

**PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING TO PARISHIONERS UNDER
CHURCH DISCIPLINE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NORTH
WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN
TANZANIA.**

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**Under the Supervision of
Ms Edwina Ward.**

DECLARATION

This work unless otherwise stated, represents the author's own work. It has not been submitted to any other University.

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the issue of Pastoral Care and Counselling to the parishioners under Church discipline in the North Western Diocese (NWD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

The dissertation is concerned with the understanding of Church discipline in the Old Testament, New Testament, from the Early Church up to the present day. The study focuses especially on the history and the practice of Church discipline in the North Western Diocese.

The main body of this study is in chapters four and five. Chapter four discusses the danger and the blessings for a parishioner who is under Church discipline. Chapter five discusses the avenues by which to care for and counsel parishioners who are under Church discipline. It is the writer's understanding that the methodology used on how to care for and counsel parishioners under Church discipline can be applied to all parishioners in the Diocese.

It is the emphasis of the researcher of this dissertation that there is inadequate care of souls due to lack of training and discipline in the Church. We need discipline in order to challenge our defense patterns of behaviour in the understanding ourselves and others and in knowing and learning to be responsible Christian people.

The study calls the Church of the North Western Diocese to rethink the whole issue of how to practise Church discipline in such a way that parishioners are not judged, but comforted by caring and counselling.

It is the writer's understanding that the Church has kept discipline because it maintains that God's grace is not cheap. Grace is not a licence to sin.

The true aim of Church discipline is to help the sinner to restore his or her relationship

with Christ and the Church. To do this, parishioners under Church discipline are urged to repent of their sin and live in fellowship with God. If parishioners under Church discipline refuse to repent they have to carry the fate for their sin. There is no mercy without repentance.

It is the writer's belief that the healthy practice of pastoral care and counselling in the North Western Diocese will depend upon the regaining of a balance and the interaction between healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling models. Through this understanding, pastoral care becomes a Christian response to humanity's need. Therefore one can conclude that pastoral care and counselling can balance and heal the effect of Church discipline.

Although this study focuses on the North Western Diocese (NWD), the questions and problems concerning the issue of Church discipline and the way to approach it might be similar in many Churches in Tanzania and also in Africa.

Unless otherwise indicated, scriptural quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION (NRSV), copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christians Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AALC -	All Africa Lutheran Conference
CMS -	Church Missionary Society
CSM -	Church of Sweden Mission
DKMG-	Dayosis ya Kaskazini Magharibi (North Western Diocese)
DMS -	Danish Missionary Society
ECB -	Evangelical Church of Buhaya
ECNWT-	Evangelical Church of North Western Tanganyika
ELCT -	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania
ELCT/NED-	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania/North Eastern Diocese
ELCT/NWD-	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania/ North Western Diocese
IMC -	International Missionary Council
KKKT-	Kanisa ka Kiinjili la Kiluthari Tanzania (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania)
LWC -	Lutheran World Conversion
LWF -	Lutheran World Federation
NRSV -	New Revised Standard Version
NWD -	North Western Diocese
UIM(VEM)-	United in Mission.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The subject of the study is pastoral care and counselling to parishioners under Church discipline, with special reference to the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

I have chosen to deal with the question and problems of Church discipline in my diocese. I have been a pastor in the North Western Diocese since 1981. Being a parish pastor, I have experienced many difficulties and complaints from parishioners who are suffering under Church discipline. There are also difficulties expressed by those parishioners who are not under Church discipline.

1.2. Motivation for the study

The aim of the study is therefore to investigate the question and the purpose of discipline in the Church and how the Church can take care of her parishioners under Church discipline. The study will focus particularly on the North Western Diocese (NWD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). At present the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is the amalgamation of twenty dioceses. (Appendix 1)

In the North Western Diocese, it is the practise that the parishioners who have lived a good Christian life are allowed to attend the Lord's Supper, to be God-fathers or mothers, to hold official positions on the Church and finally are given a respectable Church burial service

when they die. Yet for those parishioners under Church discipline, no matter how faithfully they participate in the Church, they are not allowed to partake in Holy Communion, to be God-fathers or mothers, and to hold official posts in the Church. The very hurting reality is that no matter how much they participated in the Church activities before they died, they are denied a Christian burial service. Through these Church laws and sad reality, parishioners have different opinions concerning the question of Church discipline. This understanding has led to many complaints and much confusion among the parishioners in the North Western Diocese. Therefore this study will try to find answers to the following questions:

1. Why is the Church exercising Church discipline?
2. For what reasons is a person placed under Church discipline?
3. What are the problems encountered by the Church on this issue?
4. What is the role of the Church for parishioners under Church discipline?
5. Why are parishioners under Church discipline not given a Christian burial service?
6. Should parishioners under Church discipline receive a Christian burial ? If yes, why? If not, why not?

It is the hope of the researcher that this study will challenge the Church and bring more impetus and new visions as to how the Church takes care of her parishioners who are under Church discipline.

1.3. The Scope of the Paper

Some terms have been used in this paper. Such terminologies are; "Church discipline" which means :

The system or method by which order is maintained in a Church, and control exercised over the conduct of its members; the procedure whereby this is carried out; the exercise of the power of censure, admonition, excommunication, or other penal measures, by

a Christian Church. (Simpson J.A. and Weiner, E.S.C 1989: 735)

To be "under Church discipline" means to lose the Church's blessing (KKKT,1965: 5 C 1-5). But to be under Church discipline does not mean that a parishioner is excommunicated from his or her Church membership. Therefore the term "suspension" or "exclusion" is preferred, which means that a parishioner remains a member of the Church but is suspended from taking the Lord's Supper, Church leadership and Sponsorship. A Christian is "excommunicated" if he or she denies the Christian faith and believes in other faiths. The "Church" which means the confessing community of believers called together by Jesus Christ will be used interchangeably to mean also the North Western Diocese. The term "Church leaders" mean *Abashumba* (Pastors), *Abainjilisti* (Evangelists), *Abagurusi* (Church elders) and *Abahenzeza* (Village Church elders).

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter one deals with the statement of the problem, the motivation for the study, the scope of the paper, methods and procedures used in collecting data, the problems encountered during the research and the historical background of the North Western Diocese. Chapter two deals with the understanding and practice of Church discipline in the Biblical perspective. Chapter three deals with the history and practice of Church discipline in the North Western Diocese before and after the missionary era up to the present day. Chapter four deals with the fate of parishioners under Church discipline. Chapter five deals with the Church's task as to how to care for and counsel Christians under Church discipline. Chapter six is the final chapter with conclusion and suggestions from the writer.

1.4. Methods and Procedures for Collecting Data

In this study, the following sources for gathering information were used.

- (i) By interview: Some questions were prepared for different categories of people

as follows: seven pastors; six parishioners under Church discipline; four relatives of persons who died under Church discipline; ten lay parishioners who are not under Church discipline and 1 traditionalist.

- (ii) Written sources: Through Library research at the University of Natal and Makumira University College, I found information from books and journals on Pastoral Theology. The various minutes of the North Western Diocese were also investigated.
- (iii) Contacts: Contact was made with the authority from the North Western Diocese for the use of the Diocesan Archives, and with the authority of Makumira Library for the research.
- (iv) Personal Experience: Having the experience of being a pastor in the North Western Diocese since the year 1981, I have offered my observations, criticisms, views and suggestions concerning the problems of exercising Church discipline in the diocese.

1.5. Problems encountered:

During the research, several problems were encountered.

First, there was a problem of getting the statistics of parishioners under Church discipline in some of the parishes. Some of the statistics which were more readily were of those parishioners restored to full acceptance within the church.

Secondly, during the interview sessions, interview questions were shared among the interviewees. Their answers were written down. After interviewing twelve people out of twenty eight it was realized that some of the interviewees were unable to express themselves.

So the method was changed accordingly. The writer of this dissertation memorized the questions from the paper which seemed to scare them. Their responses were recorded on the very day. This method proved to be successful as the interviewees were free to express themselves. Yet the writer had to trust that his memory was good enough to be accurate for this research.

Thirdly, some informants did not turn up for the arranged appointments. This action forced the realisation that Church discipline was a sensitive issue to them.

Fourthly, some of the interviewees especially those under Church discipline, requested that their real names not to be revealed in this paper. So pseudonyms have been used as indicated in the list of interviewees by a single name with a star (Appendix 2). For others, their actual names have been indicated.

Finally, some of the interviewees were not courageous enough to be open to some of the questions. For example, when some parishioners under Church discipline were asked, why were you put under Church discipline, they were too shy to respond to this question. Perhaps my status as a pastor created this atmosphere. For this reason they were selective in some of the answers they gave.

1.6. The Historical Background of the North Western Diocese

The North Western Diocese (NWD) is one of the twenty dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). It is situated in the North Western part of the country on the west of Lake Victoria.

Since the beginning the Lutheran Church in this area has been influenced by many different Christian groups from 1907 to the present day.

1. Anglican influence through the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) of the United

Kingdom in the year 1907.

2. United (Lutheran - Reformed Bethel Mission) from Germany - 1910 - 1914.
3. The Anglican Church again - 1916 - 1924.
4. Wesleyan Methodists from South Africa 1924 - 1927.
5. Anglican - CMS from Australia and New Zealand 1928.
6. United (Lutheran - Reformed Bethel Mission) from Germany - 1929 - 1940.
7. Augustana Lutherans of USA - sent a Swedish Missionary - Dr. Bengt Sundkler - 1942 - 1945.
8. From 1945 - Swedish and Danish Lutherans - Church of Sweden Mission (CSM), Danish Missionary Society (DMS) and United (Lutheran - Reformed) Bethel Mission (VEM or UIM) (Kibira, 1984: 9).

From the beginning the Lutheran Church in the area was known as “The Evangelical Church of *Buhaya* (ECB)”. In 1960, the name was changed to the Evangelical Church of North Western Tanganyika (ECNWT). In 1963, the Evangelical Church of North Western Tanganyika (ECNWT) became a diocese within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanganyika (ELCT) and took a new name, North Western Diocese (NWD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. (Bahendwa, 1990: 154, 171)

Presently, the diocese has:

135,656 parishioners

108 pastors

217 congregations (*KKKT*, 1998).

CHAPTER TWO

2. THE UNDERSTANDING OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1. Discipline in the Old Testament

The Old Testament concept of discipline is derived from the Hebrew words "*ysr*" and "*musar*" which means to admonish or discipline. This concept is concerned with discipline and the process of education in the family.

In the Old Testament, discipline meant simple instructions and corrections. The father carried responsibility for the education of his children. The metaphor of God as a disciplinarian which is derived from the parent - child relationship combines the conviction that God loves people and seeks their ultimate well-being with the belief that he demands obedience to his righteous will as a condition of human fulfilment. The father carried responsibility for the education of his son in the traditions of the chosen people.

When your children ask you in time to come, “what is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?” Then you shall say to your children, “We are Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The LORD displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household... Then the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive as is now the case. If we diligently observe this entire commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, we will be in the right.” (Deut.6: 20-22, 24-25)

There was an easy transference of the family with the father to the discipline of God.

"Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the Lord your God disciplines you." (Deut.8: 5)

This severe discipline in Judaism was meted out to the nations and it was for punishment of sin, for correction and instruction. Thus we can see that in the Old Testament:

(a) Israel is disciplined by verbal instruction or warning:

You shall say to them: This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.... Yet they did not listen or incline their ear; they stiffened their necks and would not hear or receive instruction. (Jer.7: 28; 17: 23)

(b) Israel is disciplined by suffering:

O LORD, do your eyes not look for truth? You have struck them, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to turn back... I will come against the wayward people to punish them; and nations shall be gathered against them when they are punished for their double iniquity. (Jer.5: 3; Hos10:10)

(c) An individual is disciplined by verbal instruction or warning:.

Then he open their ears, and terrifies them with warnings,... For the LORD spoke thus to me while his hand was strong upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people...(Job 33: 16; Isa 8:11)

(d) An individual is disciplined by suffering:

O LORD do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath... Correct me, O LORD, but in just measure; not in your anger, or you will bring me to nothing. (Ps.6: 1; Jer.10: 24)

Here we can see that God's discipline is by law and wisdom. For God, wisdom and discipline are inseparable.

"For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice and equity." (Prov.1: 2-3)

According to Proverbs, education cannot dispense with corporal punishment.

"Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them." (Prov.13: 24)

Therefore, it is stated that the Israelites did not believe in education without tears. Such correction when necessary gave hope of change and gave life to those who received it. Discipline was supposed to be administered in love and not in anger. The Israelites were obliged to be faithful to God's covenant (berith) and law (torah). Priests and sages were responsible for guidance and discipline in the Israelite community. Levitical priests were closely associated with the cultic activity of the Israelite confederacy. Scribes were responsible to interpret the law. They were the authors of the Midrash (the oral exposition of the torah). Judaism more and more emphasized the written and oral law. (Browning, 1990: 289)

Generally, we can see that in the Old Testament God is holy, therefore he demands holiness from his chosen people. Since holiness has a moral demand, moral commandments are obligatory. God's covenant helps to keep people by the means of instructions, punishment and reward. The law is an educative force. Its purpose is to serve as a standard for growth in faith and order. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov.1: 7). The goal of instruction is wisdom, understanding, discipline and integrity. In the Old Testament, God is

the ultimate source of all training, therefore trust in Him is the content of instruction. God Himself disciplines and corrects.

Through these observations, we can conclude that in the Old Testament era, discipline was encouraged, practised and exercised among the people of God.

2.2. Discipline in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the verb "*paideuo*" and noun "*paideia*" have a similar range of meaning to "*ysr*" and "*musar*". Thus Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7: 22) and children are disciplined by the parents (Heb.12: 8). The word "*paideuo*" is also used in divine discipline (Heb.12: 6), exercised in love that we may share in God's holiness (Heb.12: 10). In Christian families the upbringing (*paideia*) of children (Eph.6: 4) is to reflect God's fatherly dealings with his people.

In the New Testament there is no strong emphasis on the role of discipline in Jesus' ministry. Of course Jesus as a Jew respected the law. Thus Mc Neil emphasizes that, "He may have had the informal training of rabbi" (Browning, 1990: 289). Jesus himself was interested in the needs of the individuals, performed acts of healing and used an empathetic, yet provocative manner of addressing people. Thus the Church's right to exercise discipline was definitely conferred when Christ empowered his apostles to bind and loose. "Truly I say to you whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt.18: 18).

Jesus also indicated the measure of restoration to when an offence became known. Jesus Christ said to his disciples;

If another member of the Church sins against you go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be

confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the Church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and tax collector. (Mt.18: 15-17)

Church discipline was practised among the believers. The Church was like a training school. It exercised discipline in the spirit of love and for education and correction of the weak and offending.

2.3. Church Discipline in St. Paul's Letters

St. Paul in his letters to Corinth is very concerned with the immorality of a particular individual in the Church.

Paul says;

Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up. For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarrelling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder... I warned those who sinned previously and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not be lenient. (2Cor.12: 19-20; 13: 2)

St. Paul emphasizes that the person be removed from the fellowship of the Church. Paul also saw the importance of acceptance, comfort and forgiveness for those who repent and are open to these blessings. Actually, St. Paul was deeply sorry that he had to bring disciplinary action against them but sometimes did not avoid it. Andrew Cornes comments that Paul saw the practice of Church discipline as part of his work for the churches. (1993: 393)

Biblically, discipline has educative as well as punitive pastoral implications. But God's education of his people involves much more than punishing them for their wrong doing, for God never cuts off his people. From the biblical perspective, the whole of the Christian life is to be seen as training for eternity and the fatherly discipline of God. Person to person exhortation, the corporate life and sanctions of the church each have important parts to play. (2Tim.3: 16; Eph.4: 25; 1Cor.5: 1-5)

Biblically, we can dare to say that the authority of exercising Church discipline is based upon the nature of the Church as a select body with a code of its own; according to the command of Jesus Christ and upon Apostolic precepts and examples afforded in the history of the Apostolic Church.

As we have observed, the main concern of the Church in the question of Church discipline is to maintain the quality of holiness, to keep itself free from corrupting elements which might taint its purity and to train its members to bear witness to the world. Therefore the main purpose of Church discipline is not to put a Christian under condemnation but to help him or her from impurity in life so that his or her soul will be saved.

2.4. Church Discipline: From the Early Church to the Reformers and the Protestant Churches

For the matter of exercising discipline in the Church, we need first to know the character of this kind of discipline and to know the conditions under which it was applied and the manner of its exercise. One of the Church fathers, Origen stressed that;

The Church is concerned to guard its own purity and to this end its

members in common ought to observe the lives of their fellows. He added that, it is more especially the duty of the minister of the Church to be watchful, and most of all that of the bishop because he is the head and the eye of the body, the shepherd of the flock. Therefore, he has the authority to bind and to retain. (Swete, 1918: 356)

In the Early Church, Christian morality was strongly influenced by Greek (stoic) ideas of virtue. Through a process of spiritualization it came more and more to assume the form of idealistic perfectionism. This made it all the easier for the Church to establish order within the moral disintegration of the late ancient period. Thus two aspects were observed; the purity of the Church and the effectiveness of its mission forced the congregation to be concerned themselves about moral respectability. Christians were urged to live a respectable life. At that time the question was who has the authority to readmit backsliders to the Church. (Lindhardt, 1965: 506)

Originally, the authority to readmit backsliders was limited to charismatic persons (among whom were martyrs). Later on, the practice was vested in the ecclesiastical office of bishops and priests whose function from the very beginning was not charismatic but administrative. (1965: 506)

The idea of exercising discipline in the Church began to gain momentum in the third century. Bishop Calixtus of Rome (218 A.D.) claimed the authority to readmit the morally lapsed especially those who were fallen into sexual morality. During the time of the Decian persecution (250 A.D.), Cyprian of Carthage in North Africa emphasized that only the bishop had the authority to readmit the lapsed to the Church. It was through the struggles of Calixtus and Cyprian that the matter of exercising Church discipline was placed in the hands of the clergy (Lindhardt, 1965: 506).

In the Early Church, the discipline rested purely on moral sanctions. Grave sins were

grouped into categories such as idolatry, magic, schism, homicide, uncleanness, fraud and false witness. The length of the period of penance varied with the gravity of the offence committed with local temper and with date. It ranged from a few weeks to all that remained of the lifetime. (Swete, 1918: 363)

Tertulian pointed out several mortal offenses for which if committed after baptism, there could be no restoration in this world or world to come. Seven mortal offenses were; Murder, idolatry, theft, apostasy, blasphemy, fornication and adultery. Those who committed such offenses ceased to be children of God. For other sins committed after baptism certain penance or compensation was needed such as fasting, prayer and alms giving. Tertulian refused restoration to those who had denied the faith during persecution. (Schaff, 1911: 716)

The Synods of the early part of the fourth century further defined this new practice and there was no longer any doubt that the Church's decision in the matter was viewed as identical with God's will. The Church saw itself as the keeper of the keys. Pastoral care and pastoral discipline were seen as forms of guidance by which individuals were inducted into a progressively higher degree of perfection along this chain of being. At this time the Synods agreed about the practice of discipline in the Church by accepting that it was God's will. The Church was essentially an institution of salvation (*extra ecclesia nulla salus*) and its authority was vested in the episcopacy. (Lindhardt, 1965: 506)

The Orthodox Church in the East regarded the practice of Church discipline as a means of pastoral care to the weak. The Roman Church of the West had the system of penitence and excommunication. Venial sins were blotted out through the general absolution at the worship service and through the participation in the Lord's Supper. Mortal sins excluded the Christians from sacraments (excommunication minor). A Christian had first to confess before the priest. Where there was contrition and repentance, the clergy granted absolution. Such absolution, however removed only guilt and eternal punishment; temporal punishments and the obligation to correct committed evil as far as possible remained. Works of satisfaction were assigned to

the confessing sinner. Private confession first became established in the monasteries. For example the Benedictine monks in their teachings encouraged pastoral discipline that believers have to fear God, to despise one's own desires and obey the Church. In the year 1215 private confession was obligatory for every one. (1965: 506)

As the private confessional became more common, there was less need for public confession which took place following sins of such a gross nature as to exclude the guilty from the congregation as well as from the worship service and to deprive the person in question of burial by the Church. The "major" excommunication came to be an exceedingly effective political and economic instrument used against rulers of states whose political policies were displeasing to the Church and to force the payment of duties and penalties to the Church. While excommunication was used against individuals, the interdict was used against groups of persons and even the entire nation. (1965: 607)

New and mostly unhealthy developments occurred from the time of Gregory I to the Council of Trent. Penances were imposed for lesser offenses with possible financial commutation. The practice of private confessions to the priest established itself. Purgatory became a supposed extension of temporal discipline and to avert this many of the worst medieval abuses arose, eg. indulgences and private masses. The elaborate system of Church courts formalized discipline but to no great spiritual profit. Serious offenders could also be handed over to the civil power for punishments which the Church was not allowed to impose. (Bromiley, 1973: 185)

At this time, there were four classes of penitents; weepers, hearers, kneelers and standers (*flentes, audientes, gemiflexi* and *consistence*). They were forbidden certain forms of pleasure. The usual duration of this period of penance was three to four years though it might be abbreviated at the will of the Church authorities. (Lindhardt, 1965: 506)

With the alliance of the state and Church, the state itself passed disciplinary

regulations. Worldly penalties, such as confiscation of goods, banishment, mullets of money, death and later the loss of individual freedom came to be approved by the Church as penalties for offences within the sphere of religion. At this time, the practice of discipline in the Church was encouraged. (Schaff, 1911: 716)

During the time of the Reformation and the expansion of the Protestants churches, Church discipline began to lose its power because Reformers insisted that;

- (a) The principal emphasis is the immediate responsibility of the Christian to God.
 - (b) The authority of scripture as a supreme rule of life.
 - (c) The insistence upon preaching as the chief element in the power of the keys.
- (Schaff, 1911: 718)

Instructions and persuasions were encouraged in the sermons, for this reason punitive discipline was discouraged. In the Lutheran Church, Martin Luther was very satisfied with preaching Christian instructions and the practice of the two sacraments as a means of preserving the purity of the Church. He did not say much about discipline, in fact he never worked out a system of discipline. Lutheran teachings rejected the major excommunication but retained the minor excommunication which was to be used against the manifest sinners excluding them from the Lord's Supper till they confessed and were received back in the congregation. (Tappert, 1959: 314)

In the Reformed Church, Calvin saw the importance of Church discipline when he posed an illustration that

no house can be preserved in proper condition without discipline. Otherwise Christians would live like rats in the straw. (Schaff, 1911: 341)

Calvin portrayed the threefold function of discipline;

- a) To keep the Church in sound condition.
- b) To protect its members against taint.
- c) To bring the offender if possible to repentance. (1911: 719)

The Church of England (Anglican) prescribes three forms of punishment for Christians under Church discipline. These are;

- a) Admonition.
- b) Suspension from the Lord's table for a time.
- c) Excommunication from the Church. (1911: 719-720)

In America, during the colonial era, the discipline within the churches of Puritan and Presbyterian lineage was strict. The emphasis today is on the effectiveness of the public exposition of the truth from the pulpit and on the conscience of the Church member.

In ecclesiology, we can say that discipline, particularly in the Reformed tradition, has embraced a range of concerns regarding of Church order, including Church courts, and the moulding of a Christian society and being sustained by Christian principles.

Thus we can say that through the practice of Church discipline, the law of God meets every person through scriptures, conscience and through natural orders of life in history and society. In religious life, law and gospel are correlative. The aim of the law is to order the society, to prevent chaos and to punish crimes. In the development of Canon Law such punishments were regarded as either medicinal or strictly penal.

The Bible prescribes four stages of action in the case of Church discipline:

- a) If another member of the Church sins against you, go and point out the fault

when the two of you are alone. If the member listen to you, you have regained that one. (Mt. 18: 15)

- b) But if you are not listen to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (Mt.18: 16)
- c) If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church. (Mt. 18: 17a)
- d) And if the offender refuses to listen even to the Church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Mt. 18: 17b)

From the biblical point of view we can learn that the purposes of Church discipline are;

- a) To reform and save the brother or sister who has fallen into sin.
- b) To prevent the contamination of sin from ruining others.
- c) To make the Church's confession and the truth to which she witnesses clear and unequivocal.
- d) To preserve the Church's order because God is God of order (Moshi, 1961: 25).

Through this understanding, we are convinced that Church discipline is biblical. Therefore it must be exercised in the Church for the sake of the impudent people, but also to give hope and consolation for the sake of the fallen ones so that they do not think their baptism is now invalid. The true aim of Church discipline should be to help the sinner to restore his or her relationship with Christ and the Church.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE HISTORY OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN THE NORTH WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA

3.1. The Practice of Church Discipline before 1958

The Lutheran Church in the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania has undergone several types of leadership styles and each style emphasized its own practice of Church discipline.

During the early years of the Catacomb Congregation, (after 1890) which started at Kashenye village in the Northern side of Kagera region at the Uganda border, the founder of the congregation, Isaya Kibira was refused baptism, due to the fact that he was a polygamist. But he was baptised later in 1917 after divorcing his second wife. (Niwagila, 1988: 86)

At that time a congregation in the cave (catacomb) was used as a refuge place for Protestant Christians. In the 1910's Protestant Christians suffered under the colonial government, the Roman Catholic Church and the traditional rulers of Buhaya. Professor Bengt Sundkler gives the following example:

It should not be forgotten that Germans from Bethel Mission on their way to evangelize Rwanda felt they needed to establish a trade post at Bukoba. Dr. Johansen, the great German leader of early Protestant endeavour in Rwanda, made two brief visits to Bukoba in 1907 and 1910. On his first visit he approached the German Resident, Stuemmer, with a view to obtaining permission to work in Bukoba. This was denied him on the grounds that the Catholics were already well established in the country. (1980: 25)

Sahlberg adds that in the year 1910, the Bethel Mission from Germany started their

mission field in Bukoba area. A missionary called Johansen was asked to reflect upon the possibility of commencing a Lutheran mission in the area. So it happened that on June 16, 1910 he moved from Rwanda to Bukoba. (1986: 63)

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) which came first to Buhaya from Uganda in the 1890's emphasized Church discipline as a punishment rather than a way of helping people. John V. Taylor also reports this by pointing out that "according to the Anglican Church discipline is unregulated, punitive rather than pastoral and usually permanent." (1958: 245)

In 1913, difficulties with the question of Church discipline began to be experienced during the time of Pastor Doehling. Due to a misunderstanding of African culture, Pastor Doehling would not baptize a woman who wore "*enyerere*" (rings) on her legs or anyone who shaved his or her hair after the death of a member in the family. Doehling thought that these were pagan and demonic customs. As a result, he suggested the practice of Church discipline in order to avoid evil things in the Church. But in turn, he was warned by Pastor Roehl (who was in charge of the Bethel Mission in Rwanda from November, 1910) not to pass any law against such customs but to take time in discussing such issues with catechumens. These should be the ones to decide whether such items could be worn or not. Niwagila states that "Roehl continued to warn Doehling that the work of Church discipline was not the work of the missionary but of the congregation." (1988: 36)

At this point one could say that Roehl's suggestion to Doehling would not work very well because at that time in the Church of Buhaya Doehling was the only pastor. He was not working in a vacuum, he worked in the congregation with the people. He was the only one with authority to baptise and to offer the Lord's Supper to his parishioners. As a result, Doehling was able to establish some restrictions and rules in the Church of Buhaya.

In 1914, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) became involved in the first World War. Germans were asked to leave the country. In 1924, the Wesleyans from South Africa came

to Bukoba in order to take care of mission fields left by the Germans. In their preaching they emphasized grace without law. The year of 1927 was a year of controversy and crisis between the Haya people living in Bukoba area and the Wesleyan mission. Hellberg and Sundkler portray the reason for the controversy.

First, there was the use of the slide projector in the Church at Bukoba. The older Haya Christians (living in Bukoba) were hesitant to accept the non-Christians and Muslims who were not prevented from smoking and talking in the Church.

Secondly, Wesleyans offered the Lord's Supper even to the Christians under Church discipline. This was contrary to the Anglican teachings which emphasized the importance of liturgy and the practice of discipline in the Church.

Thirdly, Wesleyans demanded of a candidate for baptism the promise to hold fast to the Church of John Wesley.

These three disputes presented by Andrea Kajelero are well discussed by Hunt who was a Methodist missionary in Bukoba at that time. Hunt admitted that on one occasion, a slide projector was used in the Church at Bukoba, but the experiment was never repeated. On the question of Church discipline, Hunt said that the Methodist Church attempted to use Church discipline as a means of coming to terms with congregants who reverted to paganism, drunkenness and polygamy. On the question of baptism, Hunt denied that John Wesley was constantly being held up in the preaching as an example for every Christian to follow.

Native parishioners under the leadership of Andrea Kajelero (the first native pastor in Buhaya who was ordained in 1929) were intolerant at seeing such actions made by Wesleyans in the Church. Their aim was to break off all contacts with the Methodists and in their mission fields in Bukoba. As a result, the Wesleyans were asked to leave Bukoba in 1928.

Carl Hellberg and Bengt Sundkler see that the real reason for Andrea Kajelero and others in portraying such accusations were that the Haya Church had not been consulted and had not been in a position through its own elected delegates to invite the Wesleyans. (1965: 178-179; 1980: 30-31)

After the Wesleyans, the Bethel mission personnel returned. These were invited again by native parishioners to come back to their former missions field in Bukoba. They shared the same views with the Anglicans on the question of Church discipline. Christians under Church discipline were to undergo several punishments before being readmitted in the Church.

In 1934, Hosbach, a German missionary pastor at Ndolage Parish suggested that Christians under Church discipline who were unable to repent and to follow the guidelines of the Church should be like Ananias (Acts 5: 1-11). Yustace Kagombola a retired evangelist who worked together with Pastor Hosbach told me that Hosbach proposed several steps in dealing with Christians under Church discipline who refused to repent. Some of the steps taken were:

- (a) The name of a parishioner under Church discipline who refused to repent was written on a piece of plain paper.
- (b) A coffin was made and those plain papers with the names were put inside.
- (c) The coffin was carried to the grave yard by procession and a burial service was conducted at the Church's graveyard. This was the sign that those under Church discipline who refused to repent were no longer Church members. (Conversation with Yustace Kagombola, Buganda-Ndolage Parish, 1991).

In fact these regulations did not function for long. They lapsed within two years

(1934-1936). During these two years conflict was created among parishioners. Instead of pronouncing forgiveness, the Church punished those parishioners who were under Church discipline.

During the second World War, Germans were asked again to leave the country. The German mission areas were not left without any assistance. At the meeting between Protestant Church leaders in New York in 1939 it was agreed that the International Missionary Council (IMC) should care for non Lutheran "orphaned missions" whereas the Lutheran World Convention (LWC) should help Lutherans (Lindqvist, 1982: 26). Through this agreement, in 1942, the Church of Sweden Mission came and assisted the orphaned Church in Bukoba.. Sweden, being neutral in World War II, was in cooperation with the United States of America, the only country from where Lutherans could come during war time. Professor Bengt Sundkler from the Church of Sweden Mission (CSM), later the first Bishop of the North Western Diocese in Bukoba was called to leave his work in Zululand (South Africa) to start a new work in Bukoba. (Sahlberg, 1986: 120)

From 1945-1958, the Church of Sweden Mission did not change anything concerning the whole issue of Church discipline. Instead, they followed the Church guidelines which were established in 1938.

3.2. The Development of the Practice of Church Discipline from 1958 to the Present Day

The Constitution of the Evangelical Church of Buhaya which was established in 1958 as the first Constitution states that;

Church members who refuse to follow the rules of the Church or fall away from the true doctrine, shall if they remain in sin against the

commandments of God be put under Church discipline until they repent.(ECB, 1958: 39).

Due to this rule, some of the Christians excluded themselves from the congregations. They preferred to live under customary law which allowed them to be accepted in the community rather than living in fear and uncertainty under the legalistic Church.

When interviewed Joel Bugulano, a Christian layman on the question, why is the Church using such laws to punish Christians? Bugulano responded;

maybe the Church has adopted the way we have been treated and we are still treating our families. According to the Haya customs, discipline is an important thing in the community. There is always a command, do this and don't do that. (Interview with Joel Bugulano, Kanyinya 17/1/1997)

In those years of the 1960's the North Western Diocese did not make many amendments to the constitution concerning Church discipline. But comparing it with the old constitutions, that of 1965, the revised constitution of 1982 have taken a radical understanding of the Evangelical pastoral understanding of the Evangelical pastoral practice. A good example is that the Church guidelines of 1938 emphasized that a Christian could be under Church discipline if he or she continued to follow the pagan traditions, broke up his or her marriage, was polygamous or a drunkard. The constitutions of 1958 and 1960 emphasized that a Christian could be under Church discipline if he or she refused to follow the rules of the Church, fell from the true doctrine and sinned against the commandments of God. (Niwagila, 1988: 226)

Josiah Kibira, the second bishop of the North Western Diocese also the President of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) (1977-1984) once commented that

the number of restrictions which could suspend a parishioner from Holy Communion have been reduced to only two, any type of superstition or breaking marriage. (1966: 26)

According to the Constitution of the North Western Diocese, breaking the marriage may mean divorce, polygamy, or committing adultery. The revised Constitution of 1982 clearly shows the components which may cause parishioners to be under Church discipline. These components are polygamy, divorce, committing adultery, pregnancy out of wedlock, marrying without Church consent and "*moyo mgumu*", hardness of heart. (KKKT, 1982a: 46-50).

In the present day, we can say that in the North Western Diocese, Church discipline is theoretically based on adultery and superstition. Practically, Church discipline is based on all aspects of adultery because superstition is not easily seen. For this reason Niwagila challenges the Diocese by saying that,

In the North Western Diocese, Church discipline has been practised from the pietistic point of view in which sexuality has been regarded as the source of immorality. (1988: 365)

It is the writer's opinion that Niwagila is right because a Christian is not happy with suspension as the disciplinary measure, because marital and sexual errors are as serious as is the pastor who squanders the Church funds or a politician who squanders the state funds. This is a theological issue which should be discussed in the Church.

At the moment, the practice of Church discipline in the North Western Diocese involves the following measures:

- (a) Exclusion from the Lord's Supper
- (b) Exclusion from all Church leadership

- (c) Refusal of baptism, if the one put under Church discipline is a student of catechetical classes
- (d) The denial of Christian burial (*KKKT*, 1982a: 54)

To some extent, it seems that some leaders of the Congregations have misused the Constitution of the Church. Some Church leaders pretend to be police-like disciplinarians rather than counsellors. Church councils become a morality squad and some of the pastors a new version of heavenly prosecuting attorneys. Instead of forgiveness, they create other laws to punish the offenders. In fact they misinterpret the power of the "keys" as handed over to Peter by Jesus Christ.

At this juncture, Bishop Stephano Moshi's statement which he made at the Second All African Lutheran Conference that, "items like fines (money) animals or manual work are not exercised any longer" (LWF, 1961: 26) does not appear to be valid. In 1996, a Christian in a certain congregation in the Diocese repented and was forgiven, but first was supposed to pay "*Egabo*" (Church dues) for two years (1994-1996). Also, at Ibuga Congregation on Christmas Day 1996 some of the Christians under Church discipline were requested first to pay money (Tanzanian shillings -1000/=) before being received back again within the Church. Up to this present time we can see that the kind of discipline which some of congregations are practising are not really to help the sinner but to punish and to extract money, a form of extortion.

3.3. The North Western Diocese Constitution on Church Discipline

According to the Constitution of the North Western Diocese, Church members are urged to remain faithful in believing the word of God. They are supposed to follow the canons and laws of the Diocese. The most important thing is that "Christians are required to attend Church services very often. Through following Church instruction, Church members receive blessings; that is to be guided spiritually by the teachings, to be instructed by the Church and to partake of the Lord's Supper" (*KKKT*, 1982a: 3-4).

The "grace period" is available in the Church. One who falls into sin may confess before the pastor, a faithful Christian or before the whole congregation (1982a: 52). If a parishioner fails to repent, he or she remains under Church discipline. The Church takes on the responsibility to visit, counsel and teach those backsliders to help them see their wrong doings and therefore to repent and be forgiven. Through this procedure, those who repent are forgiven and re-admitted into the Church. Those backsliders and stiff necked ones who refuse to settle their problems remain under Church discipline.

When Pastor Nixon Lwezaula was interviewed about his own views on the Constitution, he said that, "the main goal of the Constitution of the North Western Diocese is to guide Christians to live a good life and the backsliders to wake up and settle their problems." (Makumira, 23/01/1998)

3.4. Reasons for Christians to be put under Church Discipline

The North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is facing various problems in the practice of Church discipline. First, the problem of "*kulehya*" is prevalent. This kind of marriage is preceded by elopement. Reasons for practising this kind of marriage are if the girl has failed to obtain her father's permission or when a young man cannot find all that is required to be paid. In return he arranges with the girl for elopement and the marriage takes place under the agreement to pay placation payment (fine) and the bride's wealth. (Interview with Thadeo Bushenda, Kanyinya, 28/12/96)

The problem of "*kulehya*" marriage is prevalent especially among the youth. Talking to Clement who participated in a "*kulehya*" marriage, he commented that;

I am under Church discipline because I participated in this kind of marriage. At that time I could not meet the expenses to solemnize

our marriage in the Church. So my wife Jane and I decided to marry each other without Church consent. (Interview with Clement, Bukoba, 15/12/1996)

In fact, the problem of "*kulehya*" marriage does not face Lutheran Christians alone but also Christians of other denominations. Fr. D. Bijango of Mwemage Parish told me that even in his parish, youth are the majority who perform such marriages. (Interview with Roman Catholic priest Fr. D. Bijango, Mwemage, 5/12/96)

The second aspect is divorce. Divorce has been and still is a threat and an emotional bombshell for the partner. In the North Western Diocese, divorce is strongly prohibited. Although teachings have been encouraged by the Church and society still the problem remains. Divorce in the family always crashes self confidence, it rouses anger and guilt, it promotes insecurity, it complicates all interpersonal relationships. It takes time in one's life for the emotional wounds to heal. In the North Western Diocese, parishioners who divorce are to be under Church discipline until they settle their problems.

The third aspect is polygamy. By the term "polygamy" we mean a man who has married more than one wife. On this problem, the Church is faced with unanswered questions:

- (a) What is the Church's response toward polygamy?
- (b) Can the Church accept a man living in polygamy with all his wives or only one? Which one? What about the other wives?
- (c) Can the Church allow the first, the second, or the third wife to join the Church without leaving her husband?

In fact, polygamy in Africa was discouraged by the missionaries so much so that African converts began to condemn it too. This situation is seen even today when missionaries like Aylward Shorter insists that monogamy and not polygamy is the Christian ideal arguing

this position from the book of Genesis 2: 24 (1972: 58). We need to ask ourselves what is to be said on the whole issue of polygamy? Is it adultery? No, undoubtedly. Is it to be compared with adultery? It is not. It is in itself essentially a response of a caring, legal, public and enduring relationship and it is accepted in the judgement of people in many parts of the world. To support the statements mentioned above, Kluckhohn cites the findings of Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg which show that during the period of 1945-1949 there were only 66 societies which strictly practised monogamy as against 378 which also practised polygamy and 31 polyandry. (Masamba ma Mpolo, 1987: 108)

When Mashankala Kakende was interviewed on the issue of polygamy he said that;

Polygamy is practised among the Haya people because every one desires it. It is not only men who want it but also women. Parents are involved too. When their daughters are getting married, then they are respected. The fear of the parents is that if the daughter is kept waiting she can get pregnant out of wedlock which is a shame to the family. (Interview Mashankala Kakende, Kanyinya, 10/1/1997)

Boma, a Lutheran Christian told me that he was under Church discipline because he married a second wife. The first wife did not bear him any children. Now the second wife has three children (Kitaaba, 11/1/1997).

When Mashankala Kakende was asked if he was willing to leave his three wives and remain with one in order to be baptized, he responded that it was impossible for him to send away his three wives and remain with one. (Kanyinya, 10/1/1997)

From the data mentioned above, we can say that Clement, Mashankala and Boma all agreed together that polygamy is a marriage. John Pobee supports them indirectly when he comments that "marriage is a social question even if its problems are solved with the religious

beliefs and conceptions". (1979: 127)

As Christians, we are convinced that the Church cannot tolerate polygamy. For a Christian to take a second wife is to break his marriage vow when at the wedding service in the Church, the bride and groom face each other, join hands and each in turn promises faithfulness to the other by saying these words,

"I take you (name) to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us" (KKKT, 1988: 304). In addition to that, according to the teachings of the New Testament, Christ's teaching on marriage has a new element which challenges both the Jewish and African traditions. Both spouses are equal partners and as such responsible one to another as they are bound together in a covenant of fidelity, unity and permanence.

But at the same time, the Diocese is facing the problem of the "Sent away wives". Where are they to go? To their parents? For the Haya people it is not easy for them to depend on their parents once more since from the beginning, women had no "*Obusika*" (share) in their father's property and could not depend on their brothers because they had their own families to support. According to the Haya customs, when the father dies, his heirs must be his sons. The plantations are divided amongst them according to the written will of the father. But goods, money, cows, goats and other movable properties are divided among all children regardless of sex, for they are written in the legacy.

The question still remains; where should the women go? To somewhere in towns and cities to search for jobs so that they may earn their living? Is it easy for them to get jobs? Maybe, they will enter the life of prostitution. Who is to blame? The Church or the "Sent away wives"? It is the writer's hope that the Church should find answers for the "Sent away wives".

Other rules such as prohibition of drunkenness are not written in the revised

Constitution but from the beginning drunkenness has been forbidden by the Church. (Niwagila, 1988: 231-232)

Apart from the written rules in the Constitution, there are other unwritten rules which will determine that a parishioner is under Church discipline. For example, today in the North Western Diocese, parishioners are forbidden to make or attend "*Sherehe za Usiku*" (night parties accompanied with disco music). This rule has been formulated and implemented because of fear of spreading AIDS in the Region. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no clear-cut guidelines for Church discipline because some are newly created for situational issues.

In concluding this chapter, it can be said that the practice of Church discipline is very important in the life and work of the Church. Therefore the task of the Church should be to teach effectively on Christian marriage because parishioners who divorce are the ones who face such punishment. Secondly, the Church is responsible to counsel and care for all parishioners under Church discipline enabling them to repent. This should be done in an empathetic way. The counsellors should bear in mind that the aim of Church discipline is not to punish but to help the backsliders to repent and therefore to be forgiven. The teaching of the Church is that God is a God of love, compassion and mercy.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE FATE OF PARISHIONERS UNDER CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN THE NORTH WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA.

4.1. The Church's Attitude Towards the Parishioners Under Church Discipline.

Today in the North Western Diocese, it is said that the cause of backsliding is a spiritual malaise, a feeling that something has gone wrong, expected blessings have not been achieved and unexpected opposition which has disheartened. These fellow parishioners under Church discipline need to draw nearer to God, but their troubled souls often run away from the Church hoping to return when all is well again. The question we need to ask is, how can the heart be well without God whose only purpose is to save lost human beings?

Walter J. Koehler stresses the importance of confession of sins by saying that:

A confession of sins indicates that a person is ready to receive God's forgiveness which comes through His Mercy. In confession we come to the place where we realize how small we are and how great God is (1982: 41).

Through Koehler's ideas on confession, we can say that the essence of individual absolution centres on both the recipient and the meaning of the absolution, in that it is bestowed upon an individual person. The full comforting and healing effect of the Gospel directs itself to a troubled and repentant heart.

One of the interviewees strongly emphasized that;

The effect of absolution is not conditioned or determined by the worthiness or unworthiness of the pastor. The absolution remains valid even if the pastor lacks particular gifts of the Holy Spirit or acts in a bad manner; as long as the penitent believes he or she is absolved. Therefore the responsibility of the Church is not to judge the heart of the penitent but to hear the confession and bestow the absolution on all who desire it. (Interview with pastor Robert Misilimbo, Kitahya Parish, 21/12/97).

Also the following quotations from Koehler show the Church's concern about individual confession and absolution in the Lutheran theology at the time of Reformation.

It is taught among us that private absolution should be retained and not allowed to fall into disuse. However in confession it is not necessary to enumerate all trespasses and sins for this is impossible.

At the same time the people are carefully instructed, so that they may esteem absolution as a great and precious thing. It is not the voice or word of the man [or woman] who speaks it, but it is the word of God who forgives sins, for it is spoken in God's stead and by God's command... we also teach that God requires us to believe this absolution as much as if we heard God's voice from heaven that we should joyfully comfort ourselves with absolution and that we should know that through such faith we obtain forgiveness of sins.

For we also keep confession especially because of the absolution, which is the word of God that the power of the keys proclaims to individuals by divine authority. It would therefore be wicked to remove private absolution from the Church. And those who despise private absolution understand neither the forgiveness of sins nor the power of the keys.

So if there is a heart that feels its sins and desires consolation, it has here a sure refuge when it hears in God's Word and through a man God loses and absolves him from his sins.

Thus we teach what a wonderful, precious and comforting thing confession is and we urge that such a precious blessing should not be despised, especially when we consider our great need.... However, if you despise it and proudly stay away from confession then we must come to the conclusion that you are not Christian.

Therefore when I urge you to go to the confession I am simply urging you to be Christian.

Since absolution or the power of the keys which was instituted by Christ in the Gospel is a consolation and a help against sins and bad conscience, confession and absolution should by no means be allowed to fall into disuse in the Church, especially for the sake of timid conscience and the sake of untrained young people who need to be examined and instructed in Christian Doctrine. (1982: 43)

Through these quotations we can see how Lutheran theology has highly valued and continues to value highly individual confession and absolution because of the benefits it provides for pastoral care and cure of the souls. We can also learn the benefits of advice, training, comfort, consolation, forgiveness of sins and strength, all stemming from the power and presence of God, truly comprise a priceless package of pastoral resources.

Very occasionally, obduracy and pride prevent parishioners under Church discipline from repenting. Through the pride filled ego and refusal to acknowledge God as Lord, the believer creates misconduct which is the fruit of wilfulness.

In the North Western Diocese, the practice of Church discipline and the denial of Christian burial to those under Church discipline are two things which cannot be separated. When parishioners under Church discipline die, they are not buried in the Christian way. This act shows that Church discipline is concerned with the whole life of a Christian, that is from baptism to his or her end in this world.

At the All Africa Lutheran Conference held in Marangu, Tanzania from November 12-22, 1955, Mr. K.J. Msomi from South Africa commented on the question of Church discipline in relation to the African character. He stated that;

When an individual Christian falls into sin the whole body suffers...In the young African Church, discipline is exercised in an effort to keep all members fit and worthy of their calling. Those who fall into open sin are excluded from holy communion and received into their Church again when they have shown penance for a reasonable length of time. (1956: 135)

Msomi portrays the complaints from missionaries that Africans as a rule do not show sorrow for sin as a sin against God but rather they are afraid of being found out and put under Church discipline. He directs the arrow to the missionaries by arguing that;

It may be that the missionaries had not emphasized in their teaching the law of God but they stressed the fact that God is merciful and in so doing even the idea of mercy has not been fully understood by the Christians. Mercy has no meaning in the absence of law. (1956: 135)

From Msomi's point of view, there is a need first to clear up the misunderstanding in the imagination that the Gospel is cheap grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was very much against this idea. He says;

Cheap grace is the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner...is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without Church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without contrition. Cheap grace is a grace without discipleship, grace without cross, grace without Jesus Christ the Living and Incarnate. (1954: 110)

A second misunderstanding is the use of the law, seeing it as dead legalism. Dead legalism is judging the sinner and the sin, and confession of the sin without communion, is discipleship without grace, the cross without grace. Again Bonhoeffer portrays that "the pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner so everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. Therefore grace is costly. It demands humiliation." (1954: 110) Walter Trobisch in his article "Church discipline in the Light of Law and Gospel" comments that:

The presence of the brother forces one to take sin seriously and thereby helps one to take God seriously. He who is not prepared to humble himself in the presence of another is not prepared to humble himself before God either. Personal confession is the test of whether one takes remorse seriously. Here grace is experienced in discipleship, forgiveness is imparted by means of the cross. Confession is confrontation with the living incarnate Christ in the person of the brother. (1961: 20)

In fact the Constitution of the North Western Diocese clearly shows the attitude of the Church that "a person who continues to harden his heart and live persistently in sin shall be excommunicated". (KKKT, 1982a: 30-34).

One has to bear in mind that confession and forgiveness are at the very centre of the Christian faith. In the Small Catechism of Martin Luther several points are made clear. To whom shall we confess? In the presence of God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins, even those which we do not know of. In the presence of our confessor we should confess only those sins which we know take away our peace of mind. Which are these sins? Consider whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, angry, quarrelsome or whether you have hurt anyone by your words or actions, whether you have stolen or neglected anything or done any other wrongdoing. What is the use of confession? Through confession we get help to examine ourselves but more importantly we get help to believe that God has forgiven us for the sake of Jesus. (Tappert, 1986: 24-27)

Adrian Hastings in his book "Christian Marriage in Africa" has commented on the question of confession:

The offer of private confession is probably the most helpful contribution the Lutheran Church could make to the African Churches as a whole. What is needed in Africa are not excommunicators but confessors, able to keep the secret of confession absolute. (1973: 106)

In the book of Galatians, Paul also says:

If you sow to your own flesh you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. (Gal.6: 8)

Joseph Lweyongeza, a Church elder at Ibuga parish told me that the task of the Church should be to teach the factual things concerning faith to its believers. (Itongo, 2/2/1998). According to Lweyongeza's ideas it seems that he wanted to say that the Church should direct her Christians to identify themselves for who they are. They have to leave the past, to give up and to follow Christ. They have to hear the voice of God which says "Come" "Follow me" "Come along with me" "Let us go together" (Mk.2: 13ff). Here God's call demands obedience. This is possible through teachings.

Nowadays it seems that parishioners have forgotten even the teachings which they were taught in Catechetical classes. I remember that when I was a parish pastor, I went to conduct the service in a certain congregation. Before the service started, I began to ask parishioners some questions from Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Some of the questions were;

- (a) What is Baptism?
- (b) What gifts or benefits does Baptism confer?

- (c) What does it mean when we say "Our Father who art in heaven?"
- (d) What sins ought we to confess? (Tappert, 1986: 21-24)

Surprisingly, some of the Christians were unable to answer these questions. This situation forced me to think that it is very important now for the Church to find new ways of equipping parishioners in their daily life.

Church discipline is applied in the North Western Diocese by observing the following points: -

(a) The guilty person living in open sin is examined before the Congregational Council which is presided over by a pastor and Church elders. The guilty person may either be invited to appear before the council or he or she may come of his or her own accord to confess his or her guilt.

(b) If it is a private confession, the guilty person is examined by the pastor only and his or her problem is privately settled.

(c) After repentance, admonition or reproof may be given openly or privately by the pastor.

(d) When a guilty person repents (especially the open sin) it is announced before the congregation and again he or she is received into the Church membership. This is done so as to make the other people know that such conduct is not accepted by the Church and that it is not according to Christian teachings.

Compared to other Dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, in the North Eastern Diocese, the readmission act is normally done on teaching days in the parish. One reason for this is that there is more time on these days than during Sunday Services. The offenders prefer the teaching days because there are fewer Church members who come to Church on these days than on Sundays.

This is the procedure that is followed:

After the teaching session, a hymn is sung during which the repenting offenders go to stand in front of the Church members facing them. In turn they say:

"You my fathers and mothers friends and all congregants, I repent before God and before you that I have offended by .. (the particular offence that was the reason for having been under Church discipline is mentioned). Do you receive me? The parishioners answer by saying " We receive you in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. (Munga, 1989: 32)

It is a custom that the pastor always tells the repenting ones to face the alter and in a sentence or two welcomes them back and warns them from falling again. Then they kneel down and the pastor blesses each one of them in the name of the Trinity by laying on of hands. The repenting parishioners are received back to the congregation.

So, in both Dioceses, the procedure is more or less the same. The only difference is in the act itself whereby the repenting offenders in the Western Diocese do not say anything, neither does the pastor mention their wrongdoings.

However, one can observe dangers facing the Church with the question of the practice of discipline in the Church:

(a) Many Christians are prone to think that by satisfying something that they call "law or custom" they may obtain forgiveness without thinking much about true repentance. The leaders of the congregation, are inclined to think that one who has satisfied the Church discipline has been forgiven by God.

(b) Many educated people especially those who have been to Europe or America, begin to question whether Church discipline is biblical, because they see that the parent-churches do not use such discipline. Therefore they are strongly opposed to it and are very offended by its practice.

(c) There are many backsliders who do not join the Church because they are afraid being made to stand before the congregation, and they also hate this business of announcing and being tried before the Congregational Council.

D.S. Browning also points out some problems with the question of discipline in the modern Church as follows:

1. First, the secularization of modern societies has left institutional religion with far less influence over the lives of individuals. The Church and its ministry have had much less authority to exercise and have been far less potent in shaping lives, especially at the level of concrete attitudes and behaviours. The Church, therefore, has been in a defensive stance and has related to its people primarily through warmth and acceptance, for fear that a more directing posture would actually alienate people and cause them to leave.
2. Second, along with secularization has come heightened pluralism in ethics and life style. People everywhere seem far less certain than they once were about the acceptable limits of every behaviour. The churches themselves seem more reluctant to invoke their authority in sanctioning clearly discernible approaches to work ethics, sexual ethics, child rearing ethics, and related normative issues pertaining to adulthood, manhood and womanhood.(Browning, 1990: 291)

4.2 Tensions Towards the Church

The practice of Church discipline has caused some parishioners to have a negative attitude towards the Church. This practice has caused a struggle and misunderstandings

between Church leaders and some parishioners. One day I interviewed a woman who was complaining and blaming the Church because her husband who was under Church discipline died and was not given a Christian burial. The conversation went on as follows:

Pastor : Good Morning Mrs Balla! I am happy to be here today.

Mrs Balla: Good Morning Pastor. How is your family?

Pastor : They are alright. What about your children?

Mrs Balla: They are fine.

Pastor : Mrs Balla, may I inform you that next Sunday we will have visitors from the head office of our Diocese. So we have decided that every parishioner should contribute 250 Shillings for meals.

Mrs Balla: (Long pause) Hear me - pastor, I fail to understand the function of the Church.

Pastor : Why do you say so?

Mrs Balla: Listen pastor, the Church is a money lover nowadays. When my husband was still alive, he contributed a lot of his possessions to the Church. But when he died the Church declared that he was under Church discipline because he married a second wife. For this reason he was not buried in a Christian way. I wonder why the Church accepted my husband's possessions while knowing that he was under Church discipline?

Pastor : Mrs Balla, do you know the meaning of being under Church discipline?

Mrs Balla: I don't know.

Pastor : Oh, I will explain to you. To be under Church discipline means to lose Church blessings. The parishioner is suspended from taking the Lord's Supper, Church leadership and sponsorship. Above all if he or she dies under Church discipline, the Church does not offer a Christian burial service.

Mrs Balla: (seeming annoyed). Now what is the importance of being a Christian?

Pastor : Look, Mrs Balla, the task of the Church is to take care of and nurture her Christians. The function of the Church is to preach Christ as the victor over the powers of darkness. Remember that the Church tried to talk to your

husband about breaking his vows in your marriage. Can you still remember the promise he made to you during your wedding day that "I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us"? For this reason, your husband was not faithful to your marriage vows when he married a second wife.

Mrs Balla: Your words seem most important.

Pastor : Yes! you are right. The task of the Church is to care for the souls of Christians.

Mrs Balla: Good. Now I understand. We need to experience the gospel in our daily life. The word of God is a powerful word, it sets us free from the powers of Satan.

Pastor : Thank you Mrs Balla. I think now you understand me. You are warmly welcome to our congregation next Sunday. Also you are invited for lunch with our guests from our head office.

Mrs Balla: Thank you ever so much for visiting our home. Pass our greetings to your family. Before departing could you please pray for my family?

Pastor : (Prays) - Bye Bye - Look forward to seeing you next Sunday. (Interview with Mrs Balla, Katobago, 29/12/96)

Another day I witnessed another crisis incident in Bihanga village. A woman aged thirty-six years old died. She was a parishioner but under Church discipline. Before she died, the parish pastor of Kanyinya accompanied with "*Abahenzeza*" (Village Church elders) of that village visited and talked to her about her spiritual maladies. Unfortunately after a week she died before solving her problems. Her relatives went to the pastor to ask if the deceased could be buried in the Christian way. The pastor refused to do so because the deceased was still under Church discipline. At the burial, the relatives of the deceased decided to put a cross at the tomb as an indication that the deceased was a Christian. At that very moment, one of the Church elders in that village removed the cross from the tomb as an indication that the deceased was under Church discipline. Consequently that Church elder was pushed away by one of the deceased's relatives.

With sadness, a retired pastor from the North Western Diocese also made the following

contention:

My father was a polygamist although a Christian. When he died five years ago there was no Christian burial service for him. We threw him in the tomb like a dog. I was very sad and ashamed of that incident. I think the Church should reflect afresh and correct her past errors. (Interview with Pastory, Bukoba, 2/2/1997)

The above real life situations indicate that there is great tension between the parishioners and the Church on the question of Church discipline. In fact Pastor Sospater Kihandiko is right when he says:

Church leaders do not want to attend the funeral of a parishioner who dies under Church discipline because of fear of being attacked and challenged by the relatives of the deceased. (Interview with Sospater Kihandiko, Ilemera, 22/1/1998)

Because of fear, some parishioners are joining other denominations. While talking with Tommy, a former Lutheran Christian he told me that he decided to join the "Disciples of Christ Church" because the Lutheran Church did not solve his problems. He told me of an incident when one day he caught his wife committing adultery with another man. He decided to send her back home for a while. After a month, his wife went to Mombasa to live another type of life. After this incident, Tommy decided to marry another wife. For this reason, he has been under Church discipline for fifteen years. The Lutheran Church has not yet solved his problems. Now he has decided to join another denomination because he feared that if he was to remain under Church discipline for all of his life, at the end of his life he may not be buried in the Christian way and at the end he may not go to heaven. (Interview with Tommy, Bukoba, 2/2/1997)

Apart from Tommy, four other interviewees told me that some parishioners are joining other denominations because, first, they want to be recognized as real Christians. Secondly, they want to receive a respectable Christian burial when they die. (Interviews with Betty, Itongo, 28/12/97; Kakwi, Kanyinya, 10/1/98; Kalikwendwa, Ilemera, 23/1/98; Kokugonza, Kanyinya, 10/1/98)

The data collected from my interviewees show that parishioners are afraid that if their deceased are not buried in the Christian way, they may not go to heaven. Others are angry to see that their deceased are being thrown into the grave like animals without a respectable burial. Some parishioners think that as long as the deceased has been participating in Church activities, the Church is therefore responsible to offer Christian burial to the deceased.

Through this practice of non-Christian burial of Church backsliders, some parishioners under Church discipline do not come to the Church for repentance. They do not care about their fate. Because of this fact, hard times come when a parishioner under Church discipline dies. Because of fear, the relatives of the deceased go quickly to the Church leaders to ask for the burial service. By the Church's refusal to offer Christian burial, other parishioners especially the relatives of the deceased start murmuring against Church leaders based on the fact that when the deceased was still alive the Church asked for money, offerings and other contributions from him or her but when he or she has died, the Church is closing her eyes. This situation creates problems, challenges and murmuring within the Church. Sometimes the Church is termed as "money lover". In some cases, this understanding has resulted in some of our parishioners leaving to join other denominations or others have left the Church completely. From those who joined other denominations, some have been elected as leaders in the Church. As a result, they are used as leaders in their respective Churches to challenge or oppose the Lutheran Christians.

4.3. Positive Attitudes Towards the Church

God always invites people to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, to accept the forgiveness of sins and salvation in the Gospel (1 Pet.1: 18-21). Through repentance, people change from darkness into light and from spiritual death into spiritual life. Through this understanding, some parishioners under Church discipline have understood the meaning of repentance and therefore have repented and been forgiven by the Church. During the research, three parishioners were interviewed who were once under Church discipline. They gave the following witnesses:

I bore a child outside of wedlock. As a Christian I was put under Church discipline. One day, I heard the word of God which touched me. Immediately I decided to repent. I was forgiven. (Interview with Lilly, Ibuga parish, 12/1/1997)

I was a polygamist for more than twenty years. One day my neighbour who was under Church discipline died. He was not buried in the Christian way. This critical incident caused me to decide to remain with one wife. Now the Church has forgiven me. (Interview with Patrick, Katobago, 10/1/1997)

I decided to elope with my future wife because I had no money for a grand wedding party. For this reason, my wife and I were put under Church discipline. But later on, my wife Caroline and I decided to go to the Church for repentance. We were forgiven and now we are participating fully in the Church. If we die even today, we will receive the Christian burial and finally our Father in Heaven will receive us in His Kingdom. (Interview with Grey Muhutwe, 13/12/97)

Sebastian Bishanga, one of the parishioners in the North Western Diocese and a leader within the revival movement in East Africa portrays the role of the revival in his own life:

I was baptised on April the 27th 1933 and soon went on to study what the Catechism taught about Holy Communion. I read with great interest and was very devoted in my religion. But I did not really know the Lord Jesus. My parents and brothers were all well-known Christians. But in spite of this, we continued to go to the spirits and the idols...

After my years of Secondary School at Tabora, I was engulfed by the world. When I finished my medical training in Dar-es-Salaam I was totally defeated by drink, fornication and fear of spirits. Even the urge to steal dominated me. I never had time to go to Church. I lived for some months with my wife, but then I left her and began to go with prostitutes. I got tired of my Christian faith and found nothing good in it. Finally I became a Muslim and began to live with a Muslim woman. I became a believer in the Prophet Mohammed and when I covered my arms with amulets, I asked him to help me against dangers.

In Dodoma, I had made up my mind to kill a person. I was going to do so with the help of my brother in law, who carried a spear for me. Just then, quite suddenly, the Lord Jesus came into my heart and saved me. When I was saved I felt a cry within me. : "Oh through God of Abraham" I conferred not with flesh and blood but surrendered myself totally to the Lord Jesus. I was now graced with a Spirit of strong love towards Jesus and towards my brethren and the Church. I remembered that for years I had not paid my congregational dues. I sent the amount by telegram to the Missionary, Pastor Bernander. I asked him to send my congregational dues to Pastor Kanywa for myself and for my wife. The Lord God opened my eyes so that I saw it was my duty to pay many other debts of different kinds. If I had stolen anything from the government I gave it back and received forgiveness. I sent my number two wife back to her home. I recalled my first wife. (Sundkler, 1980: 120)

Titus Lwebandiza, at an early age was selected for training as an agricultural and veterinary expert by the British administration. After 1961 he became the director general first of the Veterinary Department of Tanzania and later of the Agricultural Department.

He writes:

I come from Butainamwa in Bukoba. Before 1950 when I was working in Mpwapwa I hated the Church and even the name of Jesus. My wife Felicita and I were alcoholics. One evening I had a dream. I felt that I was about to burn. Felicita thought that I had been poisoned, but in the dream I saw Jesus himself. I got up in the middle of the night at 12 o'clock and confessed, walking from house to house. I woke up my neighbours and confessed my sins to them. At 4 o'clock in the morning I came home and sat and sang hymns. My wife Felicita was very much astonished, but three months later she followed my example and was saved.... In the morning after my conversion, I waited outside the School. I knew that our English teacher was going to come at that time in his car. I stood there, waiting for him.

When he got out of his car I said to him: "Sir, I have a sin to confess: I am a thief. A year ago I stole a bed from the School store. Now I return what I have stolen and ask you to forgive me. (1980: 121)

Through these confessions, we can see the spirit of repentance among parishioners who are under Church discipline. This picture shows that entering the Christian life is not a matter of self-justification but of forgiveness of sins. The person who is penitent is a person who has also been forgiven.

The spirit of repentance is seen in Appendix 3 where parishioners have been forgiven and been received back into the Church. The table shown gives a picture that some parishioners under Church discipline are eager to repent and therefore to be welcomed again into the Church.

In his report to the Pastors Conference, Kihandiko, the District Pastor of Southern B reported that the number of parishioners who repented and were received back into the Church was increasing in his district (*KKKT, Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi Miniti za Baraza la Wachungaji* (Minutes of Pastors Conference) Mugeza, 5-10/7/1989, p.8). On the positive side, we can conclude that;

(a) Church discipline usually helps the backsliders to think about their sins and the judgement of God upon them. One can meet many parishioners who are living in sin, but because they have not been suspended from the Church, they think they are alright and are the same as other parishioners.

(b) It also prevents weak parishioners from relaxing in Christian living; it makes them fight against sin, avoiding anything which tempts them to sin. It is my opinion that Church discipline should be practised. The Church needs to make some revisions in order to make it correspond to the present situation and to the Bible teachings. It should be a forgiving and caring Church.

4.4. The Curse of Dying under Church discipline

Hildegard of Böckelheim (1098-1179), a Benedictine abbess made a distinction between two levels of personality. The "homo exterior" and the "homo interior" or outerself and inner self. These two levels are also found in Pauline letters as "outer man" and "inner man" (Rom.6: 6; 7: 12; 1Cor.2: 14; Eph.3: 16).

Hildegard put much emphasis on faith as the function of the inner self by saying that;

Some people know through the inner eye what is hidden from the outer sight and in this they believe with certainty not doubting. Now this is faith... those who faithfully believe receive the fountain of Salvation with the Covenant of justice and find life. But those who do not want to believe are dead, for they lack the sight of the spirit... and with blind eyes merely grope their way through life in only dark knowledge of the flesh. (Grabowsky, 1987: 42)

Hildegard believes that faith is the biblical pearl of great price worn only by a free decision to appropriate the freely offered gift of grace. She continues to agree that grace not only bestows faith but heals, enlivens, enables the subject to do good and actualizes the capacity for sacrificial love. (1987: 43)

Hildegard asserts that faith as a source of life, starts in baptism when a Christian receives the gift of faith. The gospel call is intended to elicit a personal commitment to Christ. Therefore, the sacrament of baptism opens a pathway of choice that one can decide for the Kingdom of God and the higher life of the Spirit or the living death of unbelief. (1987: 43). For this reason, Hildegard sees that the grace of the "Union with Christ" is reserved for those who obey the commandments and live the life of prayer. (1987: 44)

From this understanding, we can affirm that to die under Church discipline means to die outside the Church. A Christian who dies under Church discipline shows how he or she has not kept his/her baptismal vow which says that

"I renounce Satan and all his guile" (KKKT, 1968: 207-208).

The North Western Diocese in her liturgical book has taught her parishioners to pray "Waitu otutange akabi, otubele twije tufege akanya kaitu kakaliija". Literally it means that "please prevent us from misfortune, help us to reach the good end" (KKKT: 1982b: 101). Thus a parishioner who is against these objectives in this prayer shows how unfaithful he or she is because he or she has failed to protect and guide his or her faith. Therefore, it shows that a soldier who is not faithful to his or her commander cannot expect to receive an honourable burial because he or she has escaped the battle. From this understanding, we can say that a parishioner who dies under Church discipline dies without faith and hope.

According to the Hebrews, it was a terrible misfortune not to be buried (1Kings 14:11; 2Kings 9: 10). It was believed that the spirit of the unburied dead wandered restlessly from one place to another on earth (Ezek.32: 23; Is.14: 15). Slaves and common people received less ceremonial treatment than priests, kings and nobles. Children dying before initiation were disposed of with little ceremony (Ferm, 1945: 220). Criminals were stoned to death and a heap of stones over the body served as a grave. To dishonour a body, it was left unburied (Deut.21: 23; 2Sam.2: 12-14; 2Kings 9: 10).

In ancient Greece, executed criminals though buried, were denied the customary rites; traitors and those guilty of sacrilege were refused burial at home, while others were buried without rites. (Hartland, 1911: 420)

In the Haya tradition, burial is another rite of passage. Professor Bengt Sundkler affirms that;

What once attracted the Haya to the Church was not only new life, but also the new death, the manner in which the Christians faced the fact of death and their preparations for the life on the other side. (1980: 183)

We can say that Christian burial is an expression of the comforting and supporting fellowship of village solidarity. In Bukoba, at present, Christians bury their dead not in a cemetery but next to the family house, usually the men on the right, the women on the left. The Catholic Church has attempted to change this by setting aside cemeteries as resting places of the dead. This practice has led to a crisis of confidence. According to Haya customs, to be buried in a Church yard far from home is to be thrown away. The right thing is to be buried near the family house within the fellowship of the clan.

The procedures of Lutheran Christian burials are as follows: The burial rite begins in the house of mourning with hymns, Bible readings and prayer and leads up to the final rite at the open air grave. This is an ecumenical gathering for the village, all join in the common service. Everybody waits with a handful of soil to participate in this human attempt to symbolize the dependence of men on the God of all human beings. This act symbolizes the proclamation of the rich promise of resurrection and life. According to the Haya tradition, throwing the soil in the grave is a symbolic action. Doing this during the burial of one's relative is the last homage and continued relationship between the dead and the living. Those who are prohibited from the last religious rite have no more connection with the departed one.

Unless reparation is done, the living will experience the spell sent by the living dead.

Therefore in the Haya tradition, the dead must be treated with respect, he or she must be supported and venerated. Those who have had differences are encouraged to settle them before it is too late.

In fact, the understanding of Christian burial has its roots in the burial of Jesus Christ. The early Christians adopted the example of Jesus's burial and resurrection and put away the Jewish traditional beliefs on death. Instead, death became the sleep and the grave the resting place for those who died in faith. However, respect was paid to the dead body since they believed it to be the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor.6: 19).

The cardinal purpose of Christian burial was to stress reverence for the body and God's creation, the co-instrument of the soil that shared life in Christ was destined for glorious resurrection both personally and ecclesially. The Christians frequently affirmed that no human intervention could thwart the Divine work of resurrection (Jordann, 1965: 342).

This practice shows us that the burial sermons were an act of joy. Christians sang songs to express their joy over Christ who conquered death. In the 17th Century, the Reformation brought a new element into the Christian view on burial. Reformers suggested that every Christian should be given a respectable burial when he or she dies. But non-members, excommunicated ones, those who committed suicide and non-penitents in general were denied Christian burial (Ferm, 1945: 220).

In the North Western Diocese, the practice of Christian burial is not different from that of the 17th Century. The aim is to symbolize the fellowship of believers and hope of resurrection. This is the fact that those who have lived a good Christian life, when they die are buried in the Christian way. No matter how those in polygamy, superstition, those who commit adultery, suicide and so on, have participated in the Church, when they die the Church is not ready to offer Christian burial to them because of the fact that they have lived

contrary to the Church's regulations.

In fact the diocese has been struggling with this problem for the past several years. Two ideas are always emerging in the ears of parishioners in the diocese. Some of the parishioners are saying that those under Church discipline should receive Christian burial when they die. On the other hand, others are saying that parishioners under Church discipline should not receive Christian burial when they die. This problem has become a burning issue in the diocese.

Gunnar Ljungman who was by then a District pastor of Southern B in the North Western Diocese presented a paper on "Kuwazika WaKristo walio chimiya ya Marudi (Christian burial to parishioners under Church discipline) to Enshanju (District General Assembly). In his paper he advocated that the Church has no right to judge parishioners under Church discipline. He recommended that the Church should be responsible to offer Christian burial to parishioners under Church discipline. (1976: 6). In response to that, the District General Assembly disagreed with Pastor Ljungman by arguing that "to bury parishioners under Church discipline will cause other parishioners to be lost in their daily Christian life" (Minutes, 1976: 9).

In 1984, at the Diocesan General Assembly (Synod), which met at Kishoju Secondary School in the Southern B District, Bishop Josiah M. Kibira of the North Western Diocese tabled the issue to the General Assembly. He proposed a special liturgy for parishioners who die under Church discipline. He suggested that:

- (a) The Pastor, Evangelist or a lay parishioner should conduct the funeral service without wearing clerical garments.
- (b) Few songs should be sang at the grave yard.
- (c) The word of God should be expounded at the grave yard.
- (d) The cross should be put on the tomb.

By a vote of 61 to 39 with 5 abstentions, the majority of the Assembly supported Kibira's liturgy. (Minutes of the Diocesan Synod, 1984: 13-17) Yet in spite of the fact that those who supported Kibira's liturgy were in the majority, the motion was unsuccessful because Kibira's liturgy did not show a great difference from that of the Lutheran liturgy books. As a result the General Assembly decided that this issue should be discussed again at the coming Synod.

At the Diocesan General Assembly of 1986, the Assembly resolved:

- (a) That parishioners under Church discipline when they die should not be buried in the Christian way.
- (b) That more research should be done on this problem and be presented to the coming Synod of 1988. (Minutes of the Diocesan Synod, 1986: 10)

In order to deal with this issue, the Central Committee of the North Western Diocese, which met in April 1988, elected some of the pastors to prepare and present two papers to the Diocesan General Assembly (Synod) which met in July, 1988. Papers were under the following motions:

- (a) Wakristo walio chiniya Marudi wakifa wazikwe Kikristo -Parishioners under Church discipline when they die should be buried in a Christian way-
- (b) Wakristo walio chini ya Marudi wakifa wasizikwe Kikristo -Parishioners under Church discipline when they die should not be buried in a Christian way. (Minutes of the Central Committee, ELCT/NWD, Bukoba, 1988:6)

In their paper, Pastors Balira and Bocko argued that Christian burial should be offered to the parishioners who die under Church discipline. They commented that they are not excommunicated from the Church because their names are still registered in the congregations. Furthermore they continued to challenge the Church by saying that; "if the Church is refusing to bury them, let it not ask anything from them". (1988: 4-5). In fact Balira and Bocko were basing their facts on the Constitution of the Diocese which states that,

If a Christian has been under Church discipline and has not been excommunicated from the Church by the Central Committee, if he or she dies, the pastor should bury him or her in accordance with the burial liturgy. (KKKT, 1982a: 33)

This part of the Constitution is non applicable. It shows itself only on paper. It is never practised in the congregations. When parishioners under Church discipline die they are not buried in a Christian way.

Pastor Sylvester Kahakwa presented his paper by saying that parishioners under Church discipline should not be buried in the Christian way because, if the Church has failed to help them when they were still alive, how could the Church help those who are already dead? He concluded that to accept Christian burial for parishioners under Church discipline is to legalize the sins committed by them (1988: 15).

In his paper, Kabigumila made this conclusion on the issue that,

It is too early to make a decision. We need to do more research on this issue. Theologically we need to have supporting or opposing facts as to why the Church is refusing to bury parishioners who die under Church discipline. (1988: 1)

At the Synod of 1988 the General Assembly voted for the issue, and the results were ;

- 128 agreed that when parishioners under Church discipline die they should not be buried in the Christian way.
- 10 agreed that when parishioners under Church discipline die they should be buried in the Christian way.
- 6 Abstentions (Minutes of Diocesan Synod, Kashasha, 1988: 9-10).

In the year 1990, it was agreed by the General Assembly of the North Western Diocese

that if a parishioner under Church discipline dies, the Church should not conduct a Christian burial service for him or her. Members of the General Assembly voted for the motion. By a vote of 84 to 23 with 10 abstentions, the majority agreed that when parishioners under Church discipline die they should be buried in the Christian way. (Minutes of Diocesan Synod, Ntoma,1990: 12)

Since then, this resolution has never been put into practice by the Diocese. This shows that this issue will continue to be under discussion in the North Western Diocese. The painful thing here is that a parishioner who dies while not having been able to live up to the standards of the Church regarding Church laws or having neglected all warnings of the Church as it is often put, is not permitted to have a Christian funeral. This becomes a rule for all those who are under Church discipline.

In fact one of the interviewees challenged the Church by emphasizing the importance of conducting a Christian burial. He commented that:

The aim of the pastor to conduct a Christian burial service is to bear a public witness to Christian faith and hope. It is at the burial where people can hear the word of God attentively. Through listening to the word of God, people may be touched and come closer to God. Failure to do so shows that God's message is unrevealed and hindered by the Church (Interview with Lwankomezzi, Makumira, 23/1/98).

He wants to emphasize that the service conducted at the burial is not special for the dead body but for the living ones.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING TO THOSE UNDER CHURCH DISCIPLINE

5.1. Parishioners Under Church Discipline.

Twenty seven parishioners were interviewed on the question, should the Church continue to practice Church discipline or not? They gave the following answers. Seventeen interviewees suggested that Church discipline should continue to be exercised in the Church. They commented that in exercising Church discipline, the Church is able to teach the non-Christians because when a certain Christian is living in sin, they are eager to see the reaction of the Church. They concluded that Church discipline has the objective of spiritual maturity within the community of faith. Ten interviewees declared that there is no need for the Church to practice Church discipline. They argued that Christ came into this world to serve all human beings. They added that all human beings are sinners in the eyes of ultimate goodness. Therefore the Church should not use restrictions to place some under Church discipline.

After sampling these different answers, the realisation came that among the ten interviewees who declared that Church discipline should not be used in the Church, six were parishioners under Church discipline; two were the relatives of those who had died under Church discipline and two were lay Christians. All seven pastors interviewed agreed that Church discipline should be continued to be exercised in the Church.

Through this analysis, it was obvious that these groups were very

affected by the practice of Church discipline because some were under Church discipline and for others, some of their relatives had died under Church discipline.

This research shows that the North Western Diocese has a great task to care for and to counsel those under Church discipline and also to offer spiritual teachings to all parishioners.

Rev. Barret is right when he affirms that

Counselling is no longer a matter of giving shrewd advice in a few minutes but of spending hours helping perplexed, troubled people work through their problems in confidence and faith. (1956: 77)

Methods need to be implemented through Educating, Caring, Reconciling and Bearing Witness.

5.2. Methodologies

5.2.1. Educating

The main task of the minister in the Church is to create awareness among the parishioners about the life and work of the Church. As pointed out in chapter three, there needs to be teaching and prepare couples before Christian marriage because parishioners who divorce are the ones who face such a judgements. The Church should teach couples that marriage is a saving state which leads those called to it to their due perfection.

John Stott in the book entitled "Issues Facing Christians Today" sees that the main emphasis of the Church in the question of re-education as the need for thorough biblical teaching about marriage and reconciliation. (Cornes, 1993: 316; Stott, 1984: 275)

Maurice Karpf in his article "Some Guiding Principles in Marriage Counselling"

suggests that:

- (1) Flexibility and an open mind are among the most essential prerequisites for marriage counselling.
- (2) The Counsellor must at all times maintain complete objectivity, must be non-judgmental and non-moralistic in his attitude.
- (3) The problem first presented by the Counsellee is frequently not the most important.
- (4) The complaint of sexual maladjustment is frequently a cover for social and cultural incompatibility.
- (5) The Counsellor should utilize other professional skills early enough to be of maximum benefit in the counselling process.
- (6) The Counsellor should do as much listening and as little talking as possible.
(1956: 219-224)

Here it is assumed that the task of the minister is to help the married couples to work out solutions to their problems. The minister therefore should try to assist the concerned partners to begin to communicate feelings to one another. This can be done after an atmosphere of freedom and trust between the minister and his parishioners has been established. The married couples would open up their hearts to the pastor, and they would at the same time open up their hearts to each other. Dr. C.W. Stewart is right when he says that;

A pastor should remember that much marriage counselling tends to be of the supportive, sustaining type. (1961: 82, 83)

Also the minister is responsible to help the couple to explore personal expectations of each other. As a counsellor, he or she should help the couple to develop a sense of marital

growth, emphasizing that love grows in an atmosphere of mutuality when the other is valued as much or even more than the self. Again Dr. Stewart stresses that “husband and wife should understand their role in marriage. The husband and wife would be enabled to understand each other’s role image and role relations” (1961: 83).

Also Jack Dominionian, a Social Scientist comments that:

Since the welfare of societies and nations depends on the well- being of the individual marriage and family, we have to learn how best they can be achieved. It can only be done by wide spread education and preparation for marriage, the identification through research of its intrinsic destructive forces and the provision of readily available and effective help for those who need it. (1968: 14)

Further, basic family education should include the basic cognisance of one's own biases and attitudes as they would affect the counselling techniques. Trained counsellors should gain the sense of knowing themselves. They must become an intrinsic part of their counselling preparation. They should be enabled to be aware of their own attitudes, role expectations, ethical and moral convictions concerning Christian marriage. They should have attained basic knowledge of biological and psychological aspects of sexuality. It is striking to note that the choice of life partners is usually governed by physical attraction or by family decision and arrangements. Parishioners should be assisted to see the importance of common interest between couples who propose to marry, and especially to know that sexuality is a gift from God and the physical union between husband and wife is in accordance with the will of God (Gen.2: 24). Unity is important within a marriage. Marriage is the place where sexuality unfolds for procreation, mutual love and affection. However the Bible also sets limits. Outside the proper use, sexuality can be easily misused and cause pain and sorrow. Thus, Kisembo, Magesa and Shorter caution that:

Serious preparation on both spiritual, physical and psychological aspects of marriage and family life should be given before, and if possible from the time after, marriage. (1977: 119)

In the year 1965, bishop Josiah M. Kibira of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the North Western Diocese recommended to the Evangelical Lutheran Church Convention that the entire Church was in great need of trained ministers who were specialists for marriage counselling. He continued by stressing that

We should remember that the Church helped in bringing about the changes and development in Africa. Now the Church must take the initiative in trying to solve problems which it helped to create. (Mshana et al, 1967: 65)

In his article, "Has Luther Reached Africa: The testimony of a confused Lutheran" Bishop Kibira emphasized that:

Through study of the New Testament, the North Western Diocese dropped most of the catalogues of listed laws. We saw that this inheritance was brought over at the time that many denominations invaded our area. In 1967 we started to undo these laws stressing sound Lutheran counselling by the trained ministers and teaching them to use the "keys" in the right way so that they could enable Christians to experience the Christian freedom which we find in the Gospel. But two of these laws (polygamy and superstition) are still a big headache for our Church. It seems that Europeans and North American theologians cannot help us either. (1984: 12)

The North Western Diocese always has a programme of educating the family and those parishioners under Church discipline. Church leaders at the congregational and parish levels visit parishioners under Church discipline and talk with them concerning their problems. After

that, Church leaders bring those difficulties to the attention of the Elder Council.

When Pastor Ronny Ngabona was interviewed regarding this programme he said;

In our parish we have a seminar for parishioners under Church discipline at least once in every three months. Our aim is to counsel and to teach them the word of God so that they may repent and be reinstated in the Church. (Kanazi, 2/11/1996)

In fact, educating should not only be directed to parishioners under Church discipline but to the targeted groups in the parishes. Such groups are youth groups, married couples, men's groups, divorcees. Also Christian education should be emphasized in schools. In the Bible, the family is the basic place of education and instruction. This can be observed from the earliest patriarchal times. God said of Abraham;

"Not for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep they way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him". (Gen.18: 19)

Also the book of Deuteronomy portrays that;

"Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6: 6-9).

The parishioners should be aware that divorce is a tragedy in one's life, in the family also in the community. In educating, the pastor must expect to meet with difficult problems, but should not shrink from them. H.J. Clinebell., Jr. says that the pastor must follow the

example of Christ who came forth from the bosom of the Father to save the believers; He must be a neighbour to all in his sympathy. He should have compassion on the weakness of others and feel sorry for their sins. He must examine himself as a servant and not as Lord. (1966: 18-52; 189-206; 294-307)

In educating, ministers are encouraged to use the model of marriage therapy as follows:

- (a) Individual therapy is where a husband and wife have a separate therapist. The focus is on intra psychic material underlying the relationship.
- (b) Collaborative therapy-where both partners are seen individually during the same period of time by different therapists. With the clients' permission the therapists consult or collaborate about therapies, preferably at regular intervals.
- (c) Concurrent therapy-the models in which the same therapist sees both spouses in individual therapy only.
- (d) Conjoint therapy-the marital partners are seen together in the same session by the same therapist(s).
- (e) Tandem - therapy - individual therapy sessions and conjoint marriage therapy sessions are held alternatively by the same therapist.
- (f) Group therapy. There is an increasing use of couple group therapy combined with other models of therapy. (Murphy, 1990: 685)

Instructions before marriage are very important. In the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, we have established a syllabus for marriage

preparations. Parishioners who want to marry are supposed to be under instruction for one week. This is absolutely compulsory. The parish pastor is responsible to teach them about Christian marriage and Christian life. Without Church instructions, Christian marriage cannot be solemnized in the Church.

In order to tackle the difficulties we are facing concerning our brothers and sisters under Church discipline, we need to make sure that the teachings on family life and Christian life are disseminated, explained, understood and acted upon.

5.2.2. Caring

In order to do pastoral work, the Church should be made up of a caring community. Mc Gee's four basic conditions which are location, availability, mobility and flexibility for effective counselling can help the ministers in counselling. (Stone, 1993: 11-17) Also Charles F. Kemp mentions "the 4C'S" which are caring, concern, compassion and commitment which can help the counsellor in caring for the parishioners under Church discipline. (Kemp, 1985: 15-24)

In their discussion of Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, Clebsch and Jaekle noted four primary care giving functions in epochs of Christian history.

- (1) Healing. A pastoral function that aim to overcome some impairment by restoring the person to wholeness and by leading him to advance beyond his or her previous condition
- (2) Sustaining Helping a hurting person to endure and to transcend a circumstance in which restoration to his former condition or recuperation from his or her malady is either impossible or so remote as to seem impossible.
- (3) Guiding. Assisting perplexed persons to make confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action, when such choices are viewed as affecting the present and the future state of the soul.

(4) Reconciling. Seek to re-establish broken relationships between the man (woman) and fellow man(woman) and between man (woman) and God. (1983: 33-66)

Howard Clinebell in his book “Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling” adds the fifth function which is “Nurturing”. The aim of nurturing is to enable people to develop their God-given potentialities, throughout the life journey with all its valleys, peaks, and plateaus. (1984:43)

All in all, the minister as counsellor should be open to his counselees. Here the cardinal principle is that the immediate initiative in establishing a counselling relationship must rest with the counsellee. Through this relationship, the counsellee is accepted, loved as a child of God and can feel safe to come and share his or her feelings with the pastor. At this stage, the pastor uses the so called "Exhortative" type of counselling by which his role is primarily that of the father by giving advice.(Adams, 1974: 97-100).

The question to be asked is this. What can the minister legitimately do as a counsellor in his role as a pastor? A minister offers alternatives and guidance. The alternatives can be received gratefully and put into practice by parishioners. Sometimes the minister offers rebuke and correction. The minister also exercises the ministry of mutual encouragement. Here, mutual encouragement refers to a Christian's loving interest in and concern for what matters much to others. Such concern includes:

- (a) Sharing of burdens (Gal.6: 1-5)
- (b) Speaking a word in season to one perplexed or distressed (Prov.15: 23)
- (c) Extending hospitality to the alienated individual who feels rejected or estranged on the earth (Rom.12:13; 1Tim.3: 2; 1Pet.4: 9)
- (d) Visiting homebound, ill and imprisoned persons (Matt.25: 31-46)
- (e) Praying for the victims of life's conflict (Jn.17; 1Cor.7: 13)
- (f) Comforting the bereaved (Rom.15:4; 2Cor.7: 13; 1Thess.4: 18)

- (g) Extending skilled counsel to those who seek guidance about a decision, relationship, vocation or addiction (Prov.12: 20; Ps.55: 13-14).

The minister in many such instances plays the role of a social worker or relief agency. If that relationship is one of warmth, openness, concern and friendliness, special pastoral care will be built on a strong foundation.

A question which arises here is, should a minister initiate a pastoral care relationship or wait for a parishioner to request one? This questions can be viewed in two ways by looking at the contrast between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Church. Due to the Sacrament of Penance the Roman Catholic Priest has reason to expect parishioners to seek out the advice of clergy. On the other hand, by affirming the priesthood of all believers and granting each Christian a direct recourse to the Bible, the Protestant Church encourages each of its members to be spiritually free. But here we need to bear in mind that spiritual freedom does not mean individual isolation. Parishioners should be able to trust in their ministers so that in times of need they will turn to them for help.

Schleiermacher once admonished students of practical theology that:

If ministers do not engage in any care, they cannot make much of their office (1988: 35).

By this quotation, Schleiermacher wants to emphasize that making something of the office means of course, aiding the parishioner in distress and thereby restoring and up-building the Church community as a whole.

Pastor Ronny Ngabona portrays that sometimes it is difficult to care for some parishioners who are facing difficulties in the families. He gave the following case example:-

Mr and Mrs Zakayo were members of the Lutheran Church in a certain congregation of the North Western Diocese. They have been Church members for more than fifteen years. They were married through the Church. During their first five years they were very active members in their parish. However in the last eight years they have faced an unhappy period of time because they didn't have any children. They have been consulting with their pastor who advised them to see medical doctors for a medical examination. They have tried to follow the doctor's prescription concerning procreation but all in vain. They have been praying to God to grant them even a single child but God has delayed the answer. The pastor has told them that he is also praying for them but it all seems to be in vain. Every new birth in the village reminds them of their unhappy experience. Relatives have tried to consult local medicine persons and diviners on their behalf. Even that has not helped. In the twelfth year of their marriage, Mr Zakayo decided to tell his wife that he would marry a second wife who would probably bear him children especially sons who must perpetuate his name and his clan. On the other hand Mrs Zakayo reminded her husband about the meaning of Christian marriage and the vows they made. She has insisted that their marriage is complete even without children. But the parents and relatives of Zakayo and he himself can no longer tolerate that kind of teaching. Mr Zakayo therefore must take a second wife. Because of the pressure of the family and the traditional philosophy of life, Mrs Zakayo has regretfully admitted "My husband Mr Zakayo, I know I have failed you; I could not find complete acceptance in your clan because of my bad luck! Maybe God did not want me to have an heir in this clan. By all means I choose to stay with you and keep my Christian faith." Now Mr Zakayo has married Miss Yulitha and they have two sons and one daughter. Mrs Zakayo is there as she promised. But she is unhappy. She blames herself and suffers guilty feelings; she feels humiliated before the ancestors, neighbours and God who left her without the birth of any children. (Interview with Ronny Ngabona, Kanazi, 22/12/97)

In fact the Haya people of the North Western Diocese involve themselves in matters concerning the preparation of the clan because they have a strong sense of community. They live for their sayings, "*Bashoma Bagumile*"- meaning "one goes to Church when he is well and healthy" and "*Abaikala nomukazi Omoi baba bazaile hamoi*" meaning one keeps one wife

when he has children with her.

During this research it has been discovered that most husbands blame their wives who either did not bear children at all or bore only girls. Wives, in this matter of giving birth to children, were always to blame. Also among the Haya people a marriage without the birth of children is incomplete. It may end up either in divorce or a second marriage. The Christian rule which is based on monogamy is difficult for those whose wombs are not fruitful. Such people come to the Church on Sunday but at night may consult a diviner for an interpretation of the meaning of their childless marriage. Here, questions to be asked are: What about if the man is infertile? Can the woman take another man?

In the whole process of caring, empathy is more important for the pastor when dealing with the problems of other parishioners. By so doing, the pastor feels in solidarity with the counsellee. The "Exploratory or Analytic" type of counselling will help the pastor to interpret some problems in such a way that he or she may see them for what they really are. Through this understanding the pastor as a counsellor is called to develop a sense of respect for which he is responsible to care about others. If this personal relationship does not develop, the pastor will be feared by his parishioners as was mentioned by one interviewee;

I don't think that I could go to my parish pastor with this problem. Now I am under Church discipline because during my wedding day, we had the disco music for the whole night. The Church does not allow disco music during the wedding ceremonies. I am afraid to meet the pastor. That pastor scares me because he isn't very approachable. (Interview with Tommy, Bukoba, 2/2/1997)

Schleiermacher warns pastors by stressing that:

Pastors should resist the temptation to force their own personal theological or moral views on those who come to them, lest they

produce relationship of permanent dependence or tutelage like that between a superior and a subordinate. They should instead work to restore equality by strengthening the religious resources that are already available within the individual who come to them. (1988: 37)

In the caring process, one can see also that confidentiality is also very important. Parishioners would not feel free to share their burdens, speak of their private affairs or express their qualms and doubts about faith if they feared that their privacy would be violated.

Because of the misunderstanding on the questions of Church discipline, some parishioners under Church discipline in the North Western Diocese are less concerned with church affairs. As a pastor working in the congregation I was challenged by one of our Church members in Nyabugera Parish. Our former evangelist married a second wife. One day we visited Nyabugera village where he lives. The aim of the visit was to make a campaign on "*Ekilo kikulu ky'amagesha*" (The harvest day) also to collect "*Egabo*" (Church levy). We reached his home and found him with his two wives working in their banana plantation. We informed him of the aim of our visit. Vehemently he said:

We are not going to pay "*Egabo*" or to offer anything because you as a Church don't recognize us as Christians. How can you demand something from a person whom you don't recognize? (Interview with Mukama, Nyabugera, 1988)

In the North Western Diocese, some of the parishioners are under Church discipline through the fact that they have walked contrary to the constitution of the diocese. The Constitution is the guidepost for all Lutheran Christians in the Diocese. Through the constitution, hard-hearted parishioners are banned from partaking in Holy communion, or taking any leadership post in the Church neither can they sponsor baptism or Christian

marriage.

Despite the fact that the North Western Diocese has emphasized the importance of taking care of parishioners under Church discipline, there is still a tendency to be reluctant to take this action. A good example is from Kitaaba Parish where the Central Committee of the parish agreed that a certain parishioner should be released from being under Church discipline. This resolution was forwarded to the District Council for approval. After a long debate, the Southern B District Council resolved that the issue was not well solved. Therefore the case was returned to Kitaaba Parish to be re-discussed (Minutes of the Southern B District Council, Ilemera, 1/11/1989).

Through the Church's reluctance to hear and solve their problems, some parishioners under Church discipline do not see the meaning of repentance and forgiveness. The Church has to show her credibility in decision making. Sundkler reminds us that in pastoral work it is essential that the Church should become a home for the souls, a place where men and women can say to themselves and to others "Here we are really at home..." (1964: 73).

In order to strengthen the work of pastoral care in the congregations, Paulo Kamalweki suggested that pastors should not spend extra time in office matters, instead they should be teachers in their congregations (Interview with Paulo Kamalweki, Ilemera, 9/1/1998). Furthermore, Rohoza Kagemulo added that in order to succeed in pastoral work, the Church should care for parishioners under Church discipline by visiting them from time to time at their homes. (Interview with Rohoza Kagemulo, Ibuga, 19/12/1997)

Apart from what has been said above, the pastor needs to invite these parishioners and to hold Bible readings with parishioners under Church discipline and those not under Church discipline. The Bible topics can focus on marriage, forgiveness, hope, Christian way of living etc.

On care and counselling, all seven pastors interviewed agreed that it is important for pastors and evangelists to visit Christians under Church discipline. As we have seen polygamy is one of the major causes for Christians to be under Church discipline in the Diocese, so interviewees advocated that pastors, evangelists and faithful lay Christians can guide, educate, and counsel on marriage with Christian members through:

- (a) The implementation of the "Christian priesthood of all believers". This means that men and women are called to serve the world in word, deed and truth. Every parishioner is a keeper and a priest to his brother or sister. Such a concept should be reflectively experienced in the daily life of the parishioners.
- (b) Bible readings: By reading and studying the Bible together, married men and women may find strength, security, comfort, power and peace of mind.
- (c) To have discussion groups of men and women in the congregations. These groups would be helpful in communication and finding new avenues for solving marital problems. The emphasis should be on small interpersonal groups of married men and women. In these discussions, they could freely discuss personality problems, authority problems, marital adjustments, grace, forgiveness, acceptance, reconciliation, healing and sustaining power, Christian way of living and so forth. In fact after marriage, every effort should be made to stabilize the relationship and to help the married people absorb the shocks that come out of living together.
- (d) There is also no denying that prayer plays a very important role in improving the feeling of security of many people who have been raised in a religious context. Even parishioners under Church discipline or even many backsliding individuals, who in times of health may not acknowledge any need for prayer or may even completely remove themselves from the Church, reach out again for this type of solace when assaulted by disease or misfortune whether physical or emotional. Here, the counsellor is there either to pray for the parishioner in trouble or to help the parishioners to pray.

- (e) The Church should pay attention to divorcees and unmarried mothers. These parishioners in crisis are human beings. God still loves them. They are members in the Church. It is the task of the Church to proclaim the good news to them. The Church has the task of showing them a loving fellowship and serving them.

The Church should also establish a network counselling services within the parishes. This will include the ordained ministers and faithful lay Christians who are trained. Lay Christians should be used in helping to sustain parishioners in difficulties in their respective congregations. Lay Christian counsellors need to be officially recognized, designated, commissioned and trained. Such official status will make it easier for the parishioners in crisis to turn to them and seek help from them.

5.2.3. Reconciling

Sinton describes that:

Reconciliation is a concept which stems from the realm of human personal relationship. It is the renewing of warmth and trust after a period of hostility and conflict.

The concept can be extended to refer to peace-making between conflicting groups, communities, institutions or nations. It is closely related to forgiveness which is an important element in reconciliation, but the two are not identical. One person can forgive another and let the memory of an injury fade away; reconciliation involves the willingness of both sides to resume the risks of relating with each other once again. (1995: 724-725)

Thus William E. Hulme affirms that;

Forgiveness means reconciliation in spite of estrangement, it means reunion, in spite of hostility, it means acceptance of those who are unacceptable and it means reception of those who are rejected. (1981: 42)

In the process of reconciliation, the pastor may use "client-centred or directive" type of counselling (Adams 1974: 90-100). At this stage, the pastor acts like a mirror where he seeks to serve as a means by which the counsellee may come to see the truth of his own feelings and their significance.

A good example of this type of counselling is a case study found in a certain congregation in the North Western Diocese. The pastor of that congregation had to tackle a case of Church discipline. One of the Church elders there had used the alter vessels for brewing local beer in his house. His case was brought before the congregational council. The pastor told the Church Council members. "I am one of you, I am listening. You speak to him now." The Church leaders tried to show that the man had sinned exceedingly, but the accused was adamant and retorted. "You have no authority over me. I am just as good as you are." The efforts were all in vain. Then the Pastor began to speak slowly and deliberately:

Now I am going to say my words as a priest and as a servant of God. Yes, of course you were right in using the sacred vessels of the Church for this unholy business. Of course you were right in carrying on like this. You will end by harvesting what you have sown, that which must be the obvious outcome of this on the last day before the throne of the Almighty God. You, yourself have chosen. Carry on. Nobody will hinder you any longer. (Interview with Dean Mathia Lutosha, Kafunjo, 14/2/98)

Dean Lutosha told me that overcome by fright and despair, the elder cast himself to the ground. Reduced to tears, he cried for forgiveness. After a long discussion, the council agreed with one accord to forgive him. According to this case study, we can learn that in that congregation, the pastor had established himself as something more than a mere group leader. He acted as a middleman with special authority in relation to his flock.

Apart from parishioners who do not want to repent, others under Church discipline are ready to repent. A meaningful example is this. One day I had a conversation with a young Christian woman who escaped from her husband and went to Dar es Salaam to lead another type of life. After a long talk, the conversation went as follows:

- Pastor : Sari, do you know Jesus Christ?
- Sari : (Laughs) Of course, yes.
- Pastor : Have you given yourself completely up to Him, to let Him be the Lord of your life?
- Sari : (Long pause) No, I did not think that that was necessary. That's why the Church suspended me from taking the Lord's Supper.
- Pastor : Now have you forsaken your sins?
- Sari : (Seeming to ignore the question) No, and if I have to I don't know that I want to be a real Christian. (Interview with Sari, Ibuga 12/1/1997)

After our conversation, I asked her to decide which way she wanted to follow; to follow Jesus Christ or to continue with her rampageous life. With a shy smile, Sari had no answer to my question. It was hard for her at that time to decide. She left with a determination to live with her sins, turning away from the Christian life rather than to part with her sinful life. Luckily enough, after two months that woman came back to the Church for repentance. She said that the Lord Jesus Christ had conquered. She was forgiven and then reinstated in the Church. Now she is leading a happy life with her former husband.

On the ministry of reconciliation, we can agree with the Swiss Protestant pastor and theologian Eduard Thurneysen who commented that:

True pastoral care does not rest until it has carried the forgiving

word into these depths in the strength of the Spirit and of prayer and has really.... brought (persons) again under the healing power of grace (1962: 67).

The main point is that the human self who experiences spiritual weakness in an immoral society is reconciled to God, to self and to others in the Christian community of true believers. It is very important to note that the gospel that will not work in life is no gospel at all.

5.2.4. Bearing Witness

The other role of the Church is to bear her witness to parishioners under Church discipline. The Church has to bear witness to God's standard according to Christ's teachings and not to human wishes. Of course in this issue of practising Church discipline one who brings witness is ready to face many challenges and opposition. But apart from that, he or she expects God's help. The prime responsibility of the one who bears witness is to be faithful to God. Therefore, the aim of the counsellor in bearing witness is not to please parishioners under Church discipline by fearing that he or she will lose "key families" or "the giving will go down" or "my Church will not agree". The counsellor is to listen and tell them the truth about their life.

The Church should bear her witness through being an example and through teaching. Both are very important. Teaching without example is hollow. Let us take an example. If the Church teaches about the life long nature of marriage but its members are divorcing in large numbers and the leadership of the Church is doing nothing to help marriages in difficulty or to discipline those who separate contrary to the will of Christ, then the Church will have no impact on the attitudes of marriage in the society.

In the case of parishioners under Church discipline, they need first to repent before being accepted as faithful members in the congregation. In bearing witness and to be in

solidarity with the parishioners under Church discipline, the Church should show both clear teaching and equally clear example in her teachings and even more compassion, caring and reconciliation.

5.3. The Bereaved Members in the Family of Members under Church Discipline

5.3.1. Before the Burial

Christians affirm that Christian faith is faith in the saving act and its significance of the death of Jesus Christ. On the Cross, before our eyes, the weight of our sins is weighed. Therefore, for Christians, life and death depend on God's grace. (Brunner, 1954: 109-113)

D.K. Switzer suggests that effective pastoral care for bereaved persons is based upon the capacity of the pastor to relate closely to persons undergoing intense emotion, a knowledge of the dynamics and stages and behaviour of grief and the needs of the bereaved, and an awareness of findings like those of Murray Parks which make clear that:

Early full grieving, allowing one's self to feel and express those feelings both verbally and nonverbally, tends to lead to the most constructive resolution of the process, while the repression or suppression of the early reactions to the loss tend to lead to a greater severity of the grief symptoms later. (1974: 475)

In this traumatic situation, accurate empathy is needed. It is very important that the pastor or evangelist visits the family after somebody has died. All seven pastors interviewed emphasized that talking with the bereaved will be the first part of the counselling effort. The second will be devotion. The pastoral encounter comes to be seen as "good news" rather than "bad news". If the resurrected life means anything at all it means good news in the face of grief and separation. Therefore comforting verses from the Bible can be used such as:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor

rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom.8: 38-39)

..but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2Tim.1: 10)

Jesus said to her "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn.11: 25-26)

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Rom.6: 8)

On the occasion, the preacher may use any of the themes such as resurrection, honouring the dead, eternal life and so on. In fact, the pastor must show caring, concern, compassion and commitment. The pastor needs to develop a high competence in bereavement counselling. He or she is the one who can bring peace among the bereaved and can help the bereaved to release negative emotions, hostility, guilt and fear.

In such situations of grief, the counsellor becomes the shepherd whereas the bereaved need to be fed psychologically and spiritually. Howard J. Clinebell warns that turning in upon oneself and refusing to be fed interpersonally, over a protracted period is an unhealthy grief response (1966: 168). With these words, Clinebell puts a challenge which applies to the North Western Diocese where the Church leaders guided by the Constitution are strictly not allowed to feed the bereaved by either conducting Christian burial services to the deceased having

religious rituals such as prayers and sermons at the deceased's home.

When Betty was interviewed, whose son died under Church discipline and was not buried in the Christian way, she challenged the Church by saying that:

It is the task of the Church to visit the family after somebody had died. On such occasions, more than at any other time, the most fundamental features of traditional religious life are seen, the relationship between the living and the dead. It is the time when people will be disturbed by deep-rooted fear and uncertainty. (Interview with Betty, Itongo, 28/12/97)

Schleiermacher challenges the Church by saying that:

It is not proper for us as ministers to be merely witnesses of religious emotion without influencing it and sealing it and completing it. If we are asked to attend a funeral, we must also take an active part in it, and people need to be directed to this effect. It is not really necessary for us to ignore the funeral altogether, for it always has something religious in it, and in so far as this is so, the Church Community should be made aware of it... As Ministers we must have room to perform this natural part of our vocation. (1988: 79)

In the North Western Diocese (NWD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), some Church workers do not want to attend the funerals of parishioners who die under Church discipline because they fear being attacked by the relatives of the deceased. This practice sometimes causes parishioners to be nervous. They do not see the meaning of being Christian.

5.3.2. After the Burial

This is the time when the bereaved continue to fantasize about the deceased. After the burial, the bereaved enters into another stage of grief work in which they try to reflect deeper

levels of loss. Some of the bereaved are consistently argumentative, cantankerous and hostile toward the counsellor who is the pastor.

At this crucial moment, the pastor or any other counsellor needs to help the bereaved learn to distinguish what can and what cannot be changed in such a situation. The major task is to meet the needs of the bereaved, such as:

- (a) To release negative emotions, hostility, guilt and fear.
- (b) To help the bereaved so that they can break the ties with the deceased.
- (c) Resurrection of the deceased within the self.

It is important to note that no one can get through life without loss and grief. Dr. Kenneth Moses in his lecture at Western Illinois University in 1980 commented that:

Grief is a God-given natural, healthy, self-corrective process. It is an ongoing, continuous, highly fluid process whereby an individual can separate from someone or something that has been lost (Kuenning, 1987: 256).

The grieving person may experience numbness, disbelief, denial, anger or rage, confusion, depression, guilt, fear. Kuenning asserts that:

Each individual responds to grief differently. Responses vary with each individual according to temperament, background, emotional and physical health, age, the maturity of one's faith and past losses, as well as a host of other reasons. A current loss can trigger unresolved losses from the past (1987: 256).

Kuenning continues to suggest to the counsellors to remember the following Do's and Don'ts when talking with the grieving persons.

Do

- If possible, go to visit or attend the funeral. Your presence means you care.

- . Simply say, “I am so sorry” or “Words fail me” or “I share a bit of your grief”.
- . Remember, a sympathizing tear, a warm embrace, an arm around the shoulder, a squeeze of the hand conveys your sympathy. Words aren’t always necessary.
- . Give the mourner permission to grieve.
- . Listen non judgmentally, to the grieving person’s thoughts and feelings.
- . Allow the grieving person to talk about the deceased loved one.
- . Ask open-ended questions like “What happened?” Open-ended questions invite the grieving person to express him or herself.
- . Tell them you will remember them in prayers.
- . Offer practical assistance.
- . Share a pleasant memory or words of admiration for the deceased with the grieving person.
- . Remember that grief is long-lasting.
- . Remember that you are a vital part of the grieving person’s support system. Never underestimate your role as a care giver.
- . Remember that usually the most difficult time is seven to nine months after the death.
- . Remember to extend condolences to forgotten mourners: grand parents, siblings, stepchildren, aunts and uncles, cousin, friends - any one who was especially close.
- . Remember that nothing you can say will stop the grieving person’s pain. (1987: 258)

However, Kuenning warns the counsellors not to:

- . Avoid the grieving person because you don’t know what to say.
- . Say, “Don’t cry” or “Be brave”. This may cause the grieving person to repress sad feelings.
- . Use clichés, trite statements, or euphemisms. Avoid statements such as “He’s at rest”, “Be glad it’s over...” “Time heals all wounds” or “The Lord knows the best”.
- . Be afraid of tears. Grieving persons seldom forget those with whom they have shed tears.
- . Say, “I know how you feel”. Each person’s grief is unique, and no one can totally

understand another's grief. Make statements or ask questions that induce guilt or affix blame. There is always some unfinished business and guilt associated with the death of a loved one.

- Change the subject when the grieving person talks about his or her loved one.
- Tell the grieving person his or her loss is God's will. Most grieving persons are troubled by that statement, but are too polite to say so. Avoid any of the following statements:

Sooner or later He is going to get you

He will get you in the end.

God had numbered his or her days, and when they ran out, God took him or her.

I don't understand why he or she had to die, but God doesn't make mistakes.

God must have needed another bud for his rose garden.

You never know when the Lord's going to snatch you from this world, do you?

God knows best. He won't put any more on you than you can bear.

- Try to answer the question, why?
- Encourage the grieving person to "get over it" because of your discomfort with his or her depressed state (1987: 258-259).

In discussing "Crisis Therapy", Gerald Caplain encourages the bereaved that "in the crisis of bereavement... the sufferer must actively resign himself to the impossibilities of ever again satisfying his needs through interaction with the deceased, he [she] must psychologically bury the dead" (Clinebell, 1966: 171)

For this reason, the pastoral counsellor needs to start comforting the person in crisis gently with reality. The professional pastor needs to be aware of any hints of such anger since the bereaved may be reluctant to reveal his or her feelings to him. The better the counsellor understands himself or herself and those who are in need, the more effective his or her pastoral care will be.

What is lacking in this grief situation in the North Western Diocese is that Church leaders make no official visits to the families of parishioners who have died under Church discipline. A church leader may visit the bereaved as a member in that village or as a friend but not as a Church leader. For this reason, other Church leaders have been termed as hypocrites.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1. Summary of Findings

In this research work, some issues have been observed in relation to the implementation of Pastoral Care and Counselling to the parishioners under Church discipline in the North Western Diocese (NWD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

We have seen that the greatest ethical problems in the North Western Diocese are divorce and polygamy. These two ethical problems are intertwined with the question of Church discipline. As a result, these problems cause new spiritual frontiers within the Church.

In research findings, we have found that Church discipline is exercised upon parishioners whose actions openly deviate from the accepted Church laws and norms. An offence which has been seen and recognized by the Church plays a major role in suspension. We have seen that the most common factors for suspension in the Church are pregnancy outside of wedlock, non-Christian marriage (*okulehya*), divorce and adultery. The Constitution of the North Western Diocese adds another factor, that of superstition. The problem here is that superstition is not easily noticed by outsiders. For this reason, Church discipline in the North Western Diocese comes about because of breaking marriages which sometimes means dealing with divorce, polygamy, committing adultery, pregnancy out of wedlock, marrying without Church consent and hardness of heart. Drunkenness is also prohibited.

It was revealed that some of the pastors have made great efforts in dealing with these problems by ordering parishioners under Church discipline who are involved in these practices

to leave them by imposing external social control.

The findings revealed two aspects about suspending parishioners under Church discipline from the Holy Communion. First, for many parishioners, suspension from Holy Communion means exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven. This concept can lead to another misunderstanding, that Holy Communion is the meal for the righteous or sinless. Secondly, it was observed that suspension from the Lord's Supper is an effective means against parishioners under Church discipline who take the Sacrament very seriously, even if their beliefs concerning its efficacy divert from Lutheran doctrine.

Different opinions have arisen during the research concerning the strictness and justice in the whole process of exercising Church discipline in the Church.

- (1) Six lay Christians out of ten were of the opinion that nowadays Church discipline is not being exercised strictly enough. All six parishioners were under Church discipline, and three are relatives of persons who died under Church discipline were against the practice of Church discipline.
- (2) All women interviewed felt that the exercise of Church discipline was unjust on the basis of sex. It was stated that the women were the majority who were disciplined for the reason of being pregnant outside of marriage while the responsible men were hardly or seldom disciplined.

According to my observations in Ibuga Parish during my holiday in December, 1997 I noticed that of the parishioners who were received back again into the Church, the majority were young women and a few men. These were young men and women between twenty and thirty years of age. Generally one can say that young women constitute the largest group of Church members who are under Church discipline in the North Western Diocese.

- (3) Concerning modification of the exercise of Church discipline, the options differed mainly according to the education level of the interviewees. Three lay Christians who had above Secondary School education were of the opinion that Church discipline should not continue to be exercised as long as some Church workers were themselves breaking the Church laws openly. Two female interviewees within this education level put forward the idea that the Church needed to emphasize more teaching not only to those whose actions are obviously seen but also to those whose offenses are being heard of in rumours.
- (4) Some of the interviewees suggested that the readmission act should be done by allowing parishioners under Church discipline to repent before the parish pastor and Church elders instead of being done before all parishioners. On the following Sunday this should be announced in the Church, that they were readmitted. The interviewees stressed that this would reduce the feeling of shame on the part of the backsliders. Through these findings it can be said that the young people, men, women, educated and illiterate are for changes in the exercise of Church discipline. This is because sometimes some decisions made by Church leaders have affected those who are innocent. A good example is the denial of baptising a child born outside of wedlock until the mother has mentioned the name of the father, is not a fair action with regards to the child. Hans Mwakabana in his Doctoral thesis "The Life and work of the Lutheran Church in Urban Tanzania with special reference to Iringa" sees the danger of exercising Church discipline by stating that:

Ridicule and shame seem to be the basis of Church discipline. The most possible outcome of this is creation of double morality standard by accustoming Church members to the idea that sin is that misconduct which is seen by others. Another result is that when the Church ceases to be a place where sinners can

come for help and comfort, its Church members may be driven away rather than attracted to it. (1982: 182)

The researcher in this dissertation observed that counselling had been neglected until the time when the backsliders approached the pastors requesting to be readmitted. As a result in some of the parishes pastors have used the practice of Church discipline as a punishment of the offenders.

The case of blessing an elopement marriage (*okulehya*) has been dealt with in different ways by the pastors. The reason behind this contradiction seems to be the Government law which regards these unions as legal after two years.

The Church on the other hand still insists the couple should be blessed in the Church. A good example is that of the *Kanisa Kuu* (Cathedral) congregation when, on 18/12/97 about thirty eight marriages were blessed in the Church and thereafter those parishioners were readmitted. It was also observed that this practice has caused problems when conflict arises within the first two years because one or both partners may refuse reconciliation on the basis that they are not married. Other pastors insisted upon blessing the union immediately after readmission in order to avoid the intermediary period of the couple being readmitted but not married.

It was also observed that in some parishes the regulations in the Constitution concerning issues of Church discipline are not followed properly. This practice has caused some confusion among the parishioners. In order to tackle this problem, the North Western Diocese has arranged to hold various meetings of all pastors (pastors' conference) at least once per year under the leadership of the Bishop. Here the pastors are reminded to be consistent in exercising Church discipline so as to prevent misunderstandings among the parishioners.

Some of my interviewees suggested that the procedure of burial attributed to

parishioners under Church discipline who die before being readmitted is an effective means of discipline. Some of the informants thought that this measure is more effective than suspension from the Holy Communion, while others view both measures as equally strong. From the findings of this research it can thus be said that suspension from Holy Communion and the non-Christian burial are effective measures in the exercise of Church discipline in the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

It is my thesis that the person who disciplines himself must also face himself. He will always struggle to eliminate the blockages to his or her freedom so that he or she may acquire the power to reach his or her goals. Therefore, discipline is a commitment to learning, it is an exercise in freedom. We need discipline in order to challenge our defensive patterns of behaviour in understanding ourselves and others and in knowing and learning to be responsive. God has no other way of forgiving sins than through His Word. We need to teach our parishioners to recognize their sins and therefore to repent. Catechetical classes should be encouraged in our congregations. Parishioners of all levels should be involved in these teachings. For this matter, it is better for the Church to equip itself with the word of God and experience its truth about the unfailing faithfulness of God. The Church needs to use the "Keys" that bind her members. Easy care of souls is worthless, and that kind of care is to be doubted. There is no care of souls without training and discipline. If the Church knows this, it will practice it so that the children of the Church may rejoice and increase.

6.2. Why Church Discipline?

. Firstly, Church discipline helps Church members not to follow the ways of others who have gone astray and to show the difference between the Christians and non-Christians.

. Secondly, Church discipline which is directed toward helping the backslider parishioner to become conscious of his or her need for repentance, should continue to be practised in the North Western Diocese.

. Thirdly, it must be clearly noted that Church discipline should not be understood as meaning judgement, but it should be understood as an attempt to encourage the backslider back into the fold.

. Fourthly, Church discipline should persist because I have come across some parishioners who believed that "once saved, always saved". These parishioners should be made to feel that a Christian life is not static. There are a lot of ups and downs, failings and risings. Therefore repentance and forgiveness are needed in the life of a Christian.

. Fifth, although Church discipline is necessary to guide the person back to the Church, more necessary is the process of care and counselling by pastors; we learn by our mistakes.

6.3. The Family and Family Education

All in all, the question of Church discipline must be seen in close relationship to the question of marriage. What the Church needs today is a positive message about marriage. The Church should put much emphasis on the importance of the family. The family has a central role in community building, it has a right to live in relationship with the larger community and participate in the community, it also relates to the world because everything in the community begins from the family, to the community, and the world. The family is instrumental in shaping the wishes and the lives of individuals, it is an educational institution, "a school of living" for informal education. It is the basis for decision making. It interprets and inculcates values, such as the meaning of faith, love, forgiveness and relationships with other people of God.

However today many families have moved into crisis. Factors such as economic, political and social-cultural have contributed to family crisis.

1. Economic Problems: The introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) has brought untold misery to our families because of unemployment, salary cuts and retrenchment. Many families are suffering from poverty and hunger. This has resulted in divorce in many families.
2. Social Problems: Today we can notice that broken social values have affected marriage. The lack of discipline in the family, the sharp rise in illegitimate births, increasing extra marital relationships and individualism have resulted in the breakdown in marriages. As a result we have street children, homeless people roaming around the streets, prostitutes and so forth. These people are subjected to physical burden and psychological shocks which deprive them of their innocence.
3. Political Problems: The political situation in most African countries has an adverse effect on the family. Government policies often oppress people which lead to rebellious reactions, resulting in civil wars, refugee problems, orphans, street children, separated families, prostitution, disease and so forth.

In order to tackle these problems, the Church should :

- . Encourage families to be economically viable by establishing different projects.
- . Embark on family education embracing counselling programmes.
- . The Church in collaboration with other Non-Governmental Organizations should seek possibilities for the protection of human rights in practice as well as in theory.
- . The Church should collaborate with other organizations who are

working with street children to alleviate this issue.

The Church should give more time on research and documentation on family life.

Above all, the Church should focus on the importance of family education. It is obvious that premarital, marital and family education and counselling are crucially needed in the North Western Diocese (NWD) and other dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

It is our understanding that every pastor or counsellor is expected to give instructions on Christian marriage to "boys and girls" separately who are not yet engaged, as well as to engaged couples. We should encourage parents and teachers to undertake similar duties in their respective places.

Dr. Sebastian K. Lutahoire cites Stewart who portrays that the goals of marital education and counselling are to try to:

1. Reopen the couple's communication life by plugging up the holes in marital relationships which may later lead to a real "burst in the dikes" of the concerned personalities.
2. Help husbands and wives work out solutions to their problems to the advantage of each other both interpersonally and legally.
3. Help married men and women to adjust to certain situations in the marriage which cannot be changed including each other's character traits. A pastor should remember that marriage counselling tends to be of the supportive, sustaining type.

4. Help husband and wife explore personal expectations for each other. A pastor should help the partners to develop a sense of marital growth, stressing that love grows in an atmosphere of mutuality when the other is valued as much or even more than the self.
5. Help husband and wife to understand his or her role in marriage. Hence, husband and wife would be enabled to understand each other's role image and role relations. (1974: 118-119)

6.4. Recommendations and Advice

It has happened that the North Western Diocese has used Church discipline to harm people instead of helping them to find the right way to follow. The task of the Church should be to call the sinner to repentance. Pastors should have compassion on the weakness of others and feel sorry for their sins. As a pastor I experienced a great deal of empathy for the parishioners I was counselling. But at the same time, the diocese cannot tolerate open sin. When the sinner remains impenitent, he or she has to be under Church discipline. Therefore, on the whole issues of Church discipline, I would like to suggest the following:

1. Private confession should be settled by the pastor privately, this should be between the pastor and the confessor and God alone. In the case of open sin where it is felt that exclusion is possible, a fallen parishioner should be invited before the pastor and very few Church elders (not the whole council) and be notified of his or her stand in the Church. It should not be announced before the Church.

Thus P.G. Lindhardt suggests that it is practically agreed within the Lutheran Church that Church discipline must be exercised by the Word of God alone, that it is not humanly possible to judge, and that therefore all judgement must be left to God. Church discipline can

be exercised only through the proclamation of the Gospel and its power over the consciences of people. Perhaps the Churches and especially the local congregations will learn that better than "disciplining" the Church members who have committed sins by expelling or otherwise punishing them, would be to "discipline" their members young and old in the sense of training them for intelligent and whole-hearted participation in the life of the Church. (1965: 509) Therefore, termination or exclusion of parishioners in the Church should be a grave matter. The aim of the Church should be to bring back the fallen brother or sister into the Church.

2. The aim of the Church is to help the backsliders and not to punish them. Pastors and Church leaders should not act as policemen or judges in the Church. Punishment such as exclusion from the Holy Communion or paying fines (money or manual work) should be avoided. Here the question facing the Church is this. Who is supposed to partake of the Holy Communion? We get the answer from the Large Catechism of Martin Luther that "It is he who believes what the words says and what they give, for they are not spoken or preached to stone and wood but to those who hear them, those to whom Christ says "take and eat" (Tappert, 1959: 450). It is encouraged that Christians should not absent themselves from receiving Holy Communion even though in other respects they are weak and frail. This is a great challenge to the North Western Diocese and other Dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania where parishioners under Church discipline are not allowed to celebrate the Holy Communion.

Biblically, when we read 1Cor.11: 29 we do not find "unworthy" as an attribute of the communicants but we find "unworthily" as an adverb modifying the verb "to eat". "Unworthily" means to gulp down the Lord's Supper like an ordinary meal taking no notice of the fact that the Lord is offering himself in the Supper in a special manner. Worthily means to know oneself to be unworthy to meet the Lord. Therefore the exclusion of repentant sinners from the Holy Communion is unbiblical.

It might be theologically questionable when we connect Church discipline and the

Lord's Supper. The theological basis for refusing Holy Communion as a punishment for sin must be re-examined. Perhaps some other means can be found to make a stubborn sinner realize the danger he or she is in. The task of the Church is to visit, counsel and persuade each parishioner under Church discipline in order that some may be won back. There is a frontier of hatred and prejudice due to a pietistic emphasis which must be crossed in the Church's own life before some of these parishioners under Church discipline can be reached.

Therefore it is my suggestion that the Church should open the way to invite all parishioners to celebrate the Lord's Supper. It will be the task of the communicant to re-examine if he or she is worthy or unworthy to partake the Holy Communion.

3. Church discipline may vary with individual situations, conditions and changes with the development of the Church. This problem should, therefore, be open to frequent review in order that such discipline may at all times be of spiritual value to the Church and a blessing to its members.

4. Although we have seen that polygamy is an accepted marriage in some societies in the world, as Christians we need to put much emphasis on the teachings of the New Testament, because Christ's teachings on marriage have a new element which challenges both the Jewish and African traditions. Both spouses are equal partners and as such responsible one to another as they are bound together in a covenant of fidelity, unity and permanence.

5. Another field which requires the Church's involvement is that of finding something to occupy unmarried women, especially those who leave a polygamous marriage because of their decision to follow Christ. It is also my opinion that we should not prevent a polygamist from being baptized if he is called from paganism while in that condition. Then, before receiving full Holy Communion he might be brought to spiritual maturity and thus eliminate a number of his wives. This would give him more time for fuller service in the

Church and help him gain a real genuine relationship with his wife which can only be attained in a monogamous marriage. In the way of prevention, it would help many parishioners to avoid marrying more than one woman if they would learn to respect women instead of thinking of them as if they were only for sexual enjoyment. The Church should help them to see that just as they would not like to have their own sisters misused, they should not misuse other women.

What can be said about divorce? On which precepts do we base our judgement? When a man and wife have reached a stage of living like enemies and are indulging in superstition then what right have we to force them to stay together? My suggestion is that the best would be that after divorce the party wishing to stay in the Church should be given a chance to make a new beginning provided forgiveness of love has been accepted in penitence.

6. The funeral should be viewed as a worship service of the community, yet also as a part of the pastoral care process. Its goals are to affirm the reality and finality of the physical death of the person, to encourage remembering and sharing of memories, to facilitate the identification and expression of feelings, to bind persons to one another in the community, to provide conditions and resources which may assist growth in faith and hope and to celebrate the life of the deceased before God in that context of appropriate religious meanings and ritual expressions.

For the above mentioned emphasis, the North Western Diocese has made a mistake to not preach the word of God at the funeral of a parishioner who dies under Church discipline. We have to bear in mind that the word of God preached at the funeral is not for the dead body but for the living ones. Therefore, I suggest that the word of God should be preached and the Church should conduct the Christian burial to a parishioner who has died under Church discipline. By so doing, the Church will show her witness and bear her faith and hope in this situation of grief.

On the other hand, I suggest the following recommendations and advice to be taken

into consideration by the North Western Diocese:

(1) All cases of parishioners under Church discipline should not take a long time to be solved. Cases should be solved at the Parish level instead of using the present procedures, with the case starting at the Congregation, going to the Parish, District, and finally to the Synod for the final decision.

(2) Some revisions in the constitution of the North Western Diocese are however necessary in order to make it correspond to the present situation and to the Bible teachings. For example, most of the parishioners in the North Western Diocese have been under Church discipline because they have broken the sixth commandment. The Church has used this commandment to punish Christians. But what about the other commandments? The most important thing is that the Church itself must admit and repent when it finds itself in error, for if it does not correct itself, it may completely lose its identity.

(3) Pastors need to be more thoroughly trained in psychology, philosophy and pastoral care and counselling. These subjects should be taught intensively at our Theological Colleges at Makumira, Mwika, Ruhija and Iringa.

Finally, our parishioners need to understand that when Christ calls, the disciple follows. This means that grace and commandment are in one. Only he or she who believes is obedient, likewise he or she who is obedient believes. Therefore, parishioners under Church discipline have a great task to leave their wrongdoings in order to be good followers of Christ and his Church.

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Appendix 1: The Dioceses of the ELCT and their Members - 1997/98

<u>DIOCESE</u>	<u>MEMBERS</u>	
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>
1. Dayosisi ya Mkoani Arusha (Arusha Diocese) P.O. Box 519 Arusha Telex 42054 LuttaTz, Fax (057) 8226	382,584	382,534
2. Dayosisi ya Meru (Meru Diocese) P.O. Box 96 Usa River, Arusha Phone 56/136 Usa River.	63,578	63,578
3. Dayosisi ya Kaskazini (Northern Diocese) P.O. Box 195 Moshi, Tel. (055)54359/60 Fax (055) 40144	304,976	304,976
4. Dayosisi ya Pare (Pare Diocese) P.O. Box 22 Same Moshi.	85,757	85,757
5. Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Mashariki (North Eastern Diocese), P.O. Box 10 Lushoto, Phone 27 Lushoto	92,884	92,884
6. Dayosisi ya Mashariki na Pwani (Diocese of East Coast), P.O. Box 837 Dar Es Salaam, Phone (051) 113246 Fax (051) 44866	51,276	50,805

7.	Dayosisi ya Ulanga Kilombero (Diocese of Ulanga Kilombero) P.O. Box 194, Ifakara-Morogoro.	23,178	23,178
8.	Dayosisi ya Kusini (Southern Diocese), P.O.Box 97 Njombe, Phone (063) 22032 Fax (063) 22032	197,520	197,520
9.	Dayosisi ya Kusini Kati (Diocese of the South Central) P.O. Box 53, Bulongwa-Njombe.	42,296	42,296
10.	Dayosisi ya Iringa (Iringa Diocese) P.O. Box 511 Iringa, Phone 2473, Telex 52070	59,036	67,518
11.	Dayosisi ya Kusini Magharibi (Diocese of The South West) P.O. Box Matamba via 130 Chimala	27,693	27,693
12.	Dayosisi ya Konde (Konde Diocese) P.O. Box 445 Tukuyu, Phone 2006 STD 06858, Fax (225) 6582298	67,765	70,722
13.	Dayosisi ya Kati (Central Diocese) P.O. Box 100 Singida, Phone 2061, Telex 44002.	86,110	86,110

14.	Dayosisi ya Dodoma (Dodoma Diocese) P.O. Box 1681 Dodoma, Phone 22800 Fax (061) 24137	14,564	14,584
15.	Dayosisi ya Karagwe (Karagwe Diocese) P.O. Box 7 Karagwe, Phone 73, Telegram Luth-Karad	64,738	67,549
16.	Dayosisi ya Kaskazini Magharibi (North Western Diocese) P.O. Box 98 Bukoba, Telegram: EVANGEL, Phone (066) 20027, Telex 58387 ELCT TZ Fax (255) 066 20954	135,656	135,656
17.	Dayosisi ya Mashariki ya Ziwa Victoria (Diocese of East of Lake Victoria) P.O. Box 423 Mwanza, Phone 3322, 3315	33,412	33,412
18.	Dayosisi ya Mkoani Mara (Mara Diocese), P.O. Box 396 Musoma Phone 2836; 2541, Fax 255 0675 2836	10,781	11,624
19.	Dayosisi ya Mbulu (Mbulu Diocese) P.O. Box 16 Mbulu, Phone 59 Mbulu	36,047	37,773
20.	Dayosisi ya Morogoro (Morogoro Diocese) P.O. Box 564 Morogoro, Phone 3519	19,057	19,057

Source: From the ELCT-Bible Calendar, 1997 and 1998.

Appendix 2: List of Interviewees

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
1.	* Balla	Katobago	29/12/1996
2.	* Betty	Itongo	28/12/1997
3.	Bijango, D.	Mwemage	05/12/1996
4.	* Boma	Kitaaba	11/01/1997
5.	Bugulano Joel	Kanyinya	17/01/1997
6.	Bushenda Thadeo	Kanyinya	28/12/1996
7.	* Clement	Bukoba	15/12/1997
8.	* Grey	Muhutwe	13/12/1997
9.	Kagemulo Rohoza	Ibuga	19/12/1997
10.	KaKende Mashankala	Kanyinya	10/01/1997
11.	* Kakwi	Kanyinya	10/01/1998
12.	* Kalikwendwa	Ilemera	23/01/1998
13.	Kamalweki Paulo	Ilemera	09/01/1998
14.	Kihandiko Sospater	Ilemera	22/01/1998
15.	* Kokugonza	Kanyinya	10/01/1998
16.	* Lilly	Ibuga	12/01/1997
17.	Lugayana Jackson	Makumira	23/01/1998
18.	Lutosha Mathia	Kafunjo	14/02/1998
19.	Lwankomezi Lemmy	Makumira	23/01/1998
20.	Lweyongeza Joseph	Itongo	02/02/1998
21.	Lwezaula Nixon	Makumira	23/01/1998
22.	Misilimbo Robert	Kitahya	21/12/1997
23.	* Mukama	Nyabugera	1988
24.	Ngabona Ronny	Kanazi	02/11/1996 & 22/12/1997
25.	* Pastory	Bukoba	02/02/1997

26.	* Patrick	Katobago	10/01/1997
27.	* Sari	Ibuga	12/01/1997
28.	Yustace Kagombola	Buganda	1991

* Indicates that some names have been changed and, as necessary, situations modified to protect the privacy of the individual described.

Appendix 3: Number of Parishioners under Church discipline received back into the Church in the North Western Diocese - 1988/1989 and 1994/1995

District	1988/89	1994/95
1. Bukoba	48	68
2. Biharamulo	-	804
3. Mashariki (Eastern District)	170	652
4. Magharibi (Western District)	544	488
5. Kati (Central District)	263	355
6. Kaskazini A (Northern A)	173	542
7. Kaskazini B (Northern B)	81	250
8. Kusini A (Southern A)	-	728
9. Kusini B (Southern B)	227	291

NOTE: Blank spaces means no reports were given.

Source: Ripoti Askofu (Bishop's Report to the General Assembly of the Diocese (Synod) - Ntoma, August, 1990 and Bukoba, June, 1996.

Appendix 4: Interview Questions

A: Questions for Lay Parishioners under Church Discipline.

1. Why were you put under Church discipline?
2. As a Christian, how do you feel to be under Church discipline?
3. What do you think the Church should do for you?
4. Should the Church offer Christian burial service to parishioners under Church discipline? If yes, why? If no, why not?

B: Questions for Clergy (Pastors)

1. How do you deal with your parishioners who are under Church discipline in your parish?
2. For what reason is a parishioner placed under Church discipline?
3. What is your opinion concerning the whole issue of Church discipline in the Church today?
4. What is the role of the Church to the parishioners under Church discipline?
5. Should the Church offer Christian burial to parishioners under Church discipline? Explain.

C: Questions to the Bereaved persons whose relatives died under Church discipline

1. How did you feel when the Church refused to offer a Christian burial service to your relative who died under Church discipline?
2. What is your opinion concerning the whole issue of the denial of Christian burial to parishioners under Church discipline?
3. Should the Church offer Christian burial service to parishioners under Church discipline? Explain.

D. Questions to a traditionalist (polygamist)

1. Could you please explain to me the practice of polygamy among the Haya tribe?
2. Are you ready to leave your other wives and to remain with one in order to be baptized and therefore become a Christian member in our Church?