dealing with sensitive issues like sicknesses. Some interviewees were nervous and did not want to discuss them openly. In this case, I was careful not to include the key informants or other ministers in the interview and I assured the interviewees that their names would be treated as anonymous.

Means of transport was also a great challenge. I sometimes used to walk far distances to conduct interviews because there were no good means of transport and again the interviewees were living far apart. In some instances, I hired a motorcycle or a bicycle for my informants too to meet the clients. I also had to find convenient place to sleep because sometimes I finished later than expected.

Food and accommodation was a great challenge turning to be very expensive. However despite all that, I learnt a lot from the interviewees and gathered information which will benefit the MCK upon the completion of this thesis. During the interviews, I developed some themes which featured during the interviews. These themes include: Misconception of dowry and African Patriarchy system, Drug and drug abuse, competent and professional counselors, forced marriages, children's sex (an excuse for marital unfaithfulness? number of children, misconception of gender equity/equality, lack of mutual fulfillment and HIV/AIDS in Christian families.

I will discuss the Bishops' and the ministers' contribution, then the lay members among who were interviewed individually. All the interviews were conducted through focus groups except some few which were individual.

4.3 Bishops' deliberations

4.3.1 Misconception of dowry and African patriarchy system

The concept of paying dowry is highly valued in most of the African countries. In fact it is viewed as a reward for the exchange of a girl in marriage. It is given as a token of appreciation and not like exchange in barter trade. However, this concept has been misinterpreted today as a form of 'buying' or 'paying for a wife' in marriage. Bishops A and B felt that this connotation may cause violence and abuse in families. "Some men feel that they paid so much in exchange for their wives, hence the question of possessiveness" .Bishop A argued.

Bishop B retaliated adding that as much as they are Africans, there is a need to respect their culture. Besides that, he pointed out that they should remember that they are Christians. Further more, he cautioned that the idea of bride price should never be misinterpreted by Christians. He therefore suggested that Christians need to be counseled wisely during pre-marital counseling, which will help them to understand the essence of marriage. Bishops C and D observed that this could be the possible reason explaining why wife battering has

existed in Africa for long among Christians. ‘Some abuses like forced sex in marriage which may be regarded as rape in marriage may result from this because some think it is their right to have sex any time they wish and that their wives are their properties’. Bishop E noted .As already pointed out in chapter two of this thesis about the causes of domestic violence and abuse, the Bishops echoed my words that at times due to patriarchy system; violence occurs in marriages. Bishop D maintained that in Africa, patriarchy system has taken the upper stage whereby many husbands claim to be like a roaring Lion in the family. He further noted that they want their strength and presence to be felt among their wives and children. This concept, he observed has been misused or misinterpreted leading to violence and abuse in many Kenyan families. Bishop B noted that the issue of wife battering among other domestic violence and abuse was not a problem some decades ago. However he noted that with the rise of women empowerment through certain forums like feminism; women claim to know and protect their rights.

Bishop C added that there are lots of changes because culture is dynamic. He pointed out that some cultural and traditional practices are influenced by the changes in the world. He noted that globalization has played a key role in the world today changing the initial concept and some traditional practices. Unlike before, he said that today there are various organizations that protect the rights of children and women hence domestic violence is taken with seriousness.

INCIDENT 1: Bishop C shared a case whereby one of the circuit leaders in MCK abused his wife by severely beating her before shaving off her beautiful hair. When the matter was reported to the minister in charge, the young man said that it was a form of humbling his wife. The quarrel arose after the wife borrowed her husband some money to make her hair at the salon. The husband was not willing to give her though he had some. This irritated the wife who decided to sell some few kilos of maize corns from their store in order to attend to her hair. The husband resulted into thorough beating and eventually a complete shaving off of her beautiful hair. The man thought that this was a way of making her submissive to him. Bishop C noted that this was a misconception which can damage the whole family. Bishops A and E echoed similar sentiments with C that lack of good communication in marriage can also damage many Christian families. He further pointed out that some trivial issues may cause great damage to familie which when discussed harmoniously, may saves many marriages.

Bishop C and D concurred with A, emphasizing that the notion of patriarchy system is far reaching and needs to be addressed through pre-marital counseling and family life education seminars and forum. The Bishops further examined the misuse of drugs as a serious cause of domestic violence and abuse. In this analysis, I noted that misinterpretation of dowry in marriage can have far reaching effects. When some men hold such a view in marriage, there may be the danger of being abusive. Patriarchy system in Africa is somehow something that I would view as inborn or innate. Culture has actually made us who we are. This means that the African mind is somehow enslaved to the extent which may be hard to liberate. However, I am not saying that we cannot change, but it may take time.

In the following sections below, I will present their deliberations on drug and drug abuse as a cause of domestic violence and abuse.

4.3.2 Drug and drug abuse

Quite a number of family men take drugs. Drugs in this context are not taken for curative purposes, but rather they are abused. Among the drugs abused by people are marijuana, cocaine, heroin, alcohol among many others. When taken in large quantities, these drugs can be addictive. Sometimes they may interfere with the normal functioning of the body. In such circumstances people stop behaving normally and this may have negative effects like being violent which results into battering and abusing those in the surrounding. Bishop C noted that about 50 percent of domestic violence and abuse are caused by the abuse of drugs such as marijuana and alcohol.

Bishops A and B concurred with Bishop C but adding that the consumption of drugs may not only affect the normal functioning of the brain, but also drains the family's finances. They observed that once the person has become addicted, it is hard to stop which means that he/she become what they termed as a 'daily drinker'. They further maintained that when this happens, the victim hardly saves a coin. Moreover, they noted that this may lead to violence and abuse in families. They also pointed out the dangers associated with misuse of funds on drugs which include the following: Children dropping out of school due to lack of school fees, lack of health facilities, food, shelter and clothing among other essentials.

Bishop B further added that other effects of alcoholism may include illnesses/death, loss of job through retrenchment among others. He mentioned the consumption of the famous local brew commonly known as '*kumi kumi*' in Swahili language to mean '*ten ten*' (selling at ten

Kenya shillings only). Kiswahili is a Kenyan national language. He cautioned against the intake of this liquor claiming that it may destroy internal organs like kidneys and liver, resulting to death.

On the same problem of drug abuse, Bishop E shared the following incident:

Incident 2. There was a case whereby a family middle aged man used to consume alcohol and marijuana, cocaine and sometimes Heroin. After some years he became addicted and could not help himself out of the habit. His elder son narrated all what happened in his presence one fateful night. “He could drink and threaten to kill someone...his son said sobbing. ‘This I thought was just but a mere threat’...he added. He continued saying that at times his father could take a knife and swear that he would cut someone’s head. The threats were taken for granted until the reality happened. The bishop narrated that the boy who was the elder son in the family, witnessed a merciless man slaughter of his own mother by his father five years ago when the boy was in primary five.

The Bishop said that it all started when as usual the boy’s father came home drunk and started threatening to kill someone. He explained that this day, the boy ran out of the house as usual because he feared for his life. However, he decided to go in after he heard them discussing the cow’s head and the chapattis, which were the boy’s favorite food. The father had brought with him a cow’s head which he urged his mother to make some soup from. He forced her to quickly make some chapattis before preparing the cow’s head for soup. As the mother was preparing to cook, the boy’s father took an axe and started demonstrating how he was about to cut someone’s head. The Bishop further narrated that as usual the boy’s mother laughed it off as a joke, but without knowing what would follow suit. The boy’s father took an axe and hit wife on the forehead and she fell unconsciously. “He then ordered the boy to sit with his mouth closed, lest he become the next on the line”. The Bishop narrated.

The mother eventually succumbed to death while pinking helplessly for some water to drink, which her son could not provide. The Bishop narrated that afterwards, the boy’s father locked them into the house leaving stern warning that the boy should not go out. The Bishop said that the boy and other siblings left school since the murder of their mother and they are leaving with their Uncle who cannot cater for their basic needs.

This story echoes what I discussed as the causes and the effects of and abuse violence in chapter Two. Bishop D responded saying that the MCK is indeed faced with ethical and

pastoral challenges especially when giving guidance to such hurting families. He pointed out the pastoral challenge to such victims and perpetrators of violence and abuse in families. Moreover, he posed the following questions: what would be the fate of such victims who are frequently abused? Should they continue living with the abusers no matter what may happen to them? What is the view of the church regarding legal measures? When the couples vow that it is only death which will separate them, is it any kind of death? Other Bishops concurred with Bishop D's sentiments observing that it is not enough to dismiss the offenders as being "under the MCK discipline" and being excluded from taking the Holy Communion, but something more needs to be done. Also the question of death in marriage featured here whereby many wondered what type of death is considered an acceptable means of separating those married in the MCK. The Bishops concluded that the Church has a lot to do to save her members from domestic violence and abuse.

According to the Bishops' deliberations, it came out vividly that the Methodist Church in Kenya needs to come up with some strategic planning on how to address specific pertinent issues in families that lead to domestic violence and abuse.

4.4 MCK Ministers and the Members' responses.

Having presented the Bishops' experiences and views on domestic violence and abuse, in the following paragraphs below; a presentation of the MCK clergies and the members' views will be made.

4.4.1 Pastoral care to the pastors' families

While interviewing the MCK ministers, pastoral care to the ministers' families became evident. Most of those interviewed noted that a lack of pastoral care to the ministers' families, may contribute to their poor performances in the ministry, posing a serious pastoral challenge. Minister A noted that the problem of domestic violence and abuse does not only affect the laity, but that it is equally common among the ministers. She said that the MCK should know that the fact that the ministers are God's servants does not imply that they are less human or superhuman. The ministers have marital needs which should be addressed like any other people. Ministers B, C, and D echoed similar sentiments with A. Moreover, they added that the ministers are faced with great marital challenges since they lack someone to counsel or address their family needs.

Minister D argued that despite the fact that some of his colleague counsel people with various family problems, they may lack counsel for their colleagues and the self. He pointed out that due to stigma and fear of self exposure to the members whom they serve, the ministers suffer silently. “It sounds incredible for a clergy who is believed to be above reproach to approach a counselor who may be his flock for marital counseling and advice” Minister D lamented.

The question of who should pastor the pastors was evident in this group. The ministers pointed out that pastoral care to the ministers is important and should not be overlooked.. Minister F cited an incident in which he was severely abused by his wife who is not a clergy. He argued that as an African man, he could have retaliated by hitting her back, “but I remembered that I am the Lord’s servant”...He said sobbing. He further noted that the problem has now been repeated severally and he feels ashamed to consult a counselor or even share with his colleagues. Additionally, he argued that the problem has been a thorn in his flesh especially when preaching and teaching. “Sometimes my wife excuses herself arguing that there is nothing I am telling them.” Minister F lamented. He thus revealed that he sometimes lose confidence when counseling, preaching and teaching.

He shared his experiences with the synod Bishop, in search of counsel but mentioned that the Bishop severely reminded him of his calling and cautioned against any attempts to separate or divorce. He lamented: “The Bishop said that I should be cautious because separation and divorce may cost my ministry”. He further recalled the Bishop’s plead to pursue peace under whatever circumstances. Minister F testified saying “I have severely decided to hit her back, but the spirit of God warns me against it”. He continues... “Nevertheless, as much as I love my wife and would wish to live with her, she is just too much and I don’t know what to do because she is arrogant and resists accompanying me to the Bishop for counseling. ... I now fear for my life because she has twice threatened to kill me with a kitchen knife! Should I report the matter to the police or should I wait to die for fear of exposing my family? I am planning to file a divorce and quit the Church!” He lamented.

Minister D argued that the MCK should have a counseling committee which is comprised of professionally trained men and women who will deal with marital problems among the ministers’ families. He further claimed that this will help reduce the stigma in which the ministers lack the confidence of facing their members for marital problems.

Minister G added that in the counseling committee, there should be an equal representation of gender 'to avoid biasness'. She maintained. She further observed that besides training professional counselors for the ministers' marital among other problems, the MCK should recommend a professional counseling course in all institutions for training ministers. She added that this will also help the ministers to be competent and professional counselors which is vital for the ministry today. Minister G therefore noted that the MCK should address domestic violence and abuse through professional counseling.

It is my view that the problem of domestic and violence should be addressed squarely and confidently because it is affecting all in the MCK and the society as a whole. The clergies need to break the silence and face the reality of domestic violence and abuse which is affecting them. I think as ministers, there is a need for speaking the truth in all ways. Those ministers experiencing domestic violence and abuse should speak out to their colleagues and the Bishops to see how the matter can be put to rest. Otherwise, silence and pretending that nothing is wrong will not do much.

Having deliberated on the Bishops and the ministers views, in the following paragraphs, I will present the deliberations of the members.

4.4.2 Forced/ organized marriages

In Kenya like many parts of Africa, organized marriages are not uncommon. By this I mean marriages where the choice of marriage partners is the responsibility of the parents and other members of the larger family and clan. In most parts of Africa, this practice is common although it is slowly changing. However, it should be noted that despite the fast changes in culture, there are still some practices which will take time to be completely eradicated from the African minds. Among them is the influence of family members in marriages and starting families. Organized /forced marriages still exist in some tribes of Kenya.

In North- Eastern province of Kenya, arranged/organized though not really forced marriages are still practiced. In other parts like the Eastern and the Central provinces to name some few, the influence is still high. This is because though the families may not literally choose the bride and the bride groom, they influence a lot by giving suggestions on the appropriate families/tribes that are deemed fit for their children. Sometimes this may lead to a lasting problem in marriage later in life. This is because, it does not take long before they realize that

they were not made for each other and that it was just through the influence of their families/ relatives.

Love must be natural and must compel people who are in love to proceed into marriage without any influence. The two through courtship should cultivate their own relationship which may or may not result into marriage. At times, there are some issues which cannot be tolerated in marriage hence the relationship is terminated. This explains the reason why the MCK marriage liturgy mentions that marriage should not be entered into in haste (Refer to chapter three of this thesis).

Incident 3

Member A narrated his fateful experience with his former wife whom he had married and divorced ten years ago. He narrated this during the interviews: “I was married to this woman from Tanzania ten years ago but divorced” He said. He explained that it was a painful experience since he considered his marriage as a forced marriage through his uncle. He narrated that circumstances had forced them to be together for some years bearing children with her. However later, he felt that he could not continue since he felt that the woman was not his choice. During the interviews he cautioned the danger of forced marriages and recommended for self choice in marriage. He also pointed out that the parents should be sensitized on the danger of forced and /or organized marriages. Furthermore, member A disclosed his intentions to sensitize the youths on the danger forced and organized marriages may have on families. According to this member, Pastors have a role to play in offering guidance to the youths and especially during pre-marital counseling. This is whereby they will be made to understand the repercussions that may arise in forced /influenced marriages. Furthermore, they need to understand through seminars about what marriage and family entails.

Members in category C. (5 Methodist Youths were interviewed.)

The Youths who were interviewed in focus group echoed same words with member A in category A on Forced /organized marriages (See 4.4.2 of this thesis). They further noted that at times it is difficult to disobey what the parents or any other family guardian advice them to do whilst on the contrary, it may be a challenge. ‘Some advice are intriguing’, youth A observed. ‘Our parents claim that we are disobedient to them but in the real sense we do not

find the truth in what they say because we feel we are grown enough to make decisions about marriage but still they will not let us free'. He lamented.

Youth B cited a case whereby her parents had influenced her marriage to a certain man in the church simply because they argued that the boy was calm and innocent and that their family is well up. This particular youth turned down the advice of the parents and since then, she said that they stopped paying for my university fees. The young lady reported that this brought a lot of problems with her parents who claim that she does not listen to her.

Youth B was since then thrown out of the family and she is currently living with her elder sister. She explains that it is hard to get school fees since her elder sister has children whom she is educating. "It has not been easy". She noted. She further disclosed that one time she was introduced to a commercial sex workers group of university student, after sharing with them the financial problems she was undergoing. "I went there once but deep in my heart I felt that it was not morally right and so I retrieved from the group... later, I decided to accept Jesus as my savior". She said shyly. Moreover, youths C, D, and E noted that domestic violence and abuse may scare many youths away from the family. Further they noted that this may lead to family conflicts, excommunication from the family, dropping out of school, early marriages, and fightings among others. Youth D also noted that most of the family violence and abuse originate from such issues; and that the parents claim that the youths do not obey them.

4.4.3 Children in African (Kenyan families)

In Africa unlike most of other continents, families without children are considered incomplete and lacking. Many would agree with me that childlessness among African's is tantamount to a curse. Every couple strives to get atleast a child and it is more preferable, if this child is a son. This is evident few months after the wedding whereby the relatives and other friends to the couples start questioning about the pregnancy and the plans for children. It is indeed a great pressure for the couples if nothing seems to happen the very first months of marriage. Some may start doubting their fertility and whether they are sure to have children. The whole experience can be nasty. However, immediately the wife conceives and is expectant with the child, there is a lot of joy from within and outside their marriage. The husband proudly shares with his mates that his wife is expectant with their child and that soon he will be a proud father. This is not however the case with some other parts of the world for instance Europe whereby after marriage, the couple can stay even ten or more years without planning to have

children. Moreover, the sex and the number of children in Africa is a great concern unlike in other parts of the world.

In Kenya which is part of Africa, male children are valued highly than the female or girl child. In Kenya for example, a family will never be satisfied and it is viewed as lacking without a boy child. This is because, boys are considered as inheritors of their fathers' properties. On the contrary, girls are expected to get married out of their families hence they have nothing to inherit. Therefore families without children are viewed as without any inheritors. Boy children are regarded as the security to the family. In Kenya for instance, there are some tribes like my own (Meru) who argue that when a woman bears many boys, she is safe and secure in marriage and no one can dare touch her or beat her / including her husband. This is for the simple reason that the mother is protected by her sons. Therefore, the more boys one has, the more advantaged the family is.

On the other hand, families which have only girls will struggle by all means to beget boy children. This means that in some families, women will give birth as many times as possible to ensure that they beget a boy child. Moreover, even if the family has one boy, they may still find the child not enough and wish to have several more. This explains the reason why boys are regarded more than girls in Kenya. The focus group interviews with the MCK women fellowship deliberated at length on this as the major cause of domestic violence/abuse. These 10 women fellowship were divided into two groups each comprising of five women. I will bring their discussions in the following paragraphs below.

Focus group A (deliberating on children's sex and numbers)

4.4.3.1 Children's sex: An excuse to marital unfaithfulness?

This group of women fellowship discussed at length the issue of children, sex and family planning as the major causes of marital or family violence. The issue of children is highly valued in African societies. Lady A said ... "the inability to beget children in marriage can be the worst experience for us women... This is because all blame is laid on us". She further noted that immediately women get married, the family members expects them to conceive and give birth to children to keep the family continuing, failure to conceive, the blame is laid on them as women. Additionally, lady A observes that sometimes the problem may be with the man, but nobody bothers.

The rest in the group supported lady A's views, adding that not only that the wife is to blame for lack of children, but even if she gives birth to girls, the blame is equally the same. The only difference, lady B noted is that the weight of the problem is lighter when one can at least give birth to a girl. The others concurred with lady B but added that still one has to 'give birth until the womb can carry no more'! She said this laughing as the whole group made fun of her sentiments. They all noted that it is more preferable to give birth to as many times as possible to satisfy them because some think that by so doing, they may conceive boy children. Lady C pointed out that men should know that they are the determinants of sex in children and therefore they should stop blaming us always.

Ladies D and E cautioned that there are some risks associated with giving birth to many children while chasing after a particular sex. These include risking their lives especially when giving birth at advanced age, and when the body is already weak. They further noted that this may result to abnormal children. Additionally, they noted that women may die during the process of giving birth at advanced age. Lady E maintained that men should know that children are gifts from God, hence cease the habit of blaming their wives. "It is God who gives and can choose not to give". She cautioned.

4.4.3.2 Number of children

The second group of women discussed related issues with the first group. However, in this category of ladies, the number of children was deliberated upon as a major cause of domestic violence and abuse in families. Ladies B, C, and E noted that unlike few decades ago where large number of children in families was valued, there are instances where women are currently blamed for giving birth to 'too many children'. They observed that some husbands insult them as being irresponsible and giving birth carelessly (It was noted by the group that the number of children is a most recent invention). This implies that many years ago, the number of children and wives was a sign of wealth. The more children one had, the wealthier one was regarded. However they noted that with the current change and rise in economy, things are viewed differently. Lady A shared her experiences with her abusive husband after giving birth to ten girls in pursuit of a baby boy.

This is what she said."My husband used to beat me every time he came home drunk saying that I am not able to bear him a son and that , I always give birth to girls which he considers as prostitutes". She said sobbing. She further narrated that her mother advised her to search

for a boy under whatever means assuring her of her capabilities. This was a trial she attempted with no success. She noted that eventually the doctor said that she should not give birth anymore due to her damaged uterus. She added that since then her husband has blamed her for giving birth to many children saying “where on earth have you seen a team of prostitutes, you careless, illiterate woman? You have brought disgrace to me as a professional, giving birth to girls only, and ensuring that I have no one to inherit my wealth”! She explained. Lady B also pointed out that, the number of children in the last few decades was highly cherished. She noted that before, there were huge pieces of land unlike today, when land is becoming scarce.

Lady D added saying that the issue of education has also led to a limited number of children. She further maintained that in the olden days, some of never went to school and there were no issues of school fees among other basic needs. Furthermore, she pointed out that education now is compulsory for all and it is considered among the rights of children. Nevertheless, she observed that education is now more expensive. Moreover, she noted that buying books and considering quality education in private schools are indeed very expensive.

Another cause of domestic violence and abuse that was deliberated by this group was the Sex of children. Similar views were aired in this group.

This was concerning the boy child as being more valuable than the girl child in marriage. On this view, ladies B and C observed that although men valued boy children more than the girls, they respected the girls especially during and after initiation unlike today. They argued that the girl child could not even be allowed to sit with the father. They further maintained that the fathers held great respect for the girls even at early ages. Lady B interrupted saying, “... that’s very true but nowadays the respect between the fathers and daughters is a thing of the past”. She noted. She further cited a case whereby one of her neighbors had separated due to marital misunderstandings and the wife was forced to run to her paternal home as the problem was set to be solved by both family members. As usual she left her children with their father.

Lady B narrated that when her neighbor was back after the matter was solved, she was surprised to find her teenage daughter expectant. When she was asked how it happened, the girl was reluctant to disclose what had happened. It took long before revealing all what had happened to her when her mother was away. In fact the mother had to find out about the girls’ pregnancy through a neighbor friend because she was not ready to disclose it to her mother. Her mother was shocked beyond words to learn that her daughter was carrying her father’s

and her own husband's child. The ladies therefore discussed lengthily that several things have changed and the African culture is soon fading away. Ladies D and E retaliated arguing that sex and the number of children in families should not be given as excuses to unfaithfulness in marriage. Lady E argued that trivial issues are used by many to exploit the wives. She noted that unfaithfulness in marriages is on the increase with some men stretching out to their house helps and to make matters worse even with their own siblings. Lady A further argued that many men today are involved in extra marital affairs claiming to look for their property inheritors. The group pointed out that although culture is dynamic; there are some issues that needs to be addressed.

Having looked at the women fellowship focus groups, in the following paragraphs below, I will present the deliberations of the last focus group which comprised of MCK men fellowship. Those interviewed were a group of five Methodist men fellowship. According to their discussions, the following themes were evident namely: Misinterpretation of gender equity, Lack of mutual fulfillment, and HIV/AIDS. In the following paragraphs, their presentations will be made.

4.4.4 Misinterpretation of gender equality/ equity

Gender equity or sometimes referred to as gender equality is a concept which explains that all sexes should be treated equally. By this I mean both males and females should be given equal rights. These rights are considered in terms of basic human rights like education, health facilities, political and social positions among others. It is argued that since both are human beings, they should all be treated with high dignity regardless of their differences in sex .In the larger part of Africa for instance and in Kenya to be precise, there was a lot of discrimination against women as already mentioned in this thesis. The boy children were highly valued than the girls. Education similarly was considered for the boys while the girls place was in the kitchen with their mothers. The informal education given to the girls was to learn how to be good wives and mothers.

In most parts of Africa and particularly in Kenya, women are now empowered. They organize themselves into groups and are empowered both socially and economically. This is mainly done by the Non- Governmental organizations (NGOS) which are very common in Kenya today. The women are conscientised to know their rights. Many, who are illiterate, attend adult classes in order to know how to read and write. Many years ago, since they had no education, they could neither be employed nor speak in public gatherings. However, with

the rise of Feminist Theology which has a lot on gender equity/equality, things are now changing though slowly but surely. As we all know that culture is dynamic and the effects of globalization are far and wide, Africa is not an exception. This I mean that Kenya has equally been affected by the theories of feminism. In the interviews held with the MCK men fellowship members, I was shocked to learn that this theme featured out as a major cause of domestic violence and abuse in the church today. This is what some men said in this group.

Man A said, "...the so claimed gender equity has advantages to the families but not without many limitations." He observed. He continued saying that despite the fact that their women and girls are empowered in all aspects, there should be limits. He noted that the limits of empowerment should be made clear. Moreover man A observed that the spect of equality needs to be made clear to the women and girls because there is a lot of mis- interpretation of the whole theory. Man C interrupted claiming that the whole theory has not been clearly understood, or it has been misused by many. Further more, he pointed out that the rise of gender equality theories has created more myhelm in families than before their inception. He pointed out that there used to be respect for husbands by ther wives. "Today dare ask why food is not ready and she will shout back to you wondering why you cannot as well prepare some... I mean many claim that they are equal and any one can prepare food not only them". He exclaimed.

Man C wondered whether the theory of gender equality reverses who people are. He questioned about gender roles saying "They claim to be equal with men, does these theories make them men anyway?" He exclaimed furiously as argued that women will always be women. He further claimed that when girls get educated more than boys, no one will dare approach them for marriage because the moment they rise higher than them, there will be a great problem of inferiority and superiority complex. He further maintained that many African men would not wish to marry their seniors in whether in age or in education.

Man B retaliated saying "I think it is wrong to talk about strength because there are some women who are physically stronger than their husbands. What should be considered here is respect and regard for each other not physical strengths or weaknesses". Man D concluded the discussion the discussion noting that the essence of gender equity needs to be clearly explained to both men and women. He pointed out that the idea is not about who should be above whom but it is all about respect for each other irrespective of sex or physical

appearance. He further cautioned his colleagues against the common stereotype and the demeaning of women as being inferior to men saying “the issue of inferiority complex is an out dated vocabulary among the elite”. He continued saying that today everybody provides for the family, and any can prepare food and life continues. He pointed out that life is about understanding each which is actually the essence of marriage. He also noted that in Kenya today unlike many years back, education was only for the boy child.

He elaborated this saying that things have changed and girls are becoming professionals. “In fact they seem to be doing quite well”. He said. Moreover, he shared his experience saying that his wife is employed and this has financially boosted their family. “My wife and I contribute for our family project. ...We have come this far because we team up together with understanding...Yes with understanding what we exactly want to achieve in life”. (He emphasized). He further said. “When she is home and sometimes absent, I prepare food and we eat which is not a problem at all” (He said while the group looked at him nodding their heads and some murmuring).He concluded saying that men should understand that their wives are human like any other, hence needs to be treated with dignity and respect. “After all we did not marry slaves, but companions whom we love and value”. He concluded.

Man E cited a recent case in central province of Kenya which was in most of the Newspapers saying; “In central province we currently read and watch news of how women are battering their husbands simply because they are empowered. He questioned the essence of gender equity and empowerment noting that the the theory has resulted to impunity in the society. The others in the group concurred with what he said arguing that husband battering as in the case of Nyeri women was a great shame. (Nyeri is a county in central province of Kenya. It is currently notorious for husband battering, a character trait that has tainted the county where the former president of Kenya hails from).

It was the feeling of many from this group that although some husbands do not provide for the families basic needs, does not mean that they have failed in life. “After all this should not make them result into thorough beatings like small kids”. Man A, B, and C noted that this behavior should be condemned. They further pointed out that could this be mistaken as a new development, then communities are losing their focus. Conclusively, this group noted the following: that the influence of culture in which the old mentality is still held may have a lasting effect on Christian marriages. The awkward mentality that some people may have on issues of gender equity interpreted as physical, looks trivial and naïve. Nevertheless, women

in Kenya need to understand that empowerment should in the real sense benefit the family. They should not only expect their husbands to be the breadwinners of the family. They too can take the lead. There is a need to understand that culture is dynamic and the world is changing due to the effects of modernity and globalization.

Kenyans like other Africans needs to get out of their cocoons. Days are gone when women used to sit idle and wait for their husbands to provide for them with the children. Now there is empowerment which is aimed at assisting one another in the current economic crisis where basic needs unlike in the olden days have intensified”. Man B maintained. However for those who understand the essence, there are a lot of advantages. Finally, this group came up with recommendations as follows: That the church needs to create more forums for her members in order to get more information about this theory. It should be made available for all both men and women in order for them to understand. The church can as well appeal to the women organization forums to explain the gender equity agenda to the women groups in Kenya. Having looked at the deliberations of men fellowship group on misconceptions of gender equity/equality, in the next paragraphs below, I bring out their deliberations on lack of mutual fulfillment as a major cause of marital violence.

4.4.5 Lack of mutual fulfillment in marriage

The essence of marriage is for mutual fulfillment. Nevertheless, I do not dispute the African concept of family and marriage. To be precise I mean that in reality, when a man and a woman meet, the first thing that brings them together is love. This love compels them to feel attracted to each other and eventually they feel that they cannot stay away from each other. This explains the reason why some cohabit, move in together or just get married legally in pursuit for companionship. This coming together in marriage fulfils their desires of being together and there is a feeling of mutual fulfillment and satisfaction. In other words, it is the desire to be together and a feeling of joy and happiness. On the contrary, if this expected fulfillment is lacking; then marriage or a relationship begins to tear apart. While interviewing the Methodist men fellowship (MMF), many of them felt that a lack of mutual fulfillment in marriage can result into a serious domestic violence and abuse. This is what some said.

Member A said: “Although we Africans view marriages as in complete without children, when children come; to some women, they tend to become like substitutes for us”. He further said that some women cling to their children and all attention is drawn to them.” He pointed

out that that the women's main focus is on their children hence having no or less room for their husbands .Member A observed that this is something the women esteem highly as a source of their satisfaction.

Member C concurred with A noting that most of the women reverse their attention from their husbands to their children. He noted that to some this may have a lasting effect to the families. He cited an incident in which a certain woman in his neighborhood had to 'shift from their matrimonial bedroom to sleep with their children claiming that the children were frequently getting cold at night. This continued for long and the husband was spending sleepless nights alone in their bedroom. To add insults to injury, he said "Things got worse when the husband approached his wife one day after the children were all asleep demanding his conjugal rights .His wife declined arguing that the children were still awake and would understand everything. Member C noted that, that is how the man was deprived of his conjugal rights.

The members in this group noted that this problem is very common in Kenya today and needs to be addressed because it may destroy many marriages. Member B also maintained that the issue of children is among many other causes of marital violence and abuse. He observed that the women need to be educated on personal etiquette. He further argued that at times he meet with Christian women who look very dirty and wonder whether they are the same that he meets with in Church on Sundays. "Some of them hardly bath claiming to have busy schedules throughout the day". He said. He further exposed the embarrassment of some church women are visited impromptly, only to meet them with dirt clothes and unkept hair.

The members concure with member B adding that many house- wives change their behavior and physical outlook immediately they are marriage. Member E added that some no longer care about their former adoration and the general personal hygiene. Members C and D echoed what B had said noting that cleanliness is not about beauty and adoration. They maintained that it does not matter how busy one is, one should create time for self. "After all is there any sexual pleasure with a stinking wife?" Member D asked ironically. The group noted that at times such things in women sway them away and they lack mutual fulfillment as expected. Member F noted that there is a serious problem with some African women as a whole. He noted that the cultural mentality of laxity after child birth makes most of the African women to forget themselves. He pointed out that sometimes there is a lot of laxity enthroned with the mentality of being married and attaining self comfort.

Member A concurred with member F adding that what he just said explains the reason why most of their wives grow old fast. He said that they soon become shapeless due to lack of good care and body exercise. A condition they mistake for as a sign of happiness and comfort in marriage. “They do not know that at times we feel embarrassed walking with them”. Member A said laughing. He however noted that marriages are expected to exhibit love and happiness, a home should be a place where one finds comfort especially after a stressful day. On the contrary, he noted that if they turn to be the opposite of this, then being home early becomes a nightmare. This came out when the members noted that sometimes, some wives are nagging their husbands, a character trait that may expel them away from home. “At times they are too nagging that the moment one think about home and wife, it is like hell on earth”. Member A observed.

The other members noted that this is how some family members fall prey to some street girls. And since men are panting and thirsting for love and happiness which they lack in their families, they definitely get hooked by the girls and street women who are ready to do anything in order to earn a living. It was also noted that this may explain why some have resulted into heavy drinking among others other behaviors.

According to this group, a lack of mutual fulfillment in marriage may result to some members being violent and abusive. The blame is hereby laid on women who men claim that they do not meet their hygienic standards after marriage and that some are nagging hence repelling their husbands away. I also think that family life education for Christians would do a lot of favor here. This may help the women and others to know the way they should conduct themselves before and after marriage. The pre-marital counseling can equally be helpful in this.

Having looked at lack of mutual fulfillment in marriage as a threat to families, in the preceding paragraphs, I will finally present the deliberations of this group on HIV/AIDS as a cause of family violence among MCK members.

4.4.6 HIV/AIDS and other related illnesses in Christian families.

Since its inception in the early 80s, HIV/AIDS has infected and affected many families in Kenya and several other parts of Africa. Those who are not infected are affected in one way or another due to the impact it has on larger families. For instance, if one of the family members is infected, the responsibility of taking care of him/her /his/her children is entirely

laid on the extended family members and relatives who take the burden of bringing up the children before and after the demise of the victims. In this view, the impact is far reaching in Kenya among other parts of Africa. However, experts now say that the prevalence rate has gone down compared to few decades ago. Nevertheless, there are formulations and fear that those now being infected anew are the married couples.

A few years ago, HIV/AIDS was declared a national disaster. (Since this is a qualitative research finding, I will not give details of the statistics of this in this thesis). The Kenyan ministry of health and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have been very active in creating awareness among all people and especially those in families. During my research findings, I interviewed a group of MCK men fellowship who identified HIV/AIDS as a great challenge in their marriages causing violence and abuse. This is what was deliberated.

One member A shared an incident about his brother who is living with HIV/AIDS saying that his brother has faced a lot of problems since he was diagnosed with the disease. It all started when he began having some chronic cough and after several appointments with the doctor, he was advised to take an HIV/AIDS test. The results tested positive and the doctor advised him to bring his wife with him for the same. His brother did not disclose this to his wife but asked her whether they can both see the doctor for his persistent coughs and colds. The doctor as usual counseled them and conducted a test beginning with the wife. The wife's results were negative and the doctor called the husband for the same which positive. "It was a bit problematic explaining to them the chemistry behind it" Member A noted.

However the doctor recommended that the wife review test after three months. Member A explained that during this time, the doctor advised them to use a condom every time they wish to have sexual intercourse. He further narrated that since then, his brother's family has never been the same again. The reason he gave was that when his brother's wife went home that day, she swore never to have any contact with her adulterous husband. The wife blamed her husband of the disease and abandoned her without taking good care of him. Member A further observed that his sick brother was insulted by his own children, who like their mother abandoned him to die without any attention.

He moreover maintained that his brother has since deteriorated in health and they fear that he may die soon due to lack of moral and social support from his family members. He noted that although his brother is currently on ARVs (Anti- Retroviral medication), he suffers stigma

and rejection from his family members and especially from his wife who since then left their matrimonial home to live with her sister. He further notes that his brother's own children denounced him saying that 'he should taste the fruit of his labor'. He narrated.

Member B noted that the problem of HIV/AIDS is a great challenge to many families because of blaming each other. "When sickness like this sets into families, the first thing many do is to condemn victims for loose morals" He argued. He further noted that the victims die fast due to isolation from others. He noted that there was a family whereby the victim used to have his own plate, spoon and all other personal effects kept separately from others in the family. He further argued that no one could dare touch or go close to him. He was left to die alone with no one besides him. Members C and D concurred with A and B saying that HIV/AIDS is among the common diseases that have caused a lot of violence and abuse in many Christian families today. Moreover they noted that other related illnesses can also be problematic to some families. Member D cited an incident in which sexually transmitted diseases separated the family. He noted that immediately the his neighbor's wife was diagnosed with what the doctors referred to as Chlamydia, the husband started moving out and vowed never to have any association with a promiscuous wife.

Other diseases which lead to marital violence and abuse include chronic asthma, Tuberculosis among others. Member D narrated a true story of a family in which children were born with hereditary illnesses. "It was hard to have a child born in that family without Asthma". Member D noted. The family underwent a series of trials and hard moments due to frequent loss of children at early ages. Eventually, the couple had no single child for a period of ten years since their marriage. This condition placed them in a very awkward situation. The cause was diagnosed to be hereditary from the wife's family whose history shows that a number of their relatives had suffered a similar illness. After a series of deaths of their infants, the gynecologist advised the couple not to have more children. "It was explained to them that any attempt may lead to a worse experience". He explained. He further narrated that after some years the couple separated on health problems .Nevertheless, member D observed that although the doctor cautioned them against having more children, this did not mean that they parted ways. He further noted that these couples finally divorced due to the influences of extended family members who considered their situation as an abomination and a curse to the family.

The group also noted that when for instance one of the family members suffers certain illness, he/she may fall victim of rejection and a source of blame by other family members. Member E cited a similar incident with D in which a certain friend of his was Asthmatic and was occasionally hospitalized with the chest complications. The man was advised to abstain from heavy work due to the recurring chest problem. This means that most of the time he was on bed rest and the wife had to take care of him. In spite of countless counseling sessions by the minister, the wife eventually abandoned her husband saying, “This is not what I had come to do, I came for love and protection not to be ‘a baby sitter’ (member E explained).

The group noted that the impact of HIV/ AIDS has far reaching effects on families. They further observed that families need to understand that the disease may not necessarily be caused by sexual immorality but currently, there are several causes. Furthermore the group noted that people should know that anything can happen to them in this life. “Life can be so uncertain; no one knows absolutely what lies behind them.” Member A lamented. The group further noted that understanding is vital in marriages and when it lacks, the impact may be more.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the analysis of the research findings. This is done by presenting the interviews in themes which featured during the interviews. In this chapter therefore, I have presented the field work experiences which include the short comings and the opportunities encountered. Those interviewed were 5 MCK Bishops, 8 MCK ordained ministers, and about 25 MCK members. The members interviewed include 5 MMF (Methodist Men Fellowship), 5 MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship), 10 MWF (Methodist Women Fellowship who constituted the majority of church membership), and five (5) members who were interviewed individually. The total number of all those who were interviewed both in focus group, and as individuals, were thirty eight (38).The rest were interviewed as focus groups.The deliberations from interviews are presented thematically. I chose thematic method of data analysis whereby different themes features in the discussions of different groups and individuals. They include the following namely: Misconceptions of dowry and African patriarchy system, Drug and drug abuse, competent and professional counselors, forced marriages, children’s sex and the number, lack of mutual fulfillment in marriage, HIV/AIDS and other related illnesses. In the following chapter, the interview analysis will be presented.

5.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: AN ETHICAL CHALLENGE AND DILEMMA TO THE METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the deliberations of the interview findings. This is from various groups that were interviewed. The MCK Bishops, the Ministers and the lay members. I made some themes from their discussions hence presenting them thematically. Finally, I drew a conclusion. In this chapter, I will discuss the interview analysis under the heading: Domestic violence and abuse as an ethical challenge and dilemma in the MCK. I will discuss the contemporary context of Christian ethics. Further more, I will discuss God's intent for family and marriage especially as it is depicted in the creation story. I will also discuss sin as violence and abuse of responsibilities. Moreover, I will discuss some traces of domestic violence and abuse in the Bible. This is by looking at some part of the Old Testament texts, a few on the New Testament. The Bible is so vast and I cannot include every bit in this thesis. Therefore I choose some few texts both in the Old Testament and the New Testament which are relevant for this thesis. Nevertheless, I do not wish to exegete the texts but will discuss few themes on family and marriage. Finally, I will make a conclusion.

In the following paragraphs below, I therefore discuss the contemporary context of Christian ethics.

5.2 The Contemporary Context of Christian Ethics

A change is as good as rest as many people say. When the current of change comes, it sweeps all over. No one can argue that Christianity is prone to the current of change. This means that since we are living in a period of transition which is influenced entirely by globalization, we cannot deny its impacts. The way we view the world should also change with the context. This is because we should address issues according to the current /present situation. The world view many decades ago is not the same as today. Christians too should have such a view otherwise some ethical issues may be irrelevant.

I concur with Grenz when he says that many observers have concluded that we are living in a time of transition; that a new intellectual and cultural ethos is emerging in society. (Grenz 1997:97). This new social situation he argues bears the label postmodern. This being the case, he therefore concludes that our task is to think through the Christian ethic in a manner that takes seriously the challenges the new reality brings our way. This poses a great challenge for

Christians to read and interpret the bible in the current context for the message to be relevant. The contemporary context therefore brings with it the real issues at hand with the present times bringing with it the challenges of modernity.

5.3 God's intent for family and marriage

In Genesis, we read that God instituted marriage. Indeed, He is the author of the marriage. He created male and female in order that they may live in companion. His intention for creating them is henceforth defined. In some versions which gives male as having been created before the female, the bible says that God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. Genesis 2:18-23 says. The Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him". Now the Lord had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. This is what it reads:

"... So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bones of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man". For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame". (Genesis 2:18-23).

According to this text, it is clear that God's intention for creating female and male was for companionship and of course to find joy and fulfillment. The spirit of unity and oneness is explained by them becoming one flesh. This therefore explains the essence of unity in family and marriage, which is indeed the expectation of an ideal marriage. We would therefore imagine that; that was God's initial plan for marriages before the fall through disobedience. Disobedience of humanity brought with it various repercussions although there is hope through God's redemption in Jesus Christ.

5.4 Traces of domestic violence and abuse in the Bible

Domestic violence and abuse may be traced long back after creation. Domestic violence and abuse can be understood as resulting from a lack of understanding between people living

together in a household. These misunderstandings may lead to violent behaviors and abuse. McClure and Ramsay points out that the Bible from its stories of beginnings, presents a clear view of human interaction as full of potential for violence and of the actual execution of it. (McClure and Ramsay, 1998:23). This proves that domestic violence and abuse among others has existed during biblical times. I will describe the sin of disobedience as a source of violence in the next section below.

5.4.1 Sin of disobedience as a source of violence

In Genesis we read that God pronounced a curse to Adam and his wife Eve after being disobedient. This presents disobedience as a source of violence. As a repercussion to their disobedience, God became violent with them and pronounced a curse to them. However, the bible explains that they started blaming each other. The blame was transferred from the husband to the wife and from the wife to the serpent. Nevertheless, the bible does not explain further what whether this affected their marital relationship, but their relationship with God changed and they were alienated from Him. However, the Bible does not explain further what happened between Adam and his wife after she convinced her husband to share the forbidden fruit. However there are myths and legends, several stories which explain the mystery behind the fall of humanity which I do not wish to be part of at this juncture. I wish to pursue explanation which reviews some sort of conflict and misunderstandings at the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:11-13.

“And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”The man said, “The woman you put here with- she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. Then the Lord God said to the woman, what is this you have done? The woman said, “The serpent, deceived me, and I ate.”

According to this conversation between God and the first family, we realize that there was conflict which was brought about by disobedience. Moreover, in the dialogue, it is clear that there was a shifting of blames. This means that when the source of disobedience was inquired, one blamed the other as the blame continued to something else in this case the serpent. Nevertheless, although the bible does not mention, I guess there could have been some quarreling between these two couples (Adam and his wife); probably later after God pronounced a curse on them as a repercussion for their disobedience. One may probably

deduce that there rose misunderstandings which may have resulted from God's reaction after the duo's disobedience.

5.4.2 Violence and abuse among family members

The Old Testament presents various issues concerning marriage and families. I choose to cite few references which I find relevant for this thesis. These will include the following: Genesis 4:1ff, Genesis 12:12ff, Genesis 13: 7-8, Genesis 19: 30-38, Genesis 37: 18-20, 2 Samuel 13:1-7, and Deuteronomy 24 ff.

In Genesis 4: 1ff, we read about another incident of domestic violence and abuse which resulted to murder or manslaughter. This is an evidence of abuse between two brothers. In fact these were the first children born to Adam and his wife Eve. These were Cain and Abel.

Verse 8 reads, Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field. And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him". (N.I.V Bible).

Verse 10 reads, "The Lord said, what you have done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Verse 11 reads, "Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand". (N.I.V Bible).

Other short references about domestic violence and abuse among family members include the following : In Genesis 12:12-13, the bible gives a story of the way Abraham gave out his beautiful wife to king Pharaoh in order to find favor in Egypt.

In Genesis 13: 7-8, gives an account of how dispute and quarrels arose between Abraham and his brother Lot. They finally parted ways living in different places.

Genesis 19:30-38 gives the story of Lot and his daughters. These two daughters crafted and worn sexual affair with their own father and later gave birth to sons with him. In other instances, we read of how Amnon seduced his sister and sexually abused her before forcing her out of his house.

I will explain this a little more in the following paragraph below.

In 2 Samuel 13:1-17, we read about sexual abuse between a brother and his sister. The story is an evidence of rape; whereby despite the fact that Tamar pleaded with his brother Amnon to withdraw the evil plans of having sex with her, he did it forcefully and finally ordered that she be thrown out from him. It reads:

“In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her. Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David’s brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, ‘Why do you, the King’s son look so haggard morning after morning? Won’t you tell me?’

Amnon said to him, “I’m in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister”. Go to bed and pretend to be ill.” Jonadab said. “When your father comes to see you say to him, ‘I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her then eat from her hand.’”. So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the King came to see him, Amnon said to him, ‘I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand.’” David sent word to Tamar at the palace: “Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him. So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon and, who was lying down.

She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat. “Send everyone out of here,” Amnon said. So everyone left him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand.” And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her hand and said, “Come to bed with me, my sister.” Don’t, my brother!” She said to him. Don’t force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace, and what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.”

But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out. No!” She said to him. “ Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.” But he refused to listen to her. He called his personal servant and said, “Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her.”(N.I.V Bible). This therefore helps us to understand that domestic violence is something that has existed for many years as argued earlier in this thesis.

There were other incidences of marital problems which show that when there were misunderstandings due to infidelity and by not pleasing the husband; he could write a divorce certificate and terminate the marriage relationship. The Mosaic Law has this in the book of Deuteronomy 24:1ff in which Moses advised that a man could divorce his wife if he found something displeasing in her by giving her a certificate of divorce.

It states in 24 :1-4a: “ If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled”.

The above verse shows that there were evidences of marital violence resulting into divorce according to the Mosaic Law. However, it is not quite clear what kind of indecency led to divorce.

Let us also consider Jesus’ teachings on family and marriage in the following paragraphs.

5.4.3 Domestic violence and abuse in the New Testament

The New Testament is equally very vast. For this reason, I cannot discuss every bit discussing about violence and abuse. This is due to limitations in this thesis. I therefore choose to concentrate on some few books, which I will not discuss in details. I choose among the gospels Matthew, which is the first among them. I also consider Pauline theology on family and marriage. I will refer to 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, and Ephesians 5: 22-23 for the same reason. I therefore begin with the gospel according to Matthew below.

The disciples at one time wanted to test Jesus as they sarcastically inquired about divorce. They knew that divorce was not permissible and that God’s initial intention was for a man and his wife to live peacefully and happily forever and ever till death separates them. They knew the obvious answer from Jesus but wanted to test him in order to accuse him by the Mosaic Law. This is evidence that family conflicts and misunderstandings in marriage existed during Jesus’ time. It reads in Matthew 19:3-8:

“Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” Haven’t you read, “ he replied, “ that at the beginning the

Creator made them male and female, and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate “. Why then, they asked. “Why did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied. “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning”. This is also repeated in Mark 10: 2-9 (New International version Bible).

Moreover Jesus added that anyone who divorces his wife except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery (Verse 9).

It is therefore clear that problems in marriage are not new and that they existed long ago in both the Old Testament and New Testament times. However, we need to note that solution to the problem is not very clear in both. By this I mean that when Jesus answers the Pharisees’ questions; he does so by referring them to the Mosaic Law. Moreover, he argues that the reason for Moses command on writing a divorce letter was due to the hardness of their hearts. This again shows that divorce was not considered as a solution for marital unhappiness. On the other hand, Jesus commands them that anyone who divorces his wife except for marital unfaithfulness; and marries woman commits adultery. According to this argument, it is therefore evident that there were marital problems of course which led to either separation or divorce.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 talks strongly about love. From the introductory words of this chapter, I mentioned that families are created through love; and that love must be genuine compelling those in love to cling together as they find joy and happiness in their union. During church marriages in Kenya, most preachers and especially the clergies, like using this Pauline book in giving family guidance to those starting Christian families. Like Paul many would consider love to be supreme over any other thing. This is to say that when people are in love; they do not have to focus on trivial issues which may contaminate their love; but rather venture into making their union a perfect one by ignoring anything which may threaten their love. Paul therefore argues that love should supersede all other things. This means that love must overcome all other weaknesses.

This is what it reads in verse 4 -8: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps

no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away (N.I.V Bible).

In Ephesians 5, Paul discusses the relationship between husbands and their wives. In his view, he presents the husbands as the heads of the families. The women on the other hand are to be submissive to their husbands in all ways. This is questionable in the current tranquility of domestic violence and abuse.

Having traces of family violence and abuse in the bible, I now proceed to discuss how the MCK is faced with the ethical challenge and dilemma in pursuit of combating domestic violence and abuse.

5.5 Domestic violence and abuse as an ethical challenge and dilemma in MCK

The dilemma facing the church is the fact that it is torn between two ends. One is explicit when no clear guidelines are given on marital violence and abuse. Another is the fact that the bible is the absolute custodian of the truth, hence any breach may be considered as apostasy. The following themes will be discussed lengthly.

5.5.1 The question of patience and forgiveness in marriage

The MCK marriage service book, gives various guidelines on families and marriage. Among the recommended texts during the wedding ceremonies include the following below. Matthew 19: 4-6, 1 Corinthians 13:4-13, Ephesians 3:14-19, and Colossians 3:12-16a, 17 (Methodist Service Book 1984:198-200). In all these, the emphasis is on permanence of marriage. In other words, marriage is intended to be a permanent union between two people. The MCK constitution, which is the Standing Orders, does not recommend separation or divorce in the church whatsoever. Those with marital problems are encouraged to solve them amicably and restore their relationship back. Failure to attaining reconciliation, may lead to ones loss of job among the ministers and a church discipline. (Refer to chapter 3.3.2, (a) and (b)).

The dilemma is the question of patience and forgiveness in marriage. One may wonder for how long do they tolerate and forgive each other amongst some extreme cases of violence and abuse? The Bible in 1 Corinthians 13:4ff teaches that love is patient and kindnesses...; love bears all things....The question would be, to what extent can a Christian tolerate domestic

violence and abuse? Paul therefore presents the unlimited kind of patience and love in marriage.

Barton notes that although forgiveness is a good thing, it requires a lot of unpacking if it is not merely to be a pious, sentimental and ultimately empty solution to the problems families face. (Barton, 1996:203). He further maintains that within the real, complex dynamics of family relationships, forgiveness can have different meanings in different contexts.

There are some issues that could be unbearable in marriage. For instance if in a marriage relationship, one partner threatens to kill the other, or when such attempts have been made by either poisoning or choking among others. There have been cases of severe violence and abuse among family members like severe damage of harms, feet, face which sometimes leads to amputation among others. The bible does not give any guidance on how such perpetrators should be dealt with, neither does it clearly show what steps the victims should pursue.

On the other hand, the MCK's main emphasizes is about forgiveness in marriage. This is in pursuit for an ideal family relationship. However one wonders what guidance the church can give in extreme cases of let's say threats to kill or murder. The guidelines offered by Paul to the Corinthians about love has a lot to be questioned and that is where the MCK is put in a serious dilemma. I mean, it is not clear when Paul put much emphasise on love saying: "Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:8a). And also verse 7 which say: "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres..." I differ with Paul's argument because where there are threats of murder, means there is no love.

I would not imagine that love exists amidst violent and abusive behaviors. I would therefore argue that the presence of violence and abuse in relationships is a sign of a loss of love in the same. To some Christians, it may sound unbearable to protect, love, hope and always persevere in some state of hopelessness. It sounds very unpractical for one to protect someone who does not care about them. Love is a give and take experience. It is a two way traffic whereby the receiver also expects from the other and the vice-versa. One may wonder whether he/she should continue loving and protecting an abusive partner; and for how long? I do not wish to critic Jesus' response to one of his disciple's question on forgiveness, but just want to highlight some practical concerns as reckoned in Matthew 18:21ff saying:

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Is it up to Seven times? Jesus answered. “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times–seven” (NIV Bible.) According to Jesus, seventy times seven implies an endless time. In fact it meant that one must always forgive. The ethical challenge and dilemma therefore comes in when one is expected to forgive unconditionally and unlimitedly. Some things are easily said than done as many have concluded. This is because, it may sound easy but in the real sense, it is not practical at all. A clear example to this is HIV/AIDS conditions that doctor refer to as discordant couples. They explain that this is a condition in which one of the partners is infected with HIV/AIDS and the other is tested negative irrespective of their sexual contact.

The doctor’s advice was that such couples can still have sexual intercourse with the use of condoms. On the contrary, Kenya like in most parts of the world, when such a thing happens, it is obvious to blame one partner and majority end in separation or divorce as discussed in chapter four of this thesis. Therefore the question is, should such couples just forgive and forget as if nothing happened? Additionally one may wonder for how long should one continue forgiving or condoning such behavior marriage? The dilemma the MCK faces is whether to totally concur with Jesus’ teachings and command about forgiveness, or ignore some parts? The question the church wrestles with is whether it is practical to forgive unconditionally especially on marital violence and abuse? Another dilemma is the question of ignoring Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness. The MCK is faced with the ethical challenge of falling victim of apostasy.

5.5.2 When can the victims seek legal measures?

Another problem would be the question of seeking legal measures. It is not exactly clear when one can seek legal measures in cases of a violent and abusive partner. The Bible like the MCK does not offer such guidance either. In some instances, one may assume that the problem will eventually be solved within the course of time. Some pastors may think the problem will soon be over with the counseling sessions attended. In most cases the problem is never solved and what may result is something even worse than the initial problem. As much as the church offers counseling to the worrying families, some issues needs legal measures which in this case the MCK and the Bible do not provide. When the pastors/ MCK ministers offer pastoral care and counseling to her members, it is believed or rather assumed if I may say that the problem will eventually end. This is of course through prayers. However to me this would

sound so naïve .In this view, I do not rule out the bible teachings about the power of prayer; but rather draws an attention to some practical real life questions as these:

Suppose even after prayer and counseling still violence and abuse persists? Does this rule out the power of prayers? Do seeking legal measures make prayer and counseling less effective? What advice or guidance can the MCK offer in instances of extreme marital violence and abuse? Do seeking legal measures nullify the power of God? These are probable questions the MCK wrestles with in pursuit of finding proper guidance for marital violence and abuse façade. Adams notes that in all cases of domestic violence and abuse, safety issues remain the primary concern. (Adams 1994:65). She further notes that in case of child abuse, Ministers need to make it clear that they will report any information about harm to a Child Protective Services (CPS).

The question of whether one should continue living with an abusive partner is quite pertinent here. This is now where the church is put at a fix wondering what to do in such instances. The MCK does not propose legal measures in extreme cases of violence and abuse. The church believes that it is the responsibility of the parties (husband and his wife) to decide otherwise after counseling. It is always expected that a pastor or any other counselor should not advise the worrying parties on what to do. This means that they may decide to seek legal measures, separate or even divorce. The decision is independently their own. I think that it is the responsibility of the minister to advise the victims to seek legal help. In some cases, it is advisable that the minister is familiar with the legal centres where people can get help. They should have acquaintances with relevant legal offices.

The fact is that the church does not advise such victims to quit their families in such instances. The dilemma comes when the bible states that ‘what God has joined together, no one should put asunder’ (Matthew 19:6a). The fact that death should be the only thing separating those in marriage also puts the church in such a dilemma. The MCK may consider including a clause in the marriage service liturgy, which in extreme cases of domestic violence and abuse, separation or divorce may be the most appropriate solution. However, on the contrary, the Church may fall into the danger of contradicting Paul’s teaching about love and patience in marriage. Additionally it becomes very difficult to tell which the extreme cases of violence are. Which are the extreme cases of violence that would require legal measures? Is it when

one is threatened or when one has lost his/her life? And must the church members wait for church extreme cases?

The church should therefore come out clearly and boldly to protect her members. By this I mean that she should come out with some guidelines which endeavor into providing a way out for the victims. The church should address the needs of her members. In other words, she should try to fight the evils and liberate her members. The church is looked upon as a place where people under all walks of life should find hope in God. If this is not evident in church then she becomes irrelevant. She should act as a fortress, Christians run to the churches to seek for justices and hope. I do not suggest in this case that the church at any one time be a judicial organ; but rather that she should provide some adequate guidance to her members.

5.5.3 The impact of Patriarchy system in MCK

In the beginning chapters of this thesis, I mentioned that among the causes of domestic violence and abuse are as a result of patriarchy system in Kenya among other African countries. This means that the influence of patriarchy system is great among Christian marriages which MCK is not an exceptional. Margaret Gecaga is quoted by Grace Wamue and Mary Getui saying: “the subordinate status of women in the Kenyan society has to be understood in the light of our own African culture and the, Jewish often mistaken for Christian tradion which we have inherited...” (Wamue, and Getui 1996:49).

The MCK clergies may be in dilemma especially when dealing with cases of marital infidelity whereby the husband is the perpetrator. Some MCK pastors nevertheless have a tendency of favoring men in counseling more than the women. This could be due to influences of patriarchy system evident especially when the victims are women. In this case I mean when the couple seeks counseling from their pastor, the pastor/minister tends to listen more from the male side. In several cases, the woman is advised to take good care of her husband unlike the vice versa. This probably explains the reason why Christine Rzepka, founder and director of Ripple effect, argues that among the list of the requirements expected from the women by the clergy where most of the battered women go for counseling for marital violence related issues are as follows: A reminder of their wifely duty and instructions to forgive and forget.

Secondly, she argues that referral to another resource is considered for limiting church involvement.

Thirdly, An impractical advice based on religious doctrine that was not only insensitive to their needs, but at times dangerous. She further argues that some were reminded of their vows “for better or worse” and were exhorted to pray more. She further notes: “One scolded by her minister for ‘betraying her husband by revealing what had occurred in privacy of their home after the pastor told him of her visit” (Rzepka 2002, on Religious views of domestic violence edition).

As a counselor, one needs to listen to all in order to provide a valid counsel. Additionally, counselors need to be confidential in various issues they deal with without exposing them. Some of these weaknesses of lacking confidentiality may be explained by the influence of patriarchal system. Patriarchal systems have dominated the African minds including those who are professional counselors. However, no one should be regarded superior/inferior to the other when it comes to handling marital or any other issue. I mean no one is perfect and matters of family needs to be handled wisely.

If the church claims to be just and fair, she should help her members by bringing them both to reconciliation without partiality. If it is the husband who is on the wrong, then it must be stated categorically that he is wrong. In this case I think the church should be the church. I do not ignore the influence of culture but the point I am trying to make is that the church should act without partiality like Jesus Christ. I therefore concur with Pagelow and Johnson 1998, quoted by Rzepka saying: “Silence within the religious community has served to keep the lid on the simmering pain that not only immobilizes victims but encourages the behavior of the perpetrators” (Rzepka 2002, on Religious view of domestic violence edition).

5.5.4 Cultural quandary in the church

I concur with the view which describes culture as being dynamic. This means that culture is not static and that it keeps changing. Globalization has brought with it the influence of westernization and modernity. These have affected African culture among other things. This means that the world is now like a global village. Whatever is done in Europe, America, Asia among other continents; is evident in other parts of the world which Africa is not an exception. Nevertheless, I do not ignore the fact that different people have different way of life and culture. The point I am trying to make is that the influence of culture is great which means people view the world from a wider perspective. They are more informed by advanced

technology among other things. In Africa and Kenya in particular, there is a new perspective of viewing issues. A Theology like feminist has far reaching impacts in Kenya. This is because women are now talking about empowerment through human rights, gender equity / equality; and other feminist organizations.

In Africa, few decades ago, women's place was known to be in the kitchen with their children. Moreover, boy child education was emphasized. This means that education was only meant for the boys while the girls stayed home to cook and do other household chores. In Kenya today gender roles are changing slowly but surely due to western influence. Girl education is emphasized unlike before. Women are getting empowered both socially and economically. For instance, women are illegible for senior government positions unlike before. They are elected as county representatives, Members of parliament, which is a new development. In MCK the year 2012, the first woman Bishop was elected and inaugurated early this year 2013. This is evident that changes are taking place.

The greatest challenge however is admitting the existence of these changes. In some families, these theologies are not taken positively or they are misinterpreted hence leading to misunderstandings in families (Refer to chapter four of this thesis). The ethical dilemma that the MCK faces is how to handle some serious marital problems. Moreover the issues of giving the right counsel and guidance to couples in which case the perpetrators of violence are males remain a bond of contention. This explains why Kunhiyop says:

“In Africa, as in the West, these beliefs and assumptions often remain unchanged even after there has been a religious conversion. Thus many African societies may have converted to Christianity or Islam, but they still cling to traditional beliefs and assumptions that determine how they act morally” (Kunhiyop 2008:5).

It has severally been reported that during church counseling, the counselor who in this case happen to be a male pastor/minister; will definitely favor the males or the vice versa. This has a far reaching impact because justices are not implicit. The church should emulate Christ whom she represents in the world. This is by being impartial and offering just guidance to all.

In MCK, the dilemma is due to influences of cultural practices and believes. This I mean that when for instance a male pastor/minister points out a mistake perpetrated by the husband; he may be accused of favoring the wife and the husband may even suspect that he is having an affair with his wife. In several cases therefore, women are always disadvantaged. The MCK

should therefore venture into fighting this problem if she has to minister to the needs of her members. The church should know that the African culture is changing and some concepts are outdated.

5.5.5 The existence of marital violence and abuse among Christians and clergies' families

The problem of family instability due to marital violence and abuse in Christian families is like a thorn in the flesh. Many would wonder why marital violence and abuse is reported in Christian families. Christian families are viewed with a lot of dignity. Christian families are expected to be examples of ideal Christian families. This is where love is expected to prevail among all other things. The simple reason is that these are families which none believer expect to emulate. What therefore would one expect if violence and abuse is also reported from such who are expected to be the role models? The leaders of the church and the pastors are believed to be the role models. They are the people many Christians run to in times of family crises because they expect them to offer some spiritual guidance.

In Kenya today and among most of the Christians, cases of violence in families are frequently reported. (See chapter four of this thesis). I concur with Gichinga when he notes that, the myth about marriage as being perfect has to be thrown away. (Gichinga 2005:28). She further maintains that it should not be viewed as a weakness to admit that one is experiencing violence and abuse. The MCK is however not an exception to this. The church should therefore encourage the members who are victims to identify themselves in order to find help. The members should also know that their ministers are not angels, and they can equally experience what they experience. Lately, some members were shocked to learn that even the esteemed ministers/pastors are victims and perpetrators of marital violence and abuse. (Refer to chapter four of this thesis).

This indeed poses a moral and ethical challenge to the church. Doesn't this scandalize the name of God?

Many have confessed their hopelessness especially when it comes to moral authority offered by the clergies. The spiritual and moral guidance is questioned. Some wonder what spiritual guidance the clergies who are perpetrators and victims of marital violence and abuse can offer them. Some may ask for instance, "If some of our ministers that we know very well are abusive to their families, what moral authority do they have to counsel us?" One lady, who

was under discipline after fighting with her husband said. This is reference to Paul's teachings in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 which says. He must manage his own family well and see that they obey him with proper respect. ('...if anyone does not manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?') (N.I.V Bible).

This problem has a far reaching effect especially when the members threaten to quit the church to find some other greener pastures. I was surprised to realize that most of our MCK members have moved to nearby congregation, some of which are headed by either divorcees, or separated pastors. Probably to them, that is where they find recognition. The MCK should learn to accommodate all like Jesus in the bible without isolation.

Another ethical dilemma the MCK faces amidst domestic violence and abuse era, is whether those ministers/pastors with marital problems and pending cases should still continue ministering or be suspended until proven guilty? This is because, during one of the conversation with some MCK Bishops, some confessed that majority of the ministers serving as superintendent ministers in various circuits are threatening to separate with their spouses. They noted that most clergies are unhappily married and are seriously looking for solutions to their problems. The ethical dilemma is whether to suspend them before their case is heard or just give a deaf ear until their cases is heard and decided otherwise? This is exactly what happens with the leaders who despite great rumors about their marital unfaithfulness, may still hang on to leadership of the church because they are not proved guilty. This is a great challenge to the church because the effects are far reaching. This is what the MCK is confronted with currently.

5.5.6 A need for a revised MCK Marriage service Vows, and the MCK Standing Orders (S.O .169 Marriage separation and divorce involving a Methodist Minister).

The MCK currently uses the 1987 version of the marriage liturgy. This liturgy owes a lot of influence from the British Methodist Church. There are some issues that may need to be revised in the liturgy because they may be overtaken by the events. The solemn vows in the liturgy need to be revised. This is because; there are some members who feel uncomfortable with some parts. Some of these parts include:

"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, A.B., do take the, C.D., to be my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to

God's holy law; and for this I pledge myself". In this case, there are some couples that do not like the parts which particularly emphasize clauses like "For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in health and in sickness, till death do us part" (Methodist service Book 1987:201).

The challenge comes in when some couples think about getting worse in marriage. It is believed and expected that in marriage union, the parties seeks mutual fulfillment which of course is happiness. Love and happiness are the expectations of a union between to people who are in love. However, no one predicts suffering in marriage. No one would expect the worst experience in marriage otherwise none would pursue for such. Therefore it is obvious that when couples take such solemn vows in church which is believed to be God's dwelling place; it is expected to be a well thought of decision and vows that are made in God's presence are deemed as abiding. In other words, marriage is viewed as sacred and the vows are intended to be permanent. A breach of any of them is like breaking the Mosaic Law. In this case therefore, marriage union is expected to be a lifelong union between couples. Nothing in this case should separate them as recorded in Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9. In cases where the life of one is threatened, one needs to cling to marriage since the vows are abiding (Refer to chapter three of this thesis).

The MCK believes that the solemn vows made in the church should be abiding and that God is the true unseen witness of what is said in the church which is His Holy and dwelling place. This therefore implies that none of the vows should be broken. It may be obvious therefore to foresee the probable reasons why perpetrators of marital violence and abuse are on the rise in MCK. The point I am trying to drive in here is that some would misinterpret the fact that marriage vows are abiding and that couples should cling to each other for better or for worse.

This implies that when the victims experience whatever form of life in marriage it is predicted. Some perpetrators of violence and abuse in marriages would argue that "Marriage is not a bed of roses". This means that one does not always expect the best in marriage. I would critic this argument because as I said earlier in the beginning of this chapter, marriage is a union of two people; a man and a woman who come together in pursuit of love and happiness. If then there is no love and happiness, why should the duo continue living together? In Africa and Kenya in particular, some women claim to remain in abusive marriages for the sake of their children whom they fear may suffer the consequences of either separation or divorce.

I therefore concur with Brewer when he argues:

“The church should now be humble and admit that a great mistake has been made. Too many generations of husbands and wives have been forced to remain with their abusing and neglectful partners and have not been allowed to divorce even after suffering repeated unfaithfulness. The church should not continue in false teaching because the tradition should not be regarded superior to the teaching of Paul and Jesus” (Instone- Brewer D, 2002:314).

Additionally, standing order 169 B), which has guidelines on Marriage, Separation and Divorce involving a Methodist Minister, requires some revision. (Refer to 3.3.1 B) 1, 2, 3, and 4 of this thesis).

The following are the suggested reasons for that:

Firstly, the decision made against the separated or divorced ministers, are not adequate. In fact they do not offer any solution to the problem. Furthermore, deflocking those involved adds more insults to the problem. Those hurting need to find solace and those who have no hope need to find hope in the Church. Therefore, if the opposite or the worst takes place, then members are not being helped. When a minister is deflocked, he /she is cut off from other colleagues. This is because; he/she is viewed as a deviant hence no one would wish to associate with them. The question then is, how does the church help such to heal their past experiences that led to either separation or divorce?

Secondly, when the separated minister does not get the required due or payment that he/she is accorded at the end of the month, how does he/she survive? This can be a worse experience. Instead of helping the victims, the Church in this case participates in tearing down the wounded soul.

Thirdly, the Church requires a re-reading, and a re- interpretation of the bible, from a contextual perspective. This means that the MCK should consider revising the marriage liturgy to address the contextual issues at hand. Bevans argues that the contextualization of theology as an attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of particular context is a theological imperative. (Bevans 2008:3). The bible needs to address the evils in our families and our societies. Additionally, the MCK should come up with a revised edition of the liturgy. This is because the Church has been using the very old version which was published under the Methodist Church in Great Britain, many years ago. The content that is presented is more

Western, than African. Furthermore, it lacks contextual problems of family and marriage. Moreover, the content is old and outdated.

5.6.7 Family and sex education programmes in church

One could not imagine of marriage without sex. In other words, sex in marriage would be described as the point in which both partners find joy and fulfillment. What then could happen if there is no sex in marriage? The obvious is the opposite. By this I mean that sex in marriage is central and must be taken seriously and not just assumed.

In Kenya today, many families are experiencing various problems. It would be hypocritical to exclude the church members from the problem. This means that the problems affecting families in Kenya affect all families irrespective of their religious affiliation.

The MCK has a curriculum for guiding families in marriage. However there is need to revise the curriculum in order for it to be more modern. The curriculum should address all ages in marriage. This implies that the program should be arranged systematically in order to address all ages. Some families that are recently married like for instance 0-2 years, 2-5years, 5-10 years, and 10-15 years among others should not address similar issues which may be out dated. This I mean that the curriculum should be current and address working and house wives, young, middle-aged, old , educated and illiterate couples differently, and in their current situations.

By so doing there would be no crisis in handling marital cases.

Moreover, in the curriculums, people need to be enlightened on various family values in order to uphold ideal Christian families without abusing each other.

In addition, sex education is very vital in families. In Kenya for example a few decades ago girls were not considered for formal education; they spent most of their time with their mothers and their grandmothers who taught them how to love and care for their husbands. They were also taught about child rearing and cooking among other things. Unlike in those days, girls are now enrolled in schools. This means that they have very limited or no time with their grandmothers or their mothers some who may be currently working or studying. Moreover, with the coming of boarding schools in Kenya; most children spend time in school hence they have less time with their parents. Additionally, it is recently that sex education was introduced in schools.

Few years ago, sex was assumed to be something innate. This means that besides acquiring some knowledge from mothers and grandmothers; this was still inadequate because not everything that was taught. In fact people shied from mentioning and even talking about sex. For instance no one tells his or her son how to have sex with his/her husband. The key issues that were taught were how to take care of them. It would therefore not be a surprise to learn that in Kenya today, several domestic violence and abuse are sex related. Among those that I interviewed, it was evident that the core problem was related to sex in one way or the other.

Let me share an incident that I came across during my data collection. I approached a certain middle aged woman who was married for 10 years but later divorced. She was a member of a certain church and a then practicing Christian. I inquired to know why she separated from her husband and this is what she said: “Reverend, I could not imagine living with this man. She said shyly. My former husband who is the father to my children used to force me to have sex with him in what I may term as unhealthy style. She continued to say. “He could at times insist on having sex from behind my ass which to me sounds satanic and unheard of among humanity. I wondered who and where on earth he saw or heard such kind of a style”. She explained sadly.

The worst bit is when he even started forcing me to put his pennies on my mouth and I refused. I went back to my paternal home and explained everything to my parents who said that my husband may have been bewitched. ‘They advised me not to go back to him because he may defile me’. She lamented. She also argued that her parent in laws had insisted that due to her disobedience to her husband; she needed to be circumcised as a sign of disciplining her. She however noted that her in-laws had not known the essence of her husband’s violence. They had misinterpreted her rebellion to her husband as a sign of unbecoming behavior which was common with uncircumcised Meru girls. This was however a common stereotype among the circumcising families. “After my parents explained the whole cause of the problem to my in-laws, they too suspected that there could be something terribly wrong with their son”. She lamented .This woman further explained that since then she had parted ways with her husband and she is currently living with her parents.

This may be termed as ‘sex- illiteracy’ resulting from inadequate sex education. As pointed earlier in this chapter, sex education was not taught in schools until recently when it was introduced. The challenge now remains with adults who are already in families. Families have

a lot to learn especially pertaining sex in marriage. As much as some may think that everyone innately knows about what should be done, there are many things that still remain as mysteries about sex. This I mean that in churches, there should be seminars and workshops organized to educate Christians about sex in marriage. This is because sex in marriage is very important and many families break due to problems related to sex. According to many, sex in marriage may seem to be very trivial but it is crucial in marriage. The MCK should therefore take the challenge besides preaching and teaching her members on spiritual growth.

5.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed domestic violence/abuse as an ethical challenge and dilemma in the MCK. I have evaluated the contemporary context of Christian Ethics. Moreover, I have discussed the biblical evidence of domestic violence and abuse both from the Old and New testaments. I have limited this to some few Mosaic books. In the New Testament, I looked at Matthew and Mark, and 1Corinthians. The reason for this is that they present family issues which are the center of interest in this thesis. I discussed the ethical challenges and dilemma the church is facing among the following: The question of patience and forgiveness in marriage, The question of when the victims of violence may seek legal measure?, the influence of patriarchy system in the MCK, The cultural quandary in the church, the existence of marital violence and abuse among Christians and the clergies/church ministers, a need for a revised MCK Marriage liturgy, and finally a need for family and sex education programmes in church. In the following last chapter six, I will make further discussions under theme: Domestic violence and abuse as a pastoral challenge and in MCK.

6.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AS A PASTORAL CHALLENGE TO THE METHODIST CHURCH IN KENYA

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed domestic violence and abuse as an ethical challenge and dilemma in the Methodist Church. I first of all made some traces of domestic violence and abuse in the Biblical times making special concentrations to some few Pentateuch books in Old Testament. I also made reference to the New Testament and particularly in Matthew and Mark in the gospels and finally looked at I Corinthians 13:4-8. Among the ethical challenges and dilemma the MCK face are the following: The question of patience and forgiveness in marriage, when to seek legal measures in cases of violence and abuse? The impact of patriarchy system in MCK, the quandary of culture in the church, the existence of marital violence and abuse among Christians and the clergies/church ministers, a need for a revised MCK Marriage liturgy; a need for family and sex programmes in church. Then finally I made a conclusion.

In this chapter, I will discuss the research analysis under the domestic violence and abuse as a pastoral challenge in the Methodist Church in Kenya. In my discussion, I will build more on John Patton's description of pastoral care essential guide. Furthermore, I will make suggestions on how the MCK should meet with the pastoral challenge. I will commence by giving a brief description of the MCK Membership which will provide the nature of members to whom pastoral care duties are disseminated. Furthermore, I will discuss the theological basis of pastoral care. Furthermore, I will discuss the pastoral care essential elements by John Patton. Nevertheless, I will make proposals on how the MCK should meet with the challenge; and finally make a conclusion of the chapter.

6.2 MCK Church membership

The Methodist church in Kenya has categories of church membership. There are those that are full members and those that are associate members. In the following section, I will briefly describe these two categories.

6.2.1 Full Membership

The full members are those members that have been received into the church membership through an intensive catechumen class course. They must believe in their hearts and confess that Jesus is Lord and savior. In essence, personal faith and confession is considered as a vital

requirement; after which they are baptized and recommended by the church council. These are members from ages 13 onwards for the youths, and adults from all ages. Both men and women are therefore received into the full membership of the church. Nevertheless, the MCK takes into considerations that these members are not new converts. This means that the new members in the church have to undergo an intensive preparatory course before they can be registered into the full membership of the MCK.

Moreover, those who are accepted and received into the full membership of the church should be people who are above reproach. These are people whose character are approved by the council and are found worthy and outstanding. This is in reference to 1 Timothy 3: 1ff. In other words these are the members with good standing in the church. In cases of adults, they must have had church weddings or their marriages blessed in the church before they are received into the church full membership. They must be people who relates well with other people and especially members of their family.

Additionally, they must be husbands to one wife and wives to one husband respectively. This again is in reference to Paul's teaching on church leadership in 1 Timothy 3:1 ff. (The ideal monogamous marriage is hereby emphasized amidst the common polygamous marriages that were common in Africa and Kenya in particular few decades ago). They are considered as examples to the church and are expected to be role models to others. (I also wish to note here that there are some MCK members and clergies who consider giving of either tithes or church assessment as a requirement before one is considered a full member). However, there is an ongoing debate on whether or not to consider a requirement for full membership in MCK.

Additionally, these are the members who can be considered worth for leading the church. They are considered 'worthy' or right for partaking the Holy Communion in the church. I need to mention that not everyone is welcome for the Holy Communion as it is the tradition to many western countries. In fact there are some rules and regulations. I will discuss these rules and regulations later in this chapter. The full members are viewed as the right members to receive all the benefits in the church. By this I mean that these are the people who the minister and the leaders should visit occasionally and in times of sicknesses and bereavement. They are accorded the 'best burials' in cases of deaths. By 'best burial' I mean the MCK has category of burial ceremonies. The burial service liturgy differs from members to members. For instance, if the deceased was a full member as already described in the paragraphs above,

the burial becomes official. Official in the sense that the ministers conducting are fully robed in their official attire and the burial service liturgy is strictly observed step by step without any alterations. Moreover, other services offered to the full members include baptism to their children in cases of adults (Methodist Standing Orders and Agendas 2011:77-83).

6.2.2 Associate Membership

The MCK also takes note of other members that are not full members. These include the following: All the new converts, the new attendees from other denominations, those considered as backsliders (This category of members includes the recently separated from their families, the divorcees, those with known loose morals, men who turn to be polygamous and women who become promiscuous, those who beget children out of wedlock, those who engage in pre-marital sex, those who practice magic, those who terminate pregnancies, those with known cases of extra marital affairs, those who abuse drugs and the perpetrators of marital violence and abuse among other known criminals and wrecks.

However, let me mention that such members are not completely closed up from full membership because it is always believed that there is room for change and one can repent and pursue a transformed life. These members are free to attend the church but are limited in one way or another. This means that they are not exempted to offer their tithes/offerings/thanksgiving. They are entitled to pastoral care by the church pastor/other leaders. The church encourages them to help themselves out of the associate situation by striving into good morals and by attending regular catechumen class course through which they are equipped for full membership.

Among the limitations of associate members in MCK includes the following: that they are not allowed to partake the Holy Communion, their children cannot be baptized when young unless they reach age 12 and above to be able to attend the course by themselves, their burials are not officially conducted unlike the case with the full members, they cannot be elected in any positions in the church because they are considered to lack moral authority and dignity. In other words, their morals are considered wanting and they are considered to be in need of help rather than to give help. (Let me mention that the associate members are viewed with mixed feelings in the MCK and not many Christians like associating with them). Many would be quick to condemn them as ‘sinners’ and ‘unworthy’. Having therefore a clear picture of the

MCK membership, I move further into discussing the theological basis for pastoral care in the following paragraphs.

6.3 Theological basis for pastoral care

Pastoral care is theologically based on the Christian affirmation of God's intent for creating humankind. Humanity was created to be in union and to have fellowship with God. The fellowship and relationship was not only for humanity but also with all other creatures that God created. We relate to God through prayers. When we pray, we believe that He hears and answers our prayers. He therefore cares for our lives. The Psalmist in the bible presents God as our Shepherd who cares for His flock. In the same way, since God cares for us, we too are charged with the responsibilities of caring for each other. I therefore agree with Patton when he says:

“Pastoral care within the Christian tradition is inescapably associated with the image of the shepherd” (Patton 2005:1). In Luke 15, the image of a pastor is likened to the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd. The imagery used is the one of a lost sheep which the shepherd toils to find.

In the same way therefore, the oversight function of the pastor involves not only teaching and preaching which are the pulpit ministry, but more importantly organizing, and other functions which are deemed vital for the strengthening and building the Christians. The pastoral care is aimed at bringing to the community of faith those lost or separated by either choice or by other circumstances.

According to Patton, the people charged with the responsibilities of pastoral care may not necessarily be ordained ministers/pastors but can as well be any other person who is charged with the responsibilities as a lay minister of pastoral care. Moreover, he argues that the strength of clinical education for ministry is not in its association with health care, the white coat of the hospital staff, or the psychological wisdom of the physician or psychoanalyst. It is the power of the human relationship to reach out and affirm the humanness of the separated ones-those trapped in loneliness, confusion, and often, powerlessness (Patton 2005:2, 3).

The pastoral responsibility is very vital because those hurting require someone to encourage and give them hope. Those separated needs to feel that they belong, the lonely needs to feel

that they are close to someone, the powerless needs to feel they can be powerful and make sense in life. In essence what is important here is relationship and association.

Pastoral care is therefore a term that is very common in most of the Christian churches including MCK, and its responsibilities are far reaching. In fact it constitutes the core ministry of the church. I therefore concur with Benner when he says:

“As this term is commonly employed, pastoral care refers to the total range of help offered by pastors, elders, deacons, and other members of a congregation to those in need of care. Pastoral care is a ministry of compassion, its source and motivation being the love of God. It includes such things as visiting the sick, attending to the dying, comforting the bereaved, supporting those who are struggling or facing difficulties of any kind, preaching, and administering sacraments”(Benner 2007:189).

Additionally, I would say that besides preaching and teaching, the MCK looks at the church ministry in a wider perspective. This is as a holistic ministry which endeavors the total wellbeing of her members. This is the reason why visiting the church members not only when sick but also in their homes is considered very important. Patton refers this as pastoral presence. He further argues that the Pastoral carer, he argues, whether laity or clergy, is present to the people cared for in a particular kind of relationship- one that “represents” the presence of God through relationship to the person cared for (Patton 2005:22) .

Chapter 3 of this thesis offers some of the main issues related to family affairs. However, I will not dwell so much on pastoral care to all members in the church, but rather I will concentrate with the church pastoral care to the members who are either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence and abuse. This is indeed my major task in this thesis. I therefore discuss pastoral care essential guide in the following paragraphs below.

6.4 Pastoral care essential guide

It requires one to have a lot of wisdom and knowledge when dealing with families which experience domestic violence and abuse. This means that in order to help those in need; one should have clear understanding of the essence of the problem. I wish to buy a leaf from John Patton’s contributions on what should be considered as an essential guide for pastoral care.

These include the following: Pastoral wisdom, pastoral presence, and pastoral guidance. A discussion of each will be made in the following paragraphs below.

6.4.1 Pastoral wisdom

The first essential guide that Patton discusses is Pastoral wisdom. He argues that human beings can know and discover so many things in the world, but the wisdom to deal with the practical and painful situations in their own lives and in the lives of others involves a never-ending search (Patton 2005:7).

Pastoral wisdom can therefore be viewed as having the skills of what is required in doing pastoral care. The pastors and other care givers should be people with adequate skills and competence in doing pastoral care to themselves and to those who are in need. For the pastors, there is a curriculum in Theological schools which is meant for this purpose. However besides the theoretical knowledge, pastors and other professionals need to have practical knowledge for doing the act of caring.

In other words this means that the care givers should be wise in handling issues that are at hand. They should be careful when dealing with such matters like marital related which are a bit delicate. I therefore concur with Patton who argues that pastoral wisdom involves the practical knowledge of how to do and to be. It involves being able to respond appropriately to situations calling for care (Patton 2005:7).

The pastors and the laity who are doing pastoral care should therefore be aware of what is expected of them as care givers. This therefore helps them to become relevant to the people they are offering the pastoral care.

6.4.2 Pastoral presence

The second aspect of pastoral care by Patton is pastoral presence. According to him, pastoral presence is more than just reaching out to the person cared for. He argues that in order to be present, to "be with" those who need care, the carer's being or full selfhood must be there. He therefore considers those offering pastoral care as those who seek to be more than what they are.

In such a view, he considers the character of the pastoral carer as an essential quality, which offers moral strength, self-discipline, or fortitude to the one offering it. He therefore considers character as having a definable role, which is likened to a character in a play (Patton 2005:23). These are therefore essential qualities especially to the care-givers.

Physical presence with those who need pastoral care is also vital. This is because people who are hurting in one way or the other need someone to be with them. Presence also enhances fellowship and relationship which is vital in pastoral care. Patton likens this presence with the presence of God through relationship to the person cared for. Pastoral carers he argues "represent" or remind persons of God by remembering and hearing, and affirm by their action that God continues to hear and remember them. Moreover he argues that God is "represented" in the relationship, a genuine pastoral presence in the relationship is evident in the following ways namely: when the carer's own person is fully present and he is aware of himself and his own feelings, when the carer is fully aware that he represents more than himself; and when he is aware of and able to experience as much possible the unique personhood of the one to whom care is offered (Patton 2005:22).

In essence the care givers' presence acts as a reminder and a re-presenter of God, the church and the Christian faith as a whole. Therefore they need to present themselves in such a manner that when those whom they offer care to feel that they are the right people who represent God in their various situations. This should therefore remind the ministers and the lay pastoral care-givers that character formation is a great requirement. This is what is Patton refers to as 'awareness of oneself' (Patton 2005:25). This does not imply that the pastors and the lay care-givers should be viewed as though they are 'small gods', but rather that the fact that they are God's servants should portray 'christ like characters'. This is because those hurting see pastors and ministers as representatives of God. In fact when visited at their homes, they see as though Christ is physically present through the minister. This is the reason why ministers should be careful the way they present themselves. This is again about character.

6.4.3 Pastoral guidance

Having considered the first two essential aspects of pastoral care, Patton finally present the last essential element. This I think is not the least in importance either. He views pastoral care as involving leading or showing the way. One who gives guidance is someone who is familiar with what he/she offers. The ministers who offer pastoral guidance are believed to be people who actually know exactly what should be done because they are believed to know the way. Steward Hiltner who is quoted by Patton offers a clear definition of what pastoral guidance is. He suggests that guidance involves the tender, solicitous care involved in all genuinely

pastoral work (Patton 2005:37). Guiding should therefore be viewed not as directing the person's life but reminding them of specific resources that were part of their lives though could be absent during that particular time .

In other words, guidance involves listening to those cared for and giving them some encouragements and hope from their former state of life. Those experiencing marital violence and abuse, they need some guidelines on how to go about such violence and abuses experienced. They need someone to give them way out of their problems that they face. It may be problematic to expect guidance from someone who in the actual sense is equally in need of the same guidance. This means that the pastoral challenge the church may be facing currently is a lack of /shortage of pastors who may offer relevant guidance. This is because; either most of them lack pastoral skills, or may be experiencing similar marital problems which needs guidance. Ministers in such situations may be stressed hence may look a little bit nervous and abnormal.

A pastor or any other trained laity should therefore be able to provide relevant information and guidance to such people who are hurting. Clinical pastoral education and other supervised ministry may provide opportunities for acquiring pastoral care. However, in cases where the knowledge and specialization is limited, pastors and laity should be able to direct the hurting members to relevant and resorceful avenues in which they may find help.This is because, the pastor cannot be a 'know it all' neither can he/she be a 'jungle of all train'. The fact that pastors and lay pastors are charged with the responsibilities of pastoral care does not imply that they must be able to offer solution to each and every problems experienced in families.

Having therefore discussed Patton's essential elements of pastoral care, I wish therefore to discuss on how the MCK should actually meet with the challenge of pastoral care to the families with domestic violence and abuse in the following paragraphs below.

6.5 How should the MCK meet with this pastoral challenge?

I suggest that the MCK can consider the following possible ways to help reduce the pastoral challenge posed by domestic violence and abuse.

6.5.1 Pre-marital counseling

Premarital counseling is quite essential especially for people who are preparing for marriage. As the name suggests, it is the preparation counseling those who are intending to start their family get from a pastor or a trained marriage counselor. This is why Donna maintains that pre-marriage counseling should start as soon as the man and woman are quite sure that they want to be married (Donna 2004:2). Most people underlook this kind of counselling which in essence is supposed to usher in those who intend to begin their families. In most cases, some people due to ignorance think that they already know all that is expected in marriage hence do not need any guidance. Many ministers too fall victims of this. I would argue that pre-marital counseling should not be taken for granted as it is by many. This is because, if the church should offer any help in marriage; then the starting point must be in pre-marital counseling. I concur with Instone –Brewer’s view that any couple that is willing to get married should attend the church for at least a month before the wedding (Instone-Brewer D, 2002:310).

Additionally, I suggest that they should not only attend the church but approach the minister for pastoral care and counseling sessions .By this i mean there are some people who may attend the church for some times but they may not wish to identify with the church. These are the category that I discussed in the previous paragraphs in the associate members column. Moreover, I wish to suggest that before any arrangements to solemnize their marriage, the minister should be familiar with those planning to undertake marriage in the church. This means that there are some members who may come to the church for some few months with what I refer to as a 'selfish hidden agenda'. These members may make some technical appearances in the church and after their marriages are solemnized, they no longer turn up for the service. It may be very difficult therefore for the minister to do pastoral care follow-ups even after they get married.

I would also challenge the ministers who just make haste or are in hurry to officiate the marriages of such people who are not properly grounded in the church. There have been many related instances in the church.

I would also challenge some ministers who take a very short counseling sessions which to me are could be in adequate. This presents a very serious pastoral challenge to the MCK. The question of pre-marital counseling curricullums should be clearly addressed. By this imean that the church has a challenge of lacking uniformed curricullum. For instance, different ministers prepare their own pre-marital counseling curricullums as they find fit to suit the

purpose. When another is transferred into the same circuit, he/she may come up with something similar or completely different from the former. This should be revisited, if the church is to be relevant in her pastoral duties.

6.5.2 Providing comfort and counsel to those hurting/ consider church rescue centres

The people who are hurting need comfort and counsel. This does not necessarily mean that they have to be the church members or not. The fact is that they are human. As human they also need someone whom they can share their problems and worries with. The church should therefore move out of the stigma and fear of associating with those who are not full members. The associate and other members who may be under the discipline of the church equally need comfort. They too need to love and be loved. Those abused need assurance that they do not deserve to be abused. The church should therefore acknowledge the seriousness of the issue and act with urgency to safeguard the lives of her members. I concur with Kerby Anderson who is the author and president of Probe Ministries International when he argues: “if you are a pastor, a counselor, or just a caring friend, you can provide counsel and comfort. She needs to hear from you that she doesn’t deserve to be abused” (Anderson 2003, on Abuse and Domestic Violence.)

If for instance a couple has separated, she may be stalked by the abuser hence needs to know exactly how she can gain access to the legal services. The minister or any other counselor should offer a way out with urgency to safeguard her. This is what Anderson calls crisis intervention.

The MCK is a national church hence I call upon the stakeholders to think about having church rescue centres which will provide security and comfort to the victims of domestic violence and abuse before the case is finalized by the legal office. This in deed will be of great help because the church ministers cannot accommodate all those hurting in the church houses.

Additionally, the church should emulate the character of Jesus who associated with all by showing them love and care. His example was unique because he associated with the marginalized like the prostitutes, the Samaritan woman among others. Those hurting therefore require one who can empathise with their situations and give them some hope. The young and the old, the rich and the poor need God’s love and care. The MCK should therefore take the challenge of giving attention to all without any partiality.

6.5.3 Addressing domestic violence and abuse as a National pandemic

In the year 2012, domestic violence and abuse became so rampant in Kenya. It was reported that most of the perpetrators of violence and abuse were women whilst the victims were men. The justice committee for men against violence and abuse advised all men to boycott food in their homes as a way of protesting against their violent and abusive wives (See 1.6, and 2.2 of this thesis.) The church however can consider peaceful demonstrations against all forms of domestic violence and abuse. This can be through pulpit ministry, open air crusades, seminars and workshops arranged both at local and national levels, through media- the church can consider printing out pamphlets, magazines, periodicals, books and other publications campaigning against domestic violence and abuse. Additionally, abusers should be held accountable by the church. This is by having interventions, confrontations, and love talks. This is why Carol J. Adams says that words need to be said to victims in the church: “You are not alone; God wants you to be safe.” (Adams 1994: 26). She further says that the perpetrators need to hear from the church that they are responsible for their behaviors, and that the church holds them responsible.

I concur with John S. McClure saying: “...preachers have three goals when speaking out about sexual and domestic violence from the pulpit. 1. To speak a word of hospitality, resistance, and hope to victims and survivors. 2. To send a message that the Church will cease to be a place of easy rationalization and cheap grace for abusers. 3. To invite the congregation to consider how it might become a ‘safe place’ and a force for compassion and resistance in relation to sexual and domestic violence ...” (McClure S, and Ramsay J, 1998: 111). The church in this case will endeavor into speaking the truth in love hence breaking the silence.

6.5.4 A minister as a specialized counselor

Pastoral counseling is part of the entire pastoral care responsibilities of the church. A church therefore without pastoral counseling is inadequate and may be irrelevant. The main challenge that currently the MCK is facing is a lack of competent counselors. By this I mean that most of the ministers do not have proper knowledge and skills of doing pastoral counseling. The members believe that the ministers who are God’s servants have the knowledge of handling their stressing problems. Besides praying with them, the members believe that the clergies are more close to God than any other people who may offer counselling to them. This therefore

means that they trust their ministers with their sensitive issues more than their fellow laity who may be professional counselors.

The challenge to MCK ministers comes in whereby some ministers try to muzzle more of what they can chew. By this I mean that many fall victims of becoming jungles of all trade. It becomes hard for some to confess the problem of inadequacy before the members. Moreover I think there are some few ministers who consider referring their members' cases to professional counselors who are not necessarily ministers. However, this too has some effects whereby majority of the member may turn down the offer due to lack of trust to their colleague counselors who may be the members of the same church. This therefore poses a very serious pastoral challenge to the church.

The MCK should therefore consider training her ministers who are professional counselors. These are men and women who should take a complete pastoral care and counseling intensive course. Moreover, the church should consider the course as an area of specialization whereby those trained will fully be engaged in pastoral care and counseling professionalism alone. Additionally, the church should consider opening counseling centres which will be purely run by the professionally trained MCK ministers.

6.5.5 Burned-out servants

The ministers who are God's servants experience burn-outs just like the members they serve. A minister is a human being with body like any other human being. He/she is equally created in the image and likeness of God like any other. The point I am making is that this truth has to be admitted especially in the MCK. As already mentioned earlier in this thesis, it can be a mere self-deceit to think that the ministers do not 'wear out' or grow weary and that they too do not experience what other lay members experience. The ministers are expected to attend to the pastoral needs of their members without delay. In cases of marital violence and abuse for example, the members feel at ease first consulting their ministers. When some women for instance are battered by their husbands, the first people to run to for help are their church ministers. The challenge therefore is: Can the ministers be able to offer pastoral guidance to those hurting when they are experiencing the same? Whom do they run to when faced with similar problems and who is responsible for offering pastoral care and counseling to the ministers with burn-outs? (See 4.4.1 of this thesis).

The ministers like the lay experience violence and abuse in their families as discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. However, they may lack someone to run to. The MCK therefore should not ignore the pastoral challenge to the ministers. There is a need for a counseling committee which should comprise of professionally trained ministers. This should be purely set aside for offering pastoral care and counseling to the ministers. Otherwise there could be a danger of burn-out of ministers who may fail to deliver the pastoral duties as expected. There has been known cases of some of MCK ministers threatening to commit suicide, and some dying mysteriously of marital stress related problems. Probably this may explain the reasons why many are currently threatening to quit the ministry of the church. The MCK should therefore not be ignorant of the fact that majority of the ministers like any other person experience problems in marriage and that 'no marriage is made in heaven'.

Refresher courses and seminars for the ministers may be of great importance in this. Marriage seminars, spouses' retreats, ministers' and spouses' night outs and workshops are equally important. The MCK has in the past been arranging for such seminars but the problem is that some do not take them seriously. I would also suggest that during such seminars and workshops, the church should consider having motivational speakers who will address issues like the ministers/pastors' families. The church may consider hosting some professional counselors even from outside the country for confidentiality purposes. This would be of great help and would save most of the ministers' families.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed domestic violence and abuse as a pastoral challenge to the Methodist Church in Kenya. I have explained the theological basis of pastoral care. Further more, I have described the MCK membership which includes the full and the associate membership. Moreover, I have deliberated on essential pastoral care guide and finally made some suggestions on how the MCK should meet with the pastoral challenge that domestic violence and abuse poses. I have therefore suggested the following pastoral ways which can help MCK face the underlying pastoral problem:

Taking pre-marital counseling seriously, that the church should provide comfort and counsel to those hurting / the MCK may also think of setting up church rescue centres which provide home for victims of domestic violence and abuse, the MCK should address domestic violence and abuse as a national pandemic through media, pamphlets, periodicals, magazines, pulpit

ministry, open air crusades among others. Training MCK ministers to be specialized/professional counselors.

I have also discussed the problem of burn-out among the ministers which I am referring to as 'burned-out servants'. Furthermore, I have suggested for some structured programmes which are purely meant for the ministers' rejuvenation. Finally I have drawn a conclusion of the chapter. In the following chapter 7, I will draw a general conclusion of the entire thesis.

7.0 SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

7.1 Introduction

In the whole of this thesis, I have discussed domestic violence and abuse as a pastoral and ethical challenge to the Methodist Church in Kenya. The challenge is posed by the current rise of family related violence and abusive behaviors especially among Christians where it would be least expected. It is in disbelief that some MCK members have even learnt and witnessed similar violent and abusive behaviors amongs their own ministers whom they dearly esteem. This alerts the church that all is not well and something needs to be done urgently to save the church. Among the main steps the MCK considers to reduce the problem in both the lay members and the ministers is putting them under the discipline of the church through which they are not allowed to share the Lord's Table (Holy Communion) for a period not less than 6 months. They are supposed to be under strict monitor of the leaders and the ministers in their jurisdiction until they show a sign of repentance. This however seems in adequate since the problem seems to worsen with some members quitting the church while a number of ministers have resigned from the ministry and others threatening to quit.

I have discussed the occurances of domestic violence and abuse in Kenya citing some few cases. I have also examined different types of domestic violence and abuse .

Furthermore, I have endeavoured into discussing possible causes of domestic violence and abuse. Additionally, I have discussed the effects of domestic violence and abuse.

Nevertheless, I have discussed African view of family, how some marital problems were solved in Kenya, and the MCK response to domestic violence and abuse. I analysed the MCK Church documents.

Moreover, I have discussed domestic violence and abuse as an ethical challenge and dilemma in MCK. I have also described the contemporary context of Christian ethics.

I have also discussed domestic violence and abuse as a pastoral challenge to the Methodist Church in Kenya . I have further presented the MCK church membership. Further I discussed the theological basis for pastoral care which I find very necessary in this thesis.

Additionally, I have discussed pastoral care essential guide as presented by Patton. Finally, I have suggested ways in which the MCK should meet with the pastoral challenge. These suggestions include: pre-marital counseling, Providing comfort and counsel to those hurting /

establishing church rescue centres, addressing domestic violence and abuse as a national disaster, MCK ministers as specialized / professional counselors, striving to curb burn-outs in ministers through relevant family seminars /workshops, retreats, ministers and spouses' night outs, picnics among others by professionally trained ministers from within and outside the country and other Churches. In this chapter I therefore identify some limitations posed by this study and propose further prospects of this thesis.

7.2 Limitations of the thesis

I do not ignore the fact that this thesis has several shortcomings or limitations which I will endeavor to present in the following paragraphs below.

First of all, the thesis is limited to the Methodist Church in Kenya. This means that the thesis lacks some very important information especially from other churches which are not Methodists in Kenya. If such were together gathered, one may come up with a clear picture of the magnitude of the problem among Christians in Kenya.

Secondly, is a lack of reliable domestic violence and abuse Records. The thesis lacks some reliable statistics on domestic violence and abuse in the entire country. Further more marriage laws are lacking. I was only able to present what is available in the church constitution which is the Standing Orders. However I need to note that this is because I was limited to the Methodist Church in Kenya as my area of scope.

Thirdly, domestic violence and abuse is a very wide topic. This means that it takes place among many people living in the household. This thesis offered a general overview of domestic violence and abuse without concentrating with some particular.

7.3 Further Research

I would propose the following areas of inquiry: A contextual re-reading and re- interpretation of New Testament. I would propose texts on family and marriage in reference to Pauline theology. In 1Corinthians 13: 4- 8, for instance Paul discusses the expectations of love in marriage, defining the essence of love in marriage. In his deliberation, Paul presents some themes which are discussed in extremes. These include: Love as patience, Love never fails; Love does not keep a record of wrongs. Additionally, Paul's letter to Ephesians deliberates on

the relationship between husband and wife. The main themes discussed therein include: submission of the wife to her husband, and the husband as the head of the family could be contentious with the current nature of families which are headed by single mothers / single parents. Nevertheless, in the contemporary Christian view, these themes face a lot of criticism especially during the current era where domestic violence and abuse has intensified. Furthermore, the moral authority of the church on marital guidance is put into question as many family problems pile up among the Christian families. Moreover, the permanence of marriage has been questioned amidst violent and abusive behaviors in families. One can easily deduce that such texts are enslaving whereby Christians are forced to remain in abusive marriages for the sake of being faithful to the scriptures. Therefore, a re-reading and re-interpretation of such with a contextual eye and mind would provide relevant guidance and save many Christian families.

REFERENCES\ SOURCES

Adams Carol J. (1994), *Women battering*. (Creative pastoral care and counseling).
Fortress press, Minneapolis.

Barnett W.Ola (1997), *Family violence across the lifespan*. (An introduction). Sage
publications.

Benner G. David, (1998). *Care of Souls. Revisioning Christian Nurture and counsel*, Baker
Books.

Bevans Stephen B, (2008). *Models of Contextual Theology*. Revised and expanded edition.
Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York U.S.A.

Bibles- New International Version Bible (NIV).

Breazeale Kathlyn A. (2008). *Mutual Empowerment*. A theology of Marriage, Intimacy and
Redemption. Fortress press Minneapolis.

Browning Don S, (2007) *.Equality and the Family*. A Fundamental, practical Theology of
Children, Mothers, and Fathers in the Modern societies. William B. Eerdmans publishing
company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K

Bryman Alan, (2012). *Social Research Methods*. (Fourth edition). Oxford University Press,
New York.

Buttry Daniel L. (1994), *Christian Peacemaking*. From Heritage to Hope.Judson Press,
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851. U.S.A

Cahill Lisa S, (2000). *Family*. A Christian Social perspective. Fortress press, Minneapolis

Carolyn Osiek and David Balch L. *Early Christian Families in Context*. An nterdisciplinary
Dialogue.William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge,
U.K

Clarke Rita-Lou, (1986). *Pastoral Care of Battered Women*. The Westminster press, Philadelphia.

Eide Oyvind M, Engedal Leif Gunnar, Kimilike Lechion Petter, and Ndossi Emeline, (2009). *Restoring Life in Christ. Pastoral Care and Domestic violence African Experiences*. Makumira University College and New Millenium Books, Arusha.

Donna G. and Allan, (2004). *A Pre-Marriage Counselling handbook for pastors and lay counsellors*. Oasis international Ltd .Accra

Gichinga E. M, (2005). *Marriage Counselling. (A counseling Guide)*. GEM Counselling Services. Nairobi

Hodgson L.Dorothy, (2011). *Gender and the Limits of Rights*. University of Pennyslania Press Philadelphia.

Instone- Brewer D, (2002) *.Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible. The Social and Literary Context*. Grand Rapids MI, Eerdmans.

Jones J, (2005). *What is Research? Methodological practices and New Approaches*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget.

Kunhiyop S. Waje, (2008). *African Christian Ethics*. Word Alive, Nairobi

Magazines (2010). *'The Eye, 261 special editions'*, Nairobi.

Magazine , Saturday Daily Nation, (2012) *'Domestic Violence and abuse revealed'* February 25th 2012 page 10.

Mbiti J S, (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. Oxford, Heinemann.

Mbiti J S, (1989). *African Religions and Philosophy*. Oxford, Heinemann.

Methodist Conference Office, (1987). *The Methodist Service Book*. Peterborough, Methodist Publishing House.

Methodist Church in Kenya (2011). *Standing Orders and Agendas*. (Revised Edition). Nairobi, Giant Printers.

Methodist Church in Kenya (2012). *Minutes of 47th Annual Conference*. Nairobi, Hansar Kenya Ltd.

McClure John S and Ramsay Nancy J, (1998). *Preaching about Sexual and domestic violence*. (Telling the truth). United Church press, Cleveland, Ohio.

NCCB/USCC General Membership, (1992). *When I call for help: A pastoral response to domestic violence against women*- Bishop's committee on Marriage and Family life; Bishop's committee on women in society and in the Church. Washington D.C, Office for publishing and promotion Services, United States Catholic Conference.

Nthamburi, Z. (1982). *A history of the Methodist Church in Kenya*. Nairobi, Uzima.

Njoya Timothy M, (2008). *The Crisis of exploisive masculinity*- Men for the equality of men and women. Karinyo Rock Gardens, Nairobi.

Oyekanmi, F, (2000). *Men, Women and Violence*. A collection of papers from CODESRIA Gender Institute 1997, Dakar: Council for Development of Special Research in Africa.

Patton J. (2005). *Pastoral Care .An Essential Guide*. Abingdon press.

Root Andrew, (2010). *The Children of Divorce*. The loss of family as the loss of being. Baker Academic, a division of Baker publishing Group. GrandRapids, Michigan.

Selderhuis Herman J.(2009) . *The Calvin Hand book*. William B Eerdmans publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K

Scott Kieran, (2007). *Perspectives on Marriage. A Reader-* Third edition. Oxford University press, New York.

Thatcher Adrian ,(2007). *Theology and Families. Challenge In Contemporary Theology* Blackwell publishing . Oxford.

Wamue G, and Getui M. (1996). *Violence against Women.* Acton Publishers. Nairobi, Kenya

Wells Samuel, (2010). *Christian Ethics. An Introductory Reader.* Blackwell publishing Ltd, U.K

Willimon William H, (2002). *Pastor. The Theology and practice of ordained ministry.* Abingdon Press, Nashville.

INTERNET SOURCES

Abuse and domestic violence. Probe Ministries. [http:// www.probe.org/c.fd](http://www.probe.org/c.fd) KEIMs EoG/b.4219479/k.7FEF/Abuse-and-Domestic Violence.htm (Read on 1/5/2013).

Cases of domestic violence increase in Kenya. [http:// www.voanews.com/content/cases-of-domestic-violence-increase-in-kenya-86691287/113574.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/cases-of-domestic-violence-increase-in-kenya-86691287/113574.html). (Read on 30/4/2013).

Kenya poverty, alcoholism blame. <http://thewip.net/contributors/2012/06/kenya-poverty-alcoholism-blame.html>. (Read on 30/4/2013).

Kenyan Men boycott eating their wives' food in protest of wives who beat their husbands/IQ4News [http:// www.iq4News.com/archive/iqnews/kenyan-men-boycott-eating-their](http://www.iq4News.com/archive/iqnews/kenyan-men-boycott-eating-their-wives'-food-protest-wives-who-beat-their-husbands) wives'-food-protest-wives-who-beat-their husbands. (Read on 12/5/2013).

Religious views of domestic violence [http://www.the-ripple-effect.info/pdf/Religious](http://www.the-ripple-effect.info/pdf/Religious_views_of_domestic_violence.pdf) views of domestic violence. Pdf.

Straka on the Social Construction of Family Violence <http://www.slideshare.net/Madrisa/social-constr-fam-violence>

Violence in Kenya rises. [http://www.upi.com/Top-News/special/2012/06/08/ in_Kenya-violence-against-men-rises/upl-81841339152827/](http://www.upi.com/Top-News/special/2012/06/08/in_Kenya-violence-against-men-rises/upl-81841339152827/) (Read on 30/4/13).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO THE MCK MINISTERS AND THE BISHOPS.

1. What is your experience with domestic violence and abuse cases in MCK?
2. What do you think contributes to the increase of domestic violence and abuse in MCK?
3. What do you think are the pastoral challenges of domestic violence in the current MCK?
4. What do you think are the ethical challenges and dilemma posed by domestic violence and abuse in MCK?
5. How do you think the MCK can do to reduce /or curb domestic violence and abuse?

APPENDIX 2

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO THE MCK MEMBERS

1. What form of domestic violence and abuse have you experienced?
2. What do you think are the causes of domestic violence and abuse among Christian families?
3. What is your opinion about the increase of domestic violence and abuse among the Christians?
4. What is your opinion about the biblical teaching of love, forgiveness and patience in marriage?
5. In which ways do you think the church can help curb/ or reduce domestic violence and abuse?
6. What is your opinion about the current MCK Marriage service liturgy?

APPENDIX 3

Note that for the sake of confidentiality, more information about the interviewees has been withheld.

Bishop A: Married, ordained minister.

Bishop B: Married, ordained minister.

Bishop C: Married, ordained minister.

Bishop D: Married, ordained minister.

Bishop E: Married, ordained minister.

Minister A: Married, ordained minister.

Minister B: Married, ordained minister.

Minister C: Married, ordained minister.

Minister D: Married, ordained minister.

Minister E: Married, ordained minister.

.

Minister F: Married, ordained minister.

Minister G: Married, ordained minister.

Minister H: Married, ordained minister.

APPENDIX 4

THE MEMBERS CATEGORY A. THE MEN FELLOWSHIP (MMF).

Name	Marital Status
Man A	Divorced
Man B	Married
Man C	Married
Man D	Married
Man E	Married
Man F	Married

MEMBERS CATEGORY B, WOMEN FELLOWSHIP GROUP 1

Name	Marital Status
Lady A	Married
Lady B	Married
Lady C	Married
Lady D	Married
Lady E	Married

WOMEN FELLOWSHIP GROUP 2 (Note: In this group, majority of those who responded had similar views with group 1. In this case it is a few of them who gave related experiences).

Name	Marital Status
-------------	-----------------------

Lady A	Widowed
--------	---------

Lady C	Married
--------	---------

Lady D	Separated
--------	-----------

Lady E	Married
--------	---------

MEMBERS CATEGORY C, THE METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Name	Sex	Status
-------------	------------	---------------

Youth A	Male	Not married
---------	------	-------------

Youth B	Female	Not married
---------	--------	-------------

Youth C	Female	Not married
---------	--------	-------------

Youth D	Male	Not married
---------	------	-------------

Youth E	Male	Not married
---------	------	-------------

