

**INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE COUNSELLING IN SOUTH
AFRICA**

**Towards a Counselling Model for Inter-religious Couples: A
Christian Perspective**

By

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DECLARATION

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Hereby declare that the Thesis entitled:

Inter-religious Marriage Counselling in South Africa: Towards a Counselling Model for Inter-religious Couples: A Christian Perspective

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or any other university.

Signature

Date

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ABSTRACT

The research is on inter-religious marriage and counselling from a Christian perspective. Although religious intolerance and resistance to inter-religious and inter-faith marriages exist in society, it appears that inter-religious marriages are on the increase. Since couples in inter-religious marriage experience more challenges than couples from the same religion, it is necessary to develop an integrated counselling model that may be used to counsel such couples.

In view of this, skilful counsellors and appropriate counselling are needed. The research will focus on the transformation process in South Africa; the dynamics of the family; religion and culture; the dynamics of marriage; the conceptualizing of inter-religious marriages and its challenges; the understanding of the influence of Christianity upon inter-religious marriages; the different counselling theories; and the nature of a relevant integrated counselling model for inter-religious marriages.

The transformation process had caused a huge impact in South Africa religiously and culturally. The communication across religions and cultures have opened up, hence the increase in inter-religious relationships and marriages.

The major religions of the world hold different views concerning inter-religious marriages. Christianity, Islam and Hinduism prohibit inter-religious marriages to various degrees. Despite the restrictions inter-religious, interfaith and inter-cultural marriages still do take place. Christianity allows inter-religious under certain conditions and also inter-cultural marriages if the partners are Christians.

All inter-religious marriages pose new challenges, especially when it concerns the religious traditions and cultural issues. Most couples possess a limited ability to find solutions to these challenges. They are, therefore, often unable to cope in these situations – to reach compromises and amicably deal with their challenges. In view of this, a counsellor is required to assist.

Appropriate counselling is needed in inter-religious marriages. The counsellor needs to be skilful in order to intervene in these marriages. Therefore, different counselling elements are examined in order to create a relevant integrated Psycho-spiritual counselling model for inter-religious marriages.

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CHAPTER ONE

NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“A quiet revolution is sweeping the world as millions defy ancient taboos to form intimate relationships with partners from other religious backgrounds” (Crohn 1995:3). South Africa is not excluded from this revolution. Notwithstanding that there existed inter-religious and inter-cultural relationships and intermarriages prior to 1994, the new democratic South Africa by encouraging the religious freedom, cultural and racial tolerance, opened the doors to inter-religious relationships resulting in inter-religious marriages.

Informal discussions and interviews with a Muslim community counsellor and also discussions with Christian counsellors have revealed that there has been an increase in inter-religious marriage relationships, and couples are indeed exposed to many inter-religious challenges. Women especially are faced with many challenges in these relationships. A typical counselling approach is insufficient to meet the needs of inter-religious relationships. Therefore, the research seeks to identify and adapt a counselling model that would be relevant to deal with challenges experienced by couples of inter-religious marriages. The discussion with the community counsellor (refer to chapter 7) motivated this research and to the endeavor to develop a counselling model that would consider inter-marriages and more so inter-religious marriage relationships.

During the past two decades, South Africa has experienced a transformation process. One of the changes of this process has resulted in the dismantling of the Apartheid marriage Acts, which gave people the freedom of choice of a spouse (Act 108 of 1996: section 8 - 9). This freedom exposed people to engage in inter-religious marriage relationships. It is no longer apartheid but the religious affiliations and their traditional value systems that are responsible for the dynamics in inter-religious marriage relationships (Marriage Act 25 of 1961).

Three major religions of the world (namely, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam), which hold different views on marriage, their religious affiliations and traditional value systems in relation to marriage, will be researched. In the South African context, the African Traditional Religions could

also be included in the research but the focus is the Major religions of the world that are practiced in South Africa. Although this research is based on a Christian perspective, it is important to understand the fundamental truths pertaining to marriage and family concerning the three major religions. In principle the religions do not consent to inter-religious marriages. In general, the policy in Islam is that marriage within the religion has to be practiced and not compromised (‘Abd al ‘Ati 1977:137). In the Talmud (Jewish civil and ceremonial law), an inter-faith marriage was disallowed. God instructed the Israelites in Exodus (34: 12-16) not to take wives for their sons from foreign religions. Also in Deuteronomy (7: 1-4) God warns the Israelites not to inter-marry or give their daughters to men of other religions as they would be enticed to serve foreign gods and not serve Him – God was concerned that other faiths would defile his people. However, people chose to disobey God and entered into relationships outside the faith (Nehemiah 13: 25-27; Malachi 2:11). In the New Testament, 11 Corinthians (6:14-15), the Apostle Paul exhorts the early Christians by instructing that: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... what communion hath light with darkness.” This text not only refers to the believer’s relationship with unbelievers and their way of serving God, but also that believers should not compromise the faith and the Biblical standards of living for God. It also gives guidance to those who wish to marry or seek a partner. The Bible states clearly that a Christian is not to marry an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7: 39; 1 Corinthian 7: 12-14).

The religious doctrines and God’s blueprint for marriage including the preceding Biblical texts impact on mate selection and marriage relationships, especially inter-religious marriages.

It is a reality that Christians inevitably participate in inter-religious relationships, which brings with it many challenges. One of the challenges is the faith or religious issue, especially when the partners practice two faiths. The observance of religious traditions can cause intense conflict if not addressed with compromise and maturity. The couple has to make serious responsible decisions to ensure that peace and harmony is sustained in the family and to make the marriage work. The couple has to also contend with external pressure, especially from their immediate families, with the raising of children (identity concerns), practice of rituals and ceremonious activities (which holidays or rituals to observe).

Family, religion and culture play a vital role in inter-religious marriages and its implications cannot be ignored. However, when the religions of the two partners match, the faith issues may not be at

the forefront of the relationship. For many though, religious or faith issues (Christianity, Hinduism and Islam) are truly obstacles or bottlenecks to inter-religious marriages. In the initial flush of a romance, couples hardly give a thought about religious differences, but this is realized when problems are confronted during the marriage and when children are born, in terms of which faith to follow. This is when the choice of faith to practice is discussed. The conversion to a new faith brings with it identity issues and adjustment. Hence, marriage does not come without challenges or hardships for inter-religious married couples. In sensitive areas like relationship and marriage, one has to consider religion because the cultural upbringing and one's belief system are important in understanding a person (Aamanchi 1994 – 2003: 5). Failure to cope with and overcome these challenges will result in a dysfunctional family and hence an unhappy, unfulfilled marriage or ultimately, a divorce.

In order to assist couples of inter-religious marriages to overcome their challenges, an assessment of current counselling structures and methods is necessary to determine whether it would be relevant to deal with certain faith issues or conflicts, even in pre-marital counselling. Since the dominant model of Pastoral counselling is not sufficient as it usually draws only on Christian traditions, a new model would take into consideration how to approach issues of other faiths, like Hinduism and Islam. Therefore, in order to be effective counsellors, relevant counselling models and theories need to be critically examined and employed. Finally, in view of the fact that inter-religious marriage conflicts and challenges are complex in nature, a single counselling model will not suffice and a Psycho-Spiritual Integrated counselling model is recommended.

The objectives and key issues to be addressed are clearly indicated in this chapter. The theoretical framework overview is disclosed to guide and give direction to the psycho-spiritual approach to be used to develop an inter-religious marriage counselling model. Psychological counselling theories are integrated with Biblical spirituality.

This chapter concludes with a brief synopsis of the eight chapters to follow. To proceed with the developing of an inter-religious marriage counselling model, a survey of available literature and research will be discussed, followed by an understanding of the current South African context. Concepts such as of family, religion, culture, marriage and inter-religious marriages will be considered. The challenges and the empirical research, Biblical doctrines, counselling theories and

models, a discovery of an inter-religious counselling model and finally the recommendations, will be discussed.

1.2 CONTEXT

South African society is a complex one with a total population of 54 million, comprising Indians (1,341,900), Whites (4,554,800), Blacks (43,333,700) and Coloureds (4,771,500) (<http://beta.statsa.gov.za/2014.pdf>). Each has its own set of religious and ethnic identities with varying degrees of value and normative systems. These run across racial groups. Even within certain faiths there are sets of values and normative systems. The ethnic communities are culturally complex. Hindus, Muslims and Christians also differ in so far as the institution of marriage, family, religious norms and faith traditions are concerned. There may be other differences, but the research will focus on those that are most relevant to the faith issues.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the so-called 'Rainbow nation,' has been experiencing a transformation (changes in the political and social landscape). With it came a drastic increase in inter-religious relationships. Mixed marriages are more complicated relationships than those between people from similar backgrounds. It has become not so easy to maintain a sense of group identity in a culturally diverse society that is exposed to change (Crohn 1995:24). A marriage where there are similarities between the backgrounds of the partners has a greater chance to succeed. Naomi Schaeffer Riley (2013) indicated that before 1960, 20 % of married couples were of interfaith marriages which included inter-religious marriages of Muslim Americans (40 % were below 25 years and 56 % were above 56 years). She also in her research "Till Faith Do Us Part", discusses the fact that inter-faith couples are less satisfied than the same faith marriages - 61 % end in divorce (<http://www.nytimes.com/2013>). Kamruzzaman (2016) indicated that marriages of different religion was recognized in Bangladesh under Act 3 of 1872. According Kapadia (1966), statistics in India reveal that 51 % of parents agree to inter-caste marriages. Also general articles on inter-faith marriages reveal that 2 out of every 3 married couples separate due to inter-faith challenges (cf. Kamruzzaman (2016); <http://www.sundaystandards.info/2013>; <http://www.christiantoday.com/2012/htm>). For some faith relationships this means that the following are important: The same religious background; similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds; comparable economic levels; equal educational advantages; and stable home situations. These can however not be generalized for inter-religious marriages.

1.3 MOTIVATION

Although I have had the exposure to marriage counselling in the Full Gospel Church for approximately twenty-five years, I realize that there is still a lack of knowledge in counselling techniques for international religious marriages, even marriages of same religion. As a minister, I have counselled many married couples who have experienced severe conflicts; many of these marriages were inter-religious marriages. It was often established during counselling sessions that the couple brought into their marriage unresolved pre-marital problems and conflicts. In addition, traditional and cultural issues may cause severe tension, stress, pressure, and conflict between the married couple and their families. If no compromise has been reached, these marriages are often characterized by severe unhappiness or end in divorce, but not always. As a Christian counsellor, I have become concerned to witness couples in such unions while they are uninformed about the religious and cultural dissonance weighing in on their relationships. On the one hand, such couples need to be counselled about these facts before marriage and on the other hand, in cases where they are already married, they should learn about one another's culture, or learn to respect and honour the other's religion and culture.

This research was also inspired by the informal interview (p230) conducted with a Muslim counsellor. She disclosed that she was born in England (White) with a Catholic upbringing. After marrying a Muslim in South Africa she converted from Catholicism to Islam. She also indicated that in her counselling sessions with new converts there are many religious issues and challenges that the couples have to face and need help to cope with. From this interview, it was discovered that there are many religious issues that need to be understood and considered during counselling especially when one converts to another religion. The understanding as to how the counsellor coped with the challenges of her own marriage, will contribute to the development of a counselling model for inter-religious marriage. The above interview will be discussed in detail under the empirical research findings in chapter 8.

I am motivated to find answers that cause individuals to engage in situations where they have these experiences. The reality is that many people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds do engage in relationships and ultimately marriages. I am motivated to research this phenomenon and how we being rational, religious and culturally committed people, can engage it. The ultimate reason is that we need to learn about being tolerant, and we need to face the challenges and to live

in peace and harmony, even as it concerns our most close associations. Therefore, there is a need to understand the prejudices and presuppositions involved in inter-religious relationships and especially marriages. Hence, the challenge is how we as human beings can, through our rational endeavour, find answers to conflict situations. When we understand our socio-cultural dynamics better, we can strive to find better-informed answers to our conflict situations. When this information is brought out in the open, we can also improve our counselling so that it is informed about the prejudices and assumptions of the beliefs we have been socialized into. In this study a number of counselling techniques and models will be examined and recommended for employment in marriage counselling. This may have a positive impact on marriages and families in South Africa.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Inter-religious married couples in South Africa experience not only religious issues but other cultural related challenges. These couples find it very difficult to cope with the situation and most of times if these issues are not resolved or understood, it leads to separation and ultimately divorce. The counselling structure that are available does not seem to address the religious, cultural and faith issues, mainly of Christians, Muslims and Hindus who are intermarried. This research endeavours to develop an inter-religious marriage counselling model, especially a Psycho-Spiritual Inter-religious Counselling Model which will aim to deal with the Psychological and spiritual problems of the Counsellee.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

- To give insight into marriage counselling theories and models.
- To understand the transformation process in South Africa: Cultural diversity and Marriage acts – and how it influenced inter-religious marriages.
- To understand the dynamics of family, religion and culture.
- To understand the dynamics of religious marriage.
- To conceptualize the term inter-religious marriage.
- To do an empirical study of the challenges experienced in inter-religious marriages.
- To develop a relevant marriage counselling model for counselling couples in an inter-religious marriage.

1.6 KEY QUESTIONS

- What are some of the available counselling theories and models that form the basis for counselling?
- How has the transformation process in South Africa influenced inter-faith inter-religious relationships and marriages?
- What are the basic views/beliefs/issues related to family, religion and culture?
- What are the religious perspectives/issues on marriage, especially inter-religious marriages?
- What are the empirical challenges/issues inter-religious couples face?
- What would be a relevant psycho-spiritual inter-religious marriage counselling model?

1.7 RESEARCH FOCUS

This research will focus mainly on inter-religious marriages among Hindus, Muslims and Christians in the new democratic South Africa. After understanding the problems/ faith issues of inter-religious marriages, effective marriage counselling techniques/models will be established from a Christian perspective, in conjunction with secular counselling theories and models based on a psycho-spiritual counselling approach.

1.7.1 Methodology

The theories that will be employed in this thesis will foster a critical understanding of existing texts and published documents on inter-religious marriages and counselling. Secondly, the research will critically examine existing counselling models with the aim of producing a psycho-spiritual integrated counselling model that will effectively serve inter-religious marriages – the use of secular psychological models with biblical pastoral care models. The existing data from religious texts pertaining to marriages will be analyzed hermeneutically. The empirical data will be retrieved through a qualitative empirical survey. The qualitative research will provide information on prevailing conditions and the problem issues. The available counselling models pertaining to inter-religious faith relationships or marriages have also not been fully investigated in the current South African dispensation, especially with regards to Hindu, Muslim and Christian relationships. A descriptive research approach portrays the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or

group accurately. According to Ranjith Kumar (n.d.: 12) “descriptive research precedes other types of research, because before progress can be made in solving certain problems, one needs to know the existing facts and prevailing conditions.” The focus is mainly on the gathering of facts and related conditions and circumstances. It seeks to discover cause and effect relationships and attempts to provide interpretations. Kumar states that “descriptive research attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, program, or provides information about, say, the living conditions of a community or describes attitudes towards an issue” (Kumar n.d.: 13). This provides guidance to the empirical research that was followed in this thesis.

1.7.2 Data Gathering

In the literature survey data will be retrieved (secondary data) from published books, books on religion, newspapers, journals, periodicals, websites and other pertinent sources pertaining to marriage counselling. The literature survey will also identify counselling models (Psycho-Spiritual dimension) pertaining to inter-religious marriages. Empirical research was carried out to investigate and explore inter-religious marriage relationships. The nature of data gathering will be discussed further in chapter 8.

A convenient research sample was selected for inter-religious marriages. The interviews and questionnaires targeted a selective convenient sample of 27 individuals who were identified and reside in South Africa. These respondents were referred by colleagues and they willingly volunteered to participate. The researcher wishes to state that, if these respondents had not been referred by colleagues, it would have been quite difficult to find suitable respondents who would have willingly agreed to be interviewed, since they would have to divulge personal and private information. Also, ordinary marriage counselling in itself is of a sensitive nature. Interviews and counselling of inter-religious marriages would be even more so.

Some of the interviewees reside in the North West Province, Gauteng and others in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. However, since I worked in the North West Province, I engaged with officials at work who were involved in an inter-religious and inter-cultural relationships and some of them were still living together and some were living apart due to parents not consenting to the relationship. The choice of Gauteng Province was influenced by the fact that my niece lived there and she was in an inter-cultural marriage relationship and later divorced, though the partners were Christian

Indian and White (same faith). Since the focus of this thesis is on Hindus, Muslims and Christians, most of the marriages are from these religions. Interviews were done via e-mail and telephonic contact. However, some of the individuals were from inter-cultural marriages, especially marriages and relationships between White and Coloured and also between African and Coloured. Initially some of the individuals were reluctant to co-operate, but through much persuasion and the assurance of confidentiality, they consented to be interviewed or complete the questionnaire. Ethical clearance was received from the institution of Religious studies via the Supervisor and the Dean of the faculty.

1.7.3 Validity and Reliability

Data was collected from as much available material relevant to the topic as possible and preferably related to a South Africa context.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The philosopher Aristotle (ca. 384 – 322 B.C.) believed that human behaviour was subject to rules and laws, just as are the movements of the stars and seas (Wallace 1882: 14; <http://www.openlibraryarchives.org/peripsyches/2012>). In his works *Peri Psyches*, Aristotle considered personality, sensation and perception, thought, intelligence, needs and motives, feelings and emotion, and memory (Allport 1936: 47).

When conducting therapy or counselling, an essential goal is to assist clients to learn to know themselves. In Spencer's (1990: 8) discussion, he refers to Socrates' advice to Plato (427-347 B.C.) which was "to know yourself." "Socrates mentions that the senses provide imperfect knowledge. He suggested that we should rely on processes such as rational thoughts and introspection to achieve self-knowledge" (cited by Spencer 1990: 8). Wilhelm Wundt used the method of introspection to try to discover the basic elements of experience (Bem 1972: 151).

Wolfgang Köhler (1925: 14) demonstrated that much learning, especially in learning to solve problems, is accomplished by insight, not by mechanical repetition. According to Guilford and Hoepfner (1971: 278), creativity and creative thinking is the ability to generate novel solutions to problems.

Freud's psychodynamic theory (the word 'dynamic' comes from the Greek *dynamis*, meaning "power") proposes that the motion of underlying forces of personality determines our thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Freud 1973: 141; 1976: 769). The unconscious proper contains repressed material (thoughts, feelings and facts) that are not admissible to the consciousness. Psychoanalysis is used to draw out this material. In dreams preconscious material can normally pass into consciousness without the assistance of a therapist (Frankl 1955: 22). This is the area of the mind that is aware of mental events such as thoughts, feelings and facts. Psychoanalysis aims to help patients gain insight into many of their deep-seated conflicts and find socially acceptable ways of expressing wishes and gratifying needs (cf. Spencer 1990: 14, 525; Koss et al. 1986).

Like Rogers' person-centered approach, Pearls aims to help individuals integrate conflicting parts of the personality. The clients were assisted to understand the inner conflicts experienced, accept that it exists instead of blocking off the feelings, and to choose fruitful choices against the presence of weaknesses and anxiety. Although Pearls' ideas owe much to the psychodynamic theory, his form of therapy, unlike psychoanalysis, focuses on the here and now. Like Carl Rogers, Pearls also believe that people are free to make choices and to direct their personal growth (cf. Garfield 1981: 174; Pearls 1969: 49).

Every person possesses the ability to cope successfully with problems, and will do so in a conducive emotional environment. The counsellor promotes a relationship with the clients to encourage and support the individual (Meier 1982). According to Macmillan (2002: 75), trust is nurtured in person-centered counselling with both counsellor and client, and that the client is guided towards the understanding that they have the ability to solve the problem within them. Their subjective self-concept is shaped by their understanding of themselves, and their self-motivation enables them to maintain self-growth, self-enhancement and to self-actualize. Individuals behave primarily in ways that will enhance their self-concept, i.e. the way they perceive themselves as human beings. Individuals start to develop a self-concept very early on in life, and many of the self-conceptions that form the self-concept are based on their own valuing process. A person's self-concept and the potential to actualize may not be in harmony or agreement because the person does not interpret the inner feelings and the experiences faced from the environment truthfully or realistically. Disturbed behaviour results when people perceive themselves to be behaving differently to the way they believe they should behave. This belief is

founded, often falsely, on the opinions and values of others (cf. Macmillan 2002:76; Pearls 1969: 50).

The research is guided by the client-centered approach, to eventually lead to the design of a psycho-spiritual integrated counselling model for marriage, especially inter-religious marriages. Egans (1994: 21-22) indicates that clients may request help for their crises, troubles, doubts, difficulties, frustrations, or concerns. People do have the innate ability to deal creatively with themselves and others though. Counsellors guide clients to empower themselves to draw out their potential to solve problems. One may encourage clients to take action, by nurturing self-efficacy, assertion or assertiveness – certain behaviours have an expected outcome and the client is encouraged to a point where they activate such behaviour in that they become confident to produce the expected outcome (cf. Bandura 1991; Galassi & Bruch 1992: 82; Locke & Latham 1990: 71). However, though the counselling approach of this research may mainly draw from psychological and sociological counselling theories or models, it needs to be enriched with a spiritual dimension to consider Christian married couples.

This research choose to use the theoretical framework from the Client- Centered Third Force model which uses not only psychotherapy but also Biblical spirituality together with the Rational Emotive therapy to develop a Psycho-Spiritual Inter-religious Counselling Model.

1.8.1 Reasons for Theory to Counsel Married Couples

Theories provide counsellors with a conceptual framework that enables them to think systematically about human development and their practice of counselling. This is vital because counsellors have to make decisions and choices about how to view clients' behaviour and how to respond to them (Macmillan 2002: 3).

Theories are important in providing the frameworks needed to make predictive hypotheses (Macmillan 2002: 4). Sue (1990: 5) indicated that theories are strongly influenced by culture, even more so in multicultural societies.

Having been influenced by the client-centered theories, a person has the potential to make decision for problem solving. Reasons will be discussed for having an integrated theory for Christian marriage counselling consistent with the Scriptures, and to draw from secular theories

of counselling models and integrate them into a Christian framework of counselling, especially biblical truths.

Three levels need to be considered in determining the theory: firstly, individual constructs. Secondly, the couple should be committed to making the marriage viable and productive (inputs and outputs) for the welfare of family life. Thirdly, the principles of marriage functioning should be typical of a family system. Mixed feelings (guilt) and differences that surface as conflict experienced in the marriage should be viewed from family history and transformed into output for family reconciliation and restoration (Worthington 1989: 18-20). Worthington continues to say that, for the techniques of the model to be clinically used, it should be simple, in order to ascertain significant change in a client. The techniques must be organized to be easily accessible for issues such as intimacy, communications, conflict, hurt, blame, sin, guilt and commitment.

1.8.2 The Theory or Model for Counselling

Howard Clinebell (1975:3), in his book, *Growth Counselling for Marriage Enrichment*, discusses many principles of marriage counselling. He provides suggestions to make a “good marriage better, to turn crises into opportunities for growth and inspire congregations of faith.” He introduces the human potential approach of counselling where people discover themselves and their possibilities. It provides methods to make full use of their hidden potentials: to develop communication skills with the self, the environment, others and even God; skills development; making constructive decisions and take responsible actions; using the painful challenges and crises as growth opportunities; and to learn new ways to experience spiritual growth.

Growth methods are hope centered counselling that assist people to change without ignoring the pain, conflict, and problems. Hence, people are assisted to cope constructively with problems and conflicts, thus instilling inner and spiritual hope. Clinebell’s (1975) theoretical foundation for growth counselling is embedded in psychology and psychotherapy which he refers to as the “third force” – the human potential, value-oriented approaches (psychoanalysis and behaviorism are referred to the first and second force). He indicates that new psychological needs or deficiencies (dislosed by psychotherapy) of security, love and self-esteem, may be turned around in order to experience sustained growth. This needs to draw on the unused potential of the client. This is useful in counselling problematic marriages, especially inter-religious marriages.

Clinebell (1975) further indicates that the growth-oriented psychotherapies may be integrated in counselling. The “third force” thinking is blended with growth counselling including psychology for family and marriage counselling and is referred to as the “fourth force.” In an attempt to make good marriages better, the writer makes available relationship building tools to develop skills to understand the inner-self through self-reflection, listening, develop confidence, to take risks, and to increase trust in others or partner including the growth of spiritual and physical intimacy, and to be successful in solving conflict. It is clear that Biblical truths, theology and beliefs are included with psychotherapy in marriage counselling, hence, further pointing towards the need for a psycho-spiritually based counselling model for marriage counselling, even inter-religious marriages. Clinebell’s counselling model is the theoretical point of departure towards a Psycho-Spiritual inter-religious marriage counselling model.

Additional counselling theories chosen to guide this research will be drawn from Psychodynamic counselling (Psychoanalysis and free association); Humanistic counselling (client-centered therapy – self-actualization); Cognitive behavioural counselling (Rational Emotive); and Existential counselling (Logotherapy) in conjunction with the spiritual dimension based on Biblical perspectives.

The key concept in Psychoanalysis is the unconscious mind, which is the prime motivator in determining human behaviour. Freud was strongly influenced by his study of dreams, the interpretation of which he saw as “the royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind” (Freud 1976: 1976). The unconscious proper contains repressed material (thoughts, feelings and facts) that is not admissible to consciousness. Psychoanalysis is used to draw out this material (memories of mental events). The conscious act has a sense organ for the perception of psychical qualities. Material becomes conscious by inner excitement or the external world (cf. Freud 1976: 769; Frankl 1955: 22; Macmillan 2002: 13). This is the area of the mind that is aware of mental events such as thoughts, feelings and facts. Through the use of psychoanalysis and free association the negative repressed feelings are discovered in clients.

The Client-Centered model is an active approach where problems and opportunities are explored, and goals are set to actively pursue them towards client-enhancing outcomes (Egan 1994: 21). According to Rogers the actualizing tendency is the basic motivating drive and is always operative. It is an active process that reflects the inherent tendency of all people to develop their

capacities in order to maintain, enhance and reproduce themselves. As long as certain definable conditions exist, people have the ability to regulate, guide and control themselves. Psychoanalysis clears the blockages that contribute to psychological problems and restrict self-actualization. “Emotional problems arise when there is an inconsistency between a person’s self-concept and his or her actual life experiences” (Rogers 1951: 76).

Rogers (1951) believed that tension, anxiety, and defensiveness interfere with basic human drives. If these forces can be reduced or relieved, a person can experience personal growth, health and adjustment. Neurotic individuals, according to Rogers, have lost sight of their own values and have taken on the values of others. The goal of client-centered therapy is to help people regain contact with their true feelings and values. Increased self-acceptance increases autonomy and reduces the destructive forces of anxiety; thus personal growth occurs. Reflection of client centered therapy would be a means to reflect underlying feelings and clarification may be able to defuse a potentially explosive situation.

Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) (Ellis 1988) hold the view that thought or cognition, emotions and behaviour are rarely if ever totally separable. Thoughts and emotion interact with behaviour in that individuals usually act on the basis of thoughts and emotions. Moreover their actions influence how they think and feel. Two beliefs are prevalent in a person and that is rational and irrational beliefs. If the individuals’ goals are hampered or blocked by an activating event they respond consciously or unconsciously, which results in appropriate or inappropriate consequences, both emotional and behavioural. The irrational beliefs must first become identified, secondly faced, and then thirdly replaced by more rational acceptable beliefs. Rational Emotive Therapy is active and directive. This school of thought operates on an A-B-C paradigm (Ellis 1988: 32-35):

“A” - refers to events in a person’s life;

“B” - refers to a person’s thoughts about event “A”; and

“C”- refers to a person’s emotions and behaviour as a result of “B”.

When a highly charged emotional consequence (C) follows an activating event (A), “A” may appear to cause “C”. Actually, however, emotional consequences are largely created by “B”, the individual’s belief system. The goal of therapy is to reduce a behaviour that defeats the self

and to help an individual understand and interpret the life's experiences in a more realistic way. "Pain may be alleviated in several ways, including diversion, satisfaction of demands, and convincing a person to give up certain attitudes. The individual is taught how to think - to separate rational from irrational beliefs" (Ellis. 1988: 34).

Logotherapy focuses on the meaning of human existence and humanity's search for finding meaning to life. Frankl (2006: 99) states that: "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a secondary rationalization of instinctual drives." It has been further defined that a person is responsible for his or her actions which he or she has initially consented to from within (<http://www.existentialanalysis.ca/2005>). It is a person-orientated psychotherapy that assists the client to understand and cope with his or her experiences and to responsibly face life mentally and emotionally (Frankl 1983: 1 - 5).

Wong (1997: 88 - 91) provides a breakdown of Logotherapy and points to three fundamental assumptions:

1. *The freedom of will* – that is to choose a positive attitude under any condition;
2. *The will to meaning* – there is always a primary motivation to discover meaning (make sense of human existence, to make sense of events, and to create meaning); and
3. *The meaning of life* – which is present in any situation. Wong uses Logotherapy with cognitive-behavioural processes to advance counselling that is Meaning-Centered.

Frankl maintains that human beings do not need a tensionless state or equilibrium but need to strive and struggle for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. As human beings solve the problems life brings to him, they find meaning to life and as such when life brings situations to them, we should not question but be responsible to act in finding solutions that will contribute and translate into meaning. The patients of logotherapy are not pressured into change but are left to make responsible decisions on their own (Frankl, 2006: 110). Frankl says that although human beings must realize and actualize full potential and meaning of life, they must discover it out in the world instead of looking within. Humans can discover meaning through creativity or doing a good deed; by experiences or encounters; and positive attitudes – even in hopeless situations one can find meaning in life just by a change of attitude. Only when a person removes the mistaken self analysis and behaviour, will progress be made in engaging in all life's activities and utilizing and actualizing the full potential to reach desired goals. What need to be realized is that human

experiences, especially the bad ones, are not irreversible but can be corrected, improved upon and not repeated in the future (cf. Frankl 2006: 110 – 115; Frankl 1983: 55 – 75); <http://www.existentialanalysis.ca/2005>).

The intense negative reactions of family and friends due to racism, prejudice, and ignorance to inter-marriage most definitely cause tension and strain the relationships (William 1993: 47). Anxiety, conflict and tension can creep into the lives of inter-faith married couples when they are forced to deal with religious differences with their diverse rituals and ceremonious activities.

These theories identified above address the core of the problems couples experience, negative thinking and behaviour, and attempt to direct the clients' possible solutions and eventually sustain meaning to their lives and marriage. Hence, from this theoretical framework the researcher will endeavour to formulate a psycho-spiritual inter-religious marriage counselling model which is ultimately the main objective of this thesis.

1.9 DEFINITIONS

1.9.1 Inter-religious Marriage

This refers to the marriages that occur between individuals that belong to different religions and where couples cross religious boundaries in selecting a partner.

According to Berghe (1997: 15) an inter-religious marriage consists of partners that have different religious affiliations. People experience diverse cultures through inter-religious religious practices which include customs, ceremonies, beliefs, behavior, observance of religious holidays and sustaining traditions.

1.9.2 Religion

According to Walsh (1998: 72), religion is defined as an, “organized belief system that includes shared and institutionalized moral values, beliefs about God, and involvement in religious community. Religion can be understood in terms of a social-level experience.”

1.9.3 Spirituality

The concept of spirituality and religion overlap, and can be used interchangeably in some instances. Spirituality is defined as, “an internal set of values – a sense of meaning, inner wholeness, and connection with others and God. Spirituality can be understood in terms of an individual-level experience” Walsh (1998: 72).

1.9.4 Culture

According to Paredes (1987: 31) “the concept of culture should not be confined to a group of people with privileged access to selected aspects of their culture.”

Culture is an integrated system of beliefs, of values, of customs and of institutions, which express (how people live out their lives) these beliefs, values and customs (religion and family), which bind society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity (*Willowbank Report* 1978: 7).

Lingenfelter and Mayers (1986: 6) define culture as “the conceptual design, the definitions by which people order their lives, interpret their experiences, and evaluate the behaviour of others.”

For the purpose of this research, the ethnographic and symbolic definition of culture will be employed. Idles (2002:1) indicates that “Culture” can be used to refer to (1) an entire way of life of a people or group; and (2) systems or patterns of shared symbols.

1.9.5 Counselling

Counselling refers to the process of helping people with common problems such as marriage and family difficulties. Like therapists counsellors also make use of conversational techniques (Meier 1982: 297). According to Meier (1982: 2) “Counselling is a facilitating process in which the counsellor, working within the framework of a special helping relationship, uses specific skills to assist people to help themselves more effectively.”

Kirwan (1984:41) defines counselling as a form of therapy derived from the non-directive counselling of Carl Rogers in which the clients are supported to gain insight into their problems and work on finding their own solutions. Narramore (1960:7) defines counselling as the utilization

by clergy of counselling and psychotherapeutic methods to enable individuals, couples and families to handle their personal crises and problems in living constructively.

1.9.6 Pastoral Counselling

According to Meier (1982: 299), a pastor practices pastoral counselling under the auspices of a church organization. He or she attempts to encourage and guide those who experience problems with the use of the Bible. The counsellor guides the client to nurture an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pastoral counselling is a more specialized part of pastoral care and involves helping individuals as they cope with the crises of life – this type of counselling is God-centered and based on Biblical teachings (Clinebell 1966:8). Kirwan (1984: 42) says that Pastoral counselling uses many methods to help people heal and to overcome problems in ways that are aligned with Biblical doctrines.

For Adams (1980: 14) Pastoral counselling surpasses the secular counselling. This is stated on the view that in Pastoral counselling the counsellor is dependent on his Creator and Sustainer for change to take place in an individual's life.

1.9.7 Psycho-Spiritual Approach

This approach is an integration of the secular Psychological theories (Psychodynamic techniques) and counselling methods with Spiritual counselling methods, including the reference to Biblical beliefs present in the scriptures. The understanding of the self is achieved through the traditional psychological theories for the growth of a human being and spiritual guidance is to instill in a person meaning and purpose to achieve goals by depending on God and Spirituality. This approach considers the body, mind, emotions and spirit – focuses on the healing of the whole person. Thus, the Psycho-Spiritual approach uses psychological and spiritual tools (faith in God) in counselling a person (<http://www.allthingshealing.com.php/2014>).

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

1.10.1 Chapter One

This chapter provides the introduction to and motivation for the study as well the research

methodology and a theoretical conceptual framework within which the thesis is located.

1.10.2 Chapters Two and Three

In the literature review a survey of scholars' views on the Psycho-Spiritual model and counselling theories will be done. The sociological and socio-psychological theories on the family and marriage are examined and discussed. Chapter three will examine the existing counselling techniques and models of secular counselling.

1.10.3 Chapter Four

This chapter will focus on the historical background of the South African people of diverse culture and religious affiliation. A look at the transition process from apartheid to a democratized South Africa will form the framework that will show how the people who were separated and divided became exposed to inter-religious relationships. The transformation gradually caused the dismantling of the apartheid Marriage Acts and gave people the right to freedom of choice and religion. Not only will the diverse religious laws pertaining to marriage be investigated, but also culture and change will be defined. Conversion to a new religion and inculturation issues will also be discussed.

1.10.4 Chapter Five

This chapter focuses on the theoretical understanding of marriage and family in religion and culture. Marriage and the institution of marriage as described by various scholars in family theories are researched. The transition from one cultural and religious life to another, i.e. to live in a dual culture, is a unique challenge. Hence, rituals, religious observances and cultural practices of the three major religions, especially in the context of marriage are examined and discussed. Family theories will be explored, especially Bowen's family systems theory. Finally the impact of inculturation on the conversion to a new religion, including counselling techniques for those new converts in relation to inculturation will be examined.

1.10.5 Chapter Six

In this chapter the dynamics of religious marriages will be discussed. The chapter commences with

the definition of religious marriage, followed by the history of marriages in the different religions. Thereafter, mate selection will be explored and the theories investigated. A discussion will be apparent on the religious traditions, belief systems, and cultural practices of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, followed by the different types of marriages, including restrictions. Finally, the different types of marriages (polyandrous, polygynous, and monogamous marriages) and the restrictions on marriages (exogamy and endogamy) are investigated.

1.10.6 Chapter Seven

An attempt is made to conceptualize inter-religious marriages. Also included, is a brief historical overview on inter-religious marriage. Religious views on inter-religious marriages, mate selection, and dating are examined. The chapter also provides reasons as to why inter-religious relationships occur and the range of motives. This chapter includes the examination of the influence of Christianity on Christian marriages. The fundamental Christian principles and beliefs related to inter-religious marriage will also be investigated.

1.10.7 Chapter Eight

In this chapter, Empirical Research is carried out to investigate, identify and expose the challenges of inter-religious marriages. The impact of traditions on inter-religious marriages are discussed - which faith to follow and what traditions to observe. Research methodology is disclosed as to how information was retrieved. Following the questionnaire used, an intensive qualitative empirical descriptive research and analysis is covered in this chapter.

1.10.8 Chapter Nine

This chapter attempts to introduce the primary focus of this research which is to develop *A Marriage Counselling Model for Inter-religious Marriage* through a psycho-spiritual counselling lens. The discussion commences with Pastoral care, counselling and psychotherapy, including a distinction between Christian counselling and secular counselling. Since psychotherapy cannot be ignored and Christian Spirituality cannot be used alone in the counselling of inter-religious marriages, the counselling model draw on psychological models and spirituality. Clinebell's marriage growth counselling is also included in the discussion – Human Potential growth towards

self-actualization.

The critical issues of inter-religious marriage relationships will also be discussed, especially psychologically related issues. The techniques of different therapies chosen that are appropriate and relevant to this research mainly come from Psychoanalysis; Client-Centred Therapy; Rational Emotive Therapy; Cognitive Behavioural Therapies; and the Multimodal approach by Lazarus, including Christian Spirituality. The chapter will show that the psycho-spiritual counselling approach assists clients to use their potential in areas of thinking, feeling, and acting. Finally, strategic coping skills and a summary of techniques will be discussed for inter-religious marriage counselling. Hence, this chapter will propose a model of counselling for inter-religious marriages.

1.10.9 Chapter Ten

This chapter will summarise the research and focus on recommendations and suggestions for future research.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter is an introduction to the thesis on inter-religious marriage and counselling. The motivation and objectives are clearly stated. The questions that are to be answered in the research are also clearly stated. The theoretical framework that is to guide the research will flow into the direction of a Psycho-Spiritual approach. In doing so, counselling skills, strategies and techniques will be drawn from different theories, approaches and models, including Biblical or Christian spirituality in order to eventually develop an inter-religious marriage counselling model. The next chapter will investigate available literature and research done on inter-religious marriage relationships and the following chapter, counselling theories and models.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE AND COUNSELLING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Relationships and marriages between people of different religions and cultures are a phenomenon documented throughout world history (Rohrlich, 1988: 11) and a subject severely lacking in current research and data. Information on inter-religious relationships is primarily found in two separate mediums: literature and research. Literature includes articles and papers published in popular and scholarly books, manuals, magazines, and journals. Research includes studies and other data-gathering searches done by researchers; both will be included in this review of inter-religious marriage and counselling. The main focus is to understand what scholars say about, religion, marriage and challenges pertaining to inter-religious marriage including what research has been done.

From the available research material, it was discovered that there is limited research that have been conducted for inter-religious and inter-faith marriages and relationships in South Africa. There are also but a few research projects done with inter-religious couples internationally.

However, it may be a belief in the supernatural, where religious traditions are observed to appreciate God/ the divine with a set of rules to guide people to live good moral lives which may seem pleasing to God/ the divine. Religion provides identity, a sense of belonging, serves as a pacifier, comforter and to find meaning in life. It is a part of the community's ethnicity and keeps people of groups together. Religion is significant as it is a guide to what is assumed to be the truth and directs people as to what is right and wrong. Religious ceremonies are central to religion and impact also on what make marriages valid.

According to Penny and Khoo (1996: 14), inter-marriage can be characterized in a number of ways. For example, differing ethnicity, language, birth-place, race, and status have been used as defining characteristics of inter-marriage, particularly between host and immigrant groups. For the purpose of this study, the defining characteristic of inter-marriage was religious affiliation (inter-religious

marriages between the Christian, the Muslim and Hindu religions) not excluding inter-cultural aspects. This particular example of inter-marriage overlaps with those based on contrasts of ethnicity, language, race or culture. One reason for focusing on religion is the argument that guidelines for relationships are more clearly and explicitly defined by religious doctrine and practices than by other aspects of culture. The latter is however not excluded in the research.

The cultural differences are viewed and understood by most authors primarily by critically understanding racial differences. Cross (1971: 261-262) indicated that the 'individual identity development model' describes the growth of inter-cultural marriages and it outlines healthy development as moving from a racially biased sense of inferiority and self-doubt to self-acceptance and empowerment. He implied that many inter-cultural couples are also in inter-racial relationships that are often characterized by negative, deprecatory cultural attitudes; and made up of "individuals who perceive oppressors as being better than they are and by inference identify themselves as being inferior" (Cross 1971: 262). This was applicable to dating and marriages within and across-cultural groups in his research. The primary focus was on how racial differences were the primary factor affecting inter-cultural couples.

A second group of authors identified inter-cultural relationships by examining sources of the distress couples experienced. Bhugra and De Silva (2000: 42) characterized inter-cultural couples as having certain difficulties that others do not have, especially societal attitudes (curiosity and open prejudice, including non-acceptance by each other's families and cultures)) and individual differences in habits, beliefs, values, and customs. Inter-cultural couples may be part of relationships of different faiths, cultures, nationalities, and races which may involve additional marital problems stemming from culturally-rooted beliefs and traditions. Joanides et al., (2002: 31) examined how the combination of differences in ethnicity and religion can cause difficulties and concluded that negotiation of their differences may assist inter-faith couples to experience strong intimacy and mutual understanding. He also found that the combination of religious and ethnic differences may be a major source of marital distress.

Biever et al., (1998: 31) also addressed how differences such as gender roles, traditions, and values are a factor in marital distress. However, emphasis was on the inter-cultural aspects of how inter-cultural couples often encountered negative reactions in their communities and that White partners may encounter discrimination and racial hostility. Bhugra and De Silva (2000: 61) and Joanides et

al., (2002: 33) considered how specific cultural characteristics affected couples, including differences such as religious practices; mismatched cultural expectations and differing coping strategies; communication and mood expression styles, gender roles, and involvement of extended family; and migration history and acculturation issues – how these differences produced stress. Crohn (1998: 301) underlined that couples need to work to clarify their religious and cultural differences in order to work out their differences successfully.

The challenges of inter-religious marriages are enormous and should be handled with caution and sensitivity. When one marries someone of another faith, its not just joining lives but joining lives with their religion, culture, families and friends (<http://www.beliefnet.com/2005>). There are more to deal with than in marriages from a single faith or culture, especially ethnic identity and religious traditions which trigger mainly conflict over religious issues.

In addition to the above, the literature review below includes a survey of scholars' views on the Psycho-Spiritual model and counselling theories. The sociological and socio-psychological theories on the family and marriage are also examined and discussed. Chapter three will examine the existing counselling techniques and models of secular counselling.

2.2 SCHOLARS' VIEWS ON PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL THEORY, CULTURE, AND CONVERSION

Psycho-Spiritual Theory is drawn from psychotherapy theories and biblically based counselling. Scholars hold different views on how psychotherapy and Christian counselling is understood and employed. According to Kirwan (1984), psychology and biblical principles can work together in counselling. He discusses four views of counselling: an unchristian view, a spiritualized view, a parallel view, and an integrated view. In his opinion, there is harm in only using only secular techniques. On the other hand, Ganz's (1993) view is that the Word of God is sufficient for counselling and transformation of people. This is a spiritualized view that does not consider the realities of what people face in life. Psychotherapy and secular counselling does have a role to play in Christian counselling.

Corsini et al. (1995) indicate that any counsellor may be equipped in psychotherapy and understanding of the major systems of psychotherapy. Corsini explains that the contributors may

be originators or leading proponents of one of the systems and each clearly gives an understanding of the system in the relationship to the other systems. As in the case of Okun (1990) she based her discussions on human relationship and counselling. Okun gives an overview of the systems of psychotherapies and focuses on the systems of gender, ethnicity, class and race in order to produce a model of psychotherapy, theory and practice. Okun shows how the different models of psychotherapy and psychoanalytical thinking can be clinically and therapeutically useful.

Joseph et al. (1997) argues that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is not only attributed to traumatic events but also psychosocial factors. Investigations reveal as to how the victims confronted and wrestled with their past traumas, reconstructed their memories and past experiences. Joseph discloses reasons as to why some cope well and others struggle. He introduces an integrative model of psychotherapy and intervention, though there are still ongoing debate on causes and possible treatment. However, an understanding of the role of the psychosocial factors can cause counsellors to improve therapeutic interventions. The integrative model can be applied to understanding and treating of stressful events of inter-religious marriages.

The clergy are struggling to deal with the emotionally disturbed (PTSD), intellectual, rational and spiritual needs of their congregation as never before. “Consequently, Pastors who felt inadequate often refer their clients to professionals ... and believers often come to Christian psychologists with their hurting emotional life and spiritual life at the same time” (Mangus 2000: 259-260). Mangus further indicates that there is a need for theologically informed psychotherapy. He says that Christian counsellors should develop a method of counselling that would integrate the principles of theology and psychology and produce an effective model of counselling. Collins (1993) believed that effective Christian counselling tools and scriptural knowledge form part of the foundation to be used with psychotherapy to form the basis for psycho-spiritual counselling.

According to Klimek (1991) biblical spirituality and psychotherapy may be combined in psycho-spiritual transformation. He explains as to how Jesus of the bible wisely dealt the issues of life. Klimek discloses the significance of reflection and soul searching. A counsellor should return to thoughtfulness, humility, complexity and sensitivity. He gives clarity to spiritual wisdom and the hidden meaning of the biblical parables of Jesus. He shows also how traumatic, emotional and frustrating situations can stifle spiritual growth and makes one's heart stubborn. In utilizing the psycho-spiritual theory of counselling he integrates the personality and self-actualization attitudes

and teachings of Jesus with Psychoanalysis, including healing, love, forgiveness, compassion and empathy. The issue of forgiveness and tolerance is relevant to the context of the post apartheid South Africa. In the post apartheid South Africa and during the dismantling of apartheid, issues mentioned by Meskin (2000) as indicated below, had to be faced and dealt with. Hence, there was need for post-conflict reconciliation, conflict resolution, even through therapeutic intervention in order to create sustainable peace. Awareness programmes were encouraged to prevent dangerous disputes and ongoing conflicts from spreading and the repetition of violence. The researcher observed that counsellor's contribution was also vital in this transformation and even in forming relationships. In post apartheid South Africa, in order not only to deal with hatred, but also with other deep rooted feelings and issues of relationships, family, and marriage, a psycho-spiritual model is to be employed based on a Christian perspective. In this regard, Meskin (2000: 55) indicates that considerations of culture are important. As such culture:

consists of values, attitudes and behaviour that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing, based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that rejects violence, endeavour to prevent conflict by tackling their root cause to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantees all people the full exercise of all rights and the means to fully participate in the development process of society.

Culture should be taken into consideration not only in normal therapy and counselling but also when counsellors endeavour to assist clients of inter-religious marriages and relationships. Common cultural and religious beliefs and values unite couples and shape their relationship behaviours in terms of commitment, interaction, shared activities, and approach to handling of daily issues of marriage and family. Better marital functioning generates family cohesiveness and that counselling promotes shared activities and communication. Religiosity and ethnicity should also be considered for effective communication and the strategies to be considered by counsellors, especially in inter-religious relationships are: be cautious in assuming that either partner is less serious or committed to their faith; be aware that husband and wife experience marriage differently; consider the role of extended family with regards to marital satisfaction; and encourage couples to seek additional resource and support. The role of family is important to deepen the cultural understanding, especially ethnicity, family culture and religious orientation. Alternatives should be evaluated in the context of the couple's religious views. Group counselling is important to share experiences with the couples facing similar issues within the same religious and cultural context (Lehrer and Chiswick, 1993; Sussman and Alexander, 1999; Turthkovic (2007).

In addition, Greenstone et al. (1993) indicates that in inter-religious marriage counselling, the following should be explored: New communication patterns; arrangements to incorporate facts of both religions; how to create unique mutual traditions and rituals reflecting both religious traditions; to sustain communications strategies and awareness to support new discoveries, negotiations, conflict resolutions, and a deepening spiritual love relationship; how counsellors assist couples to understand each other's faith, discomforts, tension and differences, religious identity; and how the partners consider integrating religion in their relationship

In view of the religious and cultural issues, the Ministers usually discourage inter-marriage, especially those between two traditions. Though inter-religious marriage are more acceptable today, it is discouraged based on Biblical texts such as 2 Corinthians (6: 4), "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers", due to the fact that it has been difficult to join divergent core beliefs and values together in single relationship. He also disclosed trends that motivated views that the smaller the religious group, it is more likely that members would marry outside the faith and on the other hand, the larger the group, the members would tend to marry the same faith. The shared beliefs, values, religious practices, and religious activities can sustain the marriage. Due to the tension caused by the variety of cultural differences and issues in inter-religious marriages, like mate selection, child rearing, interactional patterns, adjustment issues, counsellors should be prepared to deal with it. Hence, there is a need for a culturally based Christian counselling approach since culture has been considered a factor in marriage counselling. It was said that even family systems-oriented therapies with their sensitivity and understanding of meaning and values did not initially consider cultural characteristics (Rudolph 2003; Sullivan (2006: 221-225). It has become important for culture to be considered in therapy and counselling since in conversion to another religion through marriage the consideration of culture is inevitable.

Gallagher (1990) explains the theory surrounding religious conversion. He gives insight into the personal, psychological, theological and sociological theories pertaining to religious conversions. He not only indicated that Christian conversion is credited to God's love and amazing grace but also disclosed that social and religious circumstances play a role in conversions. People make important decisions to move towards God and to change behaviour which leads to an identity experience in religious conversion as such an attempt to find spiritual meaning and existence to life. The tension is experienced by people of different religions, races and cultural background after

conversion to Christianity. They are exposed to the negatives and positives about religious traditions and Christian identity – the problem of syncretism (Gillespie 1991; Schreiter 1985).

Counselling inter-cultural couples have some commonness with inter-religious marriage, especially from a cultural perspective. However, it is clear that not much focus has been directed to develop an inter-religious marriage counselling model. Primarily most Christian inter-religious couples are counselled only from a biblical perspective. Hence, this research would draw from psycho-spiritual counselling theories to introduce a counselling model that would be relevant to inter-religious marriage counselling – the bible will be the main reference for spiritual counselling.

2.3 AVAILABILITY OF FURTHER RESEARCH ON INTER RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE

Only one qualitative study was found that specifically looked at successful inter-married couples, a 1986 unpublished doctoral dissertation by Giladi-McKelvie. The study extensively interviewed five couples in which the partners were from different countries, and who were defined as successful by having being married at least ten years and self reporting as such. This study viewed these marriages from a descriptive phenomenological perspective, summarized by the ten participant's views of inter-marriages. Common themes that emerged from this study were a strong sense of religion, a focus on the nuclear family, and an involvement with children. The participants reported about their growing up with feelings of difference, being intrigued by differences, and making efforts to learn about their spouse's culture. While this study provides a first look at successful couples, more in depth research with wider samples and sizes is needed to further understand and generalize these findings. No studies were found that looked at inter-religious marriages from the perspective of challenges, counselling and coping skills.

All of the further literature identified include themes that inter-marriage is at a higher risk for failure than marriages of couples from the same religion and/ or culture. Failure encompasses such adverse outcomes as divorce, low marital satisfaction and domestic violence, and child abduction if the relationship ends in divorce (cf. Fu et al., 2001: 51; Gaines & Liu, 2000: 34).

A number of articles stated that inter-married couples have higher divorce rates than their same culture peers, but few cited actual research studies that proved this statement (cf. Gaines & Agnew, 2003: 103; Markoff, 1977: 18). Literature also discloses that marital satisfaction in inter-married

couples is lower than that of their same culture peers' marriages, again without empirical research to back these statements.

A study in 2001 by Fu et al. in Hawaii compared marital satisfaction, measured by a 20 question scale including questions about marital adjustments, conflict in financial matters, support to one's marriage from community and extended family, discipline of children, mutual support, marital affection, and self-rated general marital happiness. Intra and inter-cultural married couples from a university and the small surrounding community were randomly sampled and sent the questionnaire. The sample consisted of 148 wives and 134 husbands, with 122 of these being matched couples, and 87 of them being inter-married couples. Wives of inter-marriages did report lower levels of marital satisfaction than wives of intra-cultural marriages. However, there was no difference in the husband's satisfaction. Although this study seem to lend support to the theory of marital satisfaction being lower in inter-marriages than in same cultural marriages, results from two other studies that also looked at relationship satisfaction in inter-cultural dating relationships contradict this finding (cf. Gurung & Duong, 1999: 81).

The Americans for Reform Estimates indicates that 50 % of all marriages will end in divorce if current trends continue, 25 % endure marriage lacking intimacy but just co-exist, and only 25 % live in mutually supportive happy relationships (<http://www.divorcereform.org/2009>). All the surveyed literature includes themes that inter-cultural relationships are at a higher risk for failure. Failure encompasses such adverse outcomes as divorce, low marital satisfaction, and even domestic violence and child abduction if the relationship ends in divorce. A number of articles stated that inter-cultural couples have higher divorce rates than their culture peers, but few cited actual research studies that proved this statement (cf. Fu et al., 2001: 12; Gaines & Agnew, 2003: 14; Markoff, 1977: 18-19; Gaines & Liu, 2000: 33).

In another study, the failure rate of same faith marriage is 50 % and for inter-faith marriage is 75 % (<http://www.bergen.com/1999>). A study by Esther Perel published in the *New York Magazine* in 1993 on inter-faith marriage revealed that 40 % of marriage between Christian and Jews ended in divorce (<http://www.jewishdatingandmarriage.com/2002>). It has discovered that from 1998 and 2006, during the post apartheid era and transformation process in South Africa, the divorce rate fluctuated between 28924 and 37058 cases per year (<http://www.bryanwood.co.za/1998>). A survey done with 496 inter-faith marriages – Muslim-Americans – found that 45 % of Muslims in America

were married to non-Muslims. Inter-faith marriages are increasing in America – 47 % of Jews have committed to an inter-faith marriage, 40 % of Catholics were of mixed faith religion and 38 % of Hindus were married to either a Muslim, or Christian or Jew. According to this study, inter-faith marriages have a failure rate as much as 50 % higher than same faith marriages (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>).

In a 1990 research study by Sung looked at the outmarriage rates of Chinese Americans in New York City from 1972-1982. Research was gathered from the 1972 and 1982 census, marriage applications in the city, and personal interviews with couples in which one spouse was Chinese. Sung cited research done by Barron (1972) in Los Angeles, Lind (1964), Schewertfegar (1982:), Tseng (1977) in Hawaii, and Monahan (1970) in Iowa, all of which found that Chinese who married outside of their race (culture) had higher divorce rates than those that married within. However, Sung's 1990 study found no significant differences in divorce rates of Chinese in New York who married outside their culture and those married within. Sung (1990: 86) states the cosmopolitan, international atmosphere of New York City, and the changes in social atmosphere as possible factors affecting her findings as opposed to what other studies found, but calls for more research to solidify any of these results. The inconsistency of the literature on whether inter-cultural marriages do or do not have higher rates of divorce lend support for those calling for more research to be done and shared before inter-cultural marriages are automatically labeled as more likely to end in divorce than same culture marriages.

A large portion of the literature available on inter-cultural couples has concentrated on the individual characteristics of these couples, and their motivations for marriage to partners outside of their ethnic and cultural groups. One of the biggest complaints against this type of research has been the focus of an outsider's perceptions, rather than the perceptions of the couples involved (Gaines & Ickes, 1997: 10).

Sung (1990: 87), who conducted interviews in New York City with 50 Chinese who had married outside their culture, discovered that those who inter-marry are unconventional, more rebellious, and marrying for the second time around, but also flexible and resourceful in dealing with differences, and willing to make changes and accept the nontraditional. Again, the limited number of studies and samples prevent these results from being considered conclusive of all people who marry inter-culturally. The mixed results and small amount of research highlighted the difficulty

of pinning down such a subjective factor as personalty traits of a population as a variable in inter-cultural couples.

Another consideration is that many of existing studies in America are based on research of Black/White couples, and then extrapolated to also inter-cultural couples. However, these studies were done in primarily the 60's and 70's (Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001: 26), when public perceptions of Black/White unions was very controversial. That the social environment at that time had some effect on the data is likely, especially since no studies done to replicate these claims were found after 1984.

Dhruvarajan (1993: 7) in his reasearch of ethnic cultural retention of Asian Indians in Canada found that dating is contradictory to South Asian cultural values and was only permissible and acceptable in the context of marriage. Inman et al., (2007: 29) explained that such expectations may lead to profound cultural values conflicts among Asian Indian women and may affect their academic and personal adjustment in the new culture. These researchers described cultural value conflicts as negative affect, especially guilt, anxiety, or shame. Inman found that the restrictions regarding marriage and dating, for instance, to marry only an Indian, dating should eventually lead to marriage, and spouses should belong to respectable families and have high education, were very prominent among Asian Indian fathers. The Indian women have to face several restrictions when it pertains to sexual activities, especially before marriage as Hindu marriage customs and Asian Indian traditions teach that the Indian women have to abstain from sexual activities and to ensure virginity before marriage. The research found that dating and participating in pre-marital sexual activities are rarer in Asian Indian culture than in other Western cultures. However, it is still considered a taboo. Most Asian women also face restrictions regarding marriage as parents generally do not allow inter-caste, inter-racial, and inter-religious marriage among couples, more especially to retain their ethnic identity.

No research was found that specifically looked at the stressors inter-cultural couples faced, although mentioned as side notes in a few studies. Sung's (1990: 86-87) research also found that empirical interviews did not report major cultural difficulties, which is contrary to the popular opinion in the literature. Brown (1987: 71) suggests that inter-cultural couples enter relationships more aware of possible conflicts, and have higher standards for their relationship in areas such as

shared interests and personal compatibility because they are aware of the difficulties they will face due to their different cultures.

The majority of the literature stated that the need for more research and resources be made available to help inter-cultural couples, and to help and guide those professionals who work with inter-cultural couples (Biever et al., 1998: 32; Henandez 2003: 82).

In 2003 a research project was done on inter-faith (inter-religious) marriages between Muslims and Christians by Abe Ata and Mark Furlong from the Australian Catholic University. The notion to be investigated was that inter-marriage can be characterized in a number of ways and whether guidelines for relationships are more clearly and explicitly defined by religious doctrines than by other aspects of culture. In order to examine this, an empirical project was designed. Data was derived from face-to-face interviews. The sample was drawn from the state of Victoria and excluded arranged, mail-order and 'shot-gun' (Ata 2003: 202) marriages. One hundred and six people from 20 countries of birth were interviewed. With its focus on inter-faith marriages, the initial research concentrated upon: A literature review of changing traditions, roles and practices of the family within ethnic and mainstream societies and direct interviews of participants on marriage, identity, religious affiliation, and attitudes to children.

Most questions were closed, with a minority open-ended and a convenient sampling procedure was adopted. In this study, the key findings in patterns of response in inter-religious marriages were as follows.

Like any set of people who have to live with difference and diversity, couples in mixed-faith relationships reported contending with many challenges. The challenges included tense reactions from relatives and friends; community concerns; and the issue of facing religious expectations. Respondents also reported a number of positive outcomes, for example, that dealing well with religious differences can act to strengthen relationships. In general, it appeared that there were clear patterns in how couples had grown with respect to accommodating their different faiths. The most sensitive area in Muslim-Christian marriages was the identity issue as to what faith community the children will belong to. If the children are brought up in one particular faith, this gives the children a clear identity and potentially a more harmonious development but this may be at the expense of the other religious traditions and even create distance with the other parent. If both traditions are

practiced it may cause confusion in children or it may be beneficial as the children will gain knowledge of both traditions and make their own choice when they grow up. It was also found that the children of religious identity formation in mixed-faith families who were exposed to more than one religion handled it without significant problems.

Sometimes these patterns seemed well thought through; sometimes interviewees reported patterns with mixed, even contradictory features; and sometimes the reported patterns did not seem to acknowledge that there were multiple points of view. The six identified patterns of coping with inter-faith challenges of the research were as follows (Ata 2003: 200-209):

1. *Conversion or annexation*: one of the partners chooses to co-operate and practice the other's faith.
2. *Ignoring or withdrawing*: both partners choose to practice neither religion.
3. *An active policy espousing a plurality of faiths*: Some couples choose to practice both religious faiths.
4. *Compromising and negotiating*: the couple chooses to observe an alternate religious faith.
5. *Pastoral/ecumenical yielding*: couples sometimes reach a compromise and choose to observe certain traditions from both faiths.
6. *Respect for 'otherness'*: Unlike (3) above, some parties respect their religious differences, but neither are prepared to give up their religion.

The majority of the literature states the need for more research and resources to be made available to help inter-religious couples. The only structured method found for working specifically with inter-religious couples in this regard is one developed by Hernandez (2003: 83). The model was based on informal research done at the Ackerman Institute to meet the needs of the clientele they were seeing, and it was a strength based model aimed at helping couples understand and work with their cultural and racial differences through acceptance, tolerance, awareness and exploring each member's racial experiences and cultural expectations that existed in the relationship. Even though a specific model such as this is rare, much of the literature does offer suggestions to counsellors working with inter-religious married couples in this direction.

In this study inter-cultural relationships have been defined as those in which the partners come from two separate cultures and may not be inter-religious. On the other hand inter-religious relationships

are defined as couples of different religion or religious faith. There may be an interface between inter-cultural, inter-faith and inter-religious relationships. Although this research will focus mainly on inter-religious marriage and relationships between Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, inter-cultural relationships to a lesser extent would also be investigated due to the interface.

There is no evidence of research done specifically on the challenges encountered by the relationships between Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious groups. Furthermore, the ultimate objective of this research is to produce a counselling model especially for inter-religious marriages or relationships from a Christian perspective. The issues that will be discussed and the proposed counselling solutions will focus on religious conflicts, identity (including children), anxiety and fear, guilt and shame, despair, pain, rejection, prejudice, and unforgiveness. Since there is a lack of integration between the secular and spiritual (biblical) counselling, a psycho-spiritual counselling model relevant for inter-religious marriage relationships will be developed.

2.4 TYPES OF MARRIAGE AND THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS

According to Chapman (2010: 3), “marriage is a social institution that transcends most societies, and in our society that institution is closely tied to religion.” But the Bible proclaims that marriage is the institution of God (divine institution) – the sacred union between a man and a woman (Genesis 2: 24). The institutional act contains the laws, customs and cultural requirements of the society to which the couple belong. An ideal marriage was understood as a “voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others; that is, it is regarded as voluntary, permanent and as strictly monogamous. It is the ideal the law attempts to implement” (Farmer 1970: 12). According to Christensen and Johnsen (1985: 19), marriage brings a man and a woman together and children are to be born in marriage. There was no intention for one man to one woman and not a relationship of one man to many women. God ordains and blesses sexual intimacy between a husband and wife only within a marriage. Marriage is purposed to be a sustained relationship and comes with a pre-nuptial legal marriage contract between husband and wife, which contains equal rights and obligations between spouses to observe until the marriage is dissolved through legal intervention (cf. Zodiates 1992: 42; Gupta 1974: 1; Christensen and Johnsen 1985: 19). To refer to inter-marriage relationships there are three terms that are used in this research: *inter-faith*, *inter-cultural* and *inter-religious marriage*.

The term inter-faith marriage is generally used in literature to identify couples who do not practice the same religion, which in this context typically refers to completely separate faiths. Marriages that consist of a Christian and a Muslim or a Hindu would be considered an inter-faith marriage. In contrast, marriage between a Protestant and a Catholic, a Baptist and a Presbyterian, or even a Sunni and Shi'ah would be considered an intrafaith union (<http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/marriage.htm/2011>). From this point forward, the term *inter-faith* will be used to describe two individuals with two completely different religious orientations, and the term *intrafaith* will be used to describe marriages of two different denominations within one religion. The term *inter-cultural* will be used to refer to marriage of those belonging to different cultures, even though they may be of the same faith. The term *inter-religious* marriage, especially in the context of this research, will refer to relationships of a couple from different religions.

2.4.1 Family and Marriage

Browne (1992: 210) defines family as a group of people who are related by *kinship* ties: relations of blood, marriage, or adoption. The family unit is one of the most important social institutions, which is found in some form in nearly all known societies. It is a basic unit of social organization, and plays a key role in socializing children into the culture of their society. The different forms of family will be investigated later in this research.

Having children was often seen as the main reason for marriage, as a means of passing on family property and providing a future workforce. As time past there has been a steady increase in sexual relations before and outside marriage which meant that children could be born in different unions (Brooks 1982: 77).

The family and kinship network traditionally played a major role in maintaining and caring for dependent children who were still unable to provide for themselves. Although the maintenance of children is still very important, the modern nuclear family is less dependent on relatives for help and assistance from the state (Spencer 1990: 532).

The family is where society's new recruits first learn the basic values and norms of the society they will grow up in. It is in the family that children first learn the difference between what is 'right'

and 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad' behaviour, the norms governing gender roles, and the acceptance of parental and other adult authority. These rules are sanctions, such as praise and rewards (Wilson 1983: 54).

2.5 INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE

Inter-religious or inter-faith marriage - religious or civil - refers to mixed marriages between partners of different religions. Some religions allow inter-faith marriage, while most have certain religious laws as a guide ([http://en.wikipedia.org/interreligious marriage/2003](http://en.wikipedia.org/interreligious%20marriage/2003)).

Inter-religious marriage consists of marital partners that are of different religions (Berghe 1997: 15). The religion brings to the couple cultural diversity, which includes customs, ceremonies, beliefs, behaviour and traditions. Since culture and religion cannot be separated from inter-religious marriages the couples are inevitably exposed to inter-cultural experiences. Brown and Montague (1992: 48) indicated that sometimes the result of mixed marriages is driven by people who admire the cultures of each other. According to Crohn (1995: 50) "*ambivalent identification* is when a strong preference for partners from outside of one's group is combined with an intense dislike of the opposite-sex members of one's own cultural or racial group."

Laswell (1991: 405) argues that it is not conclusive that same faith marriages are more successful than inter-faith marriages. However, some say that marriages in which the partners differ in many ways are known to experience less enjoyment but more conflict (Lehrer & Chiswick 1993: 386).

Many liberal people or some contemporary Christians believe in the freedom to choose, and that love has no boundaries. It is supported by 1 Corinthians (7: 12-14): "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband." Some Christian denominations follow the Apostle Paul's instruction and forbids inter-faith marriage, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14) and in Deuteronomy (7: 3), the Israelites in the Old Testament were always reminded not to marry with the heathen nations during that era and even now in this 21st century (<http://www.talkingaboutintermarriage.com/2004>).

Those who are Catholic have to request permission for marrying outside the faith. However, conversion is not forced onto the non-Catholic (often baptized) partner but both spouses are to

promise to raise the children Catholic. In addition, the Catholic Church recognizes, wherein a Catholic marrying an unbaptized previously married person who converts to Catholicism (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/2001>).

According to Jayaram (2007: 5-22) Hinduism believes that there are always many ways to God. One's belief or understanding of God is personal and one should be left to make a decision to decide their destiny.

Thus, the Hindus always respected the freedom of other religions. Hence, inter-religious marriage is accepted in the Hindu faith, especially in South Africa and does not force their faith on the non-Hindu partner. In India Inter-caste marriages were not initially accepted but society has become more tolerant of this over time. In metropolitan cities it is common to find couples with different faith, caste and religious background. There are numerous laws in the Indian legal system, safeguarding inter-faith marriage.

Islam only permits a man to marry a non-Muslim Christian or Jewish woman. The early jurists of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence ruled in the *fiqh* law that the marriage of a Muslim man to a Christian or Jewish woman is *makruh* (reprehensible) if they live in a non-Muslim country. Islam forbids Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men. If a non-Muslim woman is married to a non-Muslim man, and she converts to Islam, the marriage is not recognized until her husband converts to Islam. When he converts then the current marriage is accepted (<http://www.beliefnet.com/2005>).

2.6 CHALLENGES OF INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

According to Hernandez (2003: 123), Laird (2000: 62) and Brown (1987: 63) as the number of inter-marriages has grown, so also has the number of these couples seeking family therapy. Inter-cultural couples (meaning couples that consist of partners who are of different cultures, religion, country, and nationalities, which may or may not include inter-racial couples) are often presented with many of the same type of relationship conflicts as intra-cultural couples (those within the same cultural group) (Biever et al., 1998: 31), but research and literature available have shown that these couples often face unique challenges and situations that add extra considerations for therapists doing work with these couples (Bonacci, Moon, & Ratliff, 1978: 111). Unfortunately, the marriage

and family therapy field has a lack of literature, research, and validated models for working with inter-cultural and inter-religious couples as already indicated above. Therapists who see these couples have few resources to turn to, and thus are left to come up with their own frameworks, and to find their own techniques and models for how best to address the issues inter-married couples bring into therapy.

The common theme in the literature, and general belief in the population, is that inter-cultural and inter-religious couples start out their relationships with a higher risk for an unsuccessful union and are more prone to marital dissatisfaction and divorce (cf. Brown, 1987: 64; Fu et al., 2001: 12).

The following are all examples of commonly held beliefs about inter-married couples that are not backed by empirical research. Romano (1988: 17) lists some of the challenges of inter-marriages as values, food and drinks, sex, gender roles, place of residence, politics, friends, finances, in-laws, social class, religion, raising children, language, communication and symbols, dealing with stress, illness and suffering, and ethnocentrism. Many of these stressors are common to all marriages, regardless of the culture of the partners. In addition, Markoff (1977: 19) addresses problems in communication, differences in values and the concept of marriage, autonomous behaviour and practices, prejudices and stereotypes, and the surrounding family. Hegar and Greif (1994: 66) listed stereotypes held by our society about them and their families as challenges. Biever et al. (1998: 35), Bonacci et al. (1996: 28), Gainnes and Agnew (2003: 15, and Laird (2000: 63) all raised the issues of cultural and religious differences about lifestyle and family decisions, and personal experiences that may relate to forms of oppression.

Grove (1991: 75) compared identity development in a sample of 51 college students in New England, broken down in groups of 17 each: White, Asian, and Asian/White. The White students volunteered after receiving a mailing sent to randomly selected students, while the other groups volunteered after a presentation to the college's Asia Student's Association. Data were taken from coded interviews and found that Asian/White students did not possess significantly different identity statuses than either Asians or Whites, which does not fit with common challenges the literature says children of inter-cultural unions will face. Again, more research is needed to prove or disapprove the validity of this belief.

Other studies suggest even more serious side effects for those involved in inter-cultural and inter-religious unions. A study in 1994 suggested that children of inter-marriage relationships may be at a higher risk for parental abductions when the relationship ends than children from the same religion and cultural relationships (Hegar & Greif, 1994: 65). A study by Chin (1994: 93) suggested that inter-cultural couples may be at a greater risk for domestic violence than their same-culture peers.

The available literature on inter-marriage couples also states that partners in these unions have more factors to think about in starting and maintaining their relationships than their same-culture peers. Inter-married couples face the typical relationship adjustments that all couples face, but they also must often reconcile other stressors that result from differing cultural and religious backgrounds, such as: stereotypes held by our society about them and their families; cultural differences about lifestyle and family decisions; and their personal experiences with oppression. Inter-cultural couples often face added stress around ethnicity and culture as it relates to their children and childrearing factors (cf. Brown, 1987: 12-13; Hegar & Greif, 1994: 65-66; Laird, 2000: 62-64; and Biever et al., 1998: 31-35).

Inter-marriage interferes with cultural growth, and partners from different religious upbringing can experience pressure and inner conflict on their feelings that are exerted by love and tradition, including ethnic identities. The religious practices are part of the life of a community. Family loyalty, cultural identity and religious belief are overlaps giving a person ownership and identity (Crohn 1995: 9).

In Hinduism the caste system has a significant impact on marriages, especially in India. The levels of the social hierarchy are called castes, and this hierarchy is fixed and clearly defined. The social position of individuals is ascribed at birth in accordance with Hindu religious beliefs and customs. Hindus believe in reincarnation – that is people are born again (take on a new form) after death. Hinduism suggests that people's behaviour in their previous life will decide the caste they are born into after rebirth. Since people believe the social position (caste) they are born into is God-given, they generally accept their ascribed position. Each caste is completely closed off from others by religious rules and restrictions, which ensures that very little social contact occurs between members of different castes. The purity of each caste is maintained by endogamy. This means that marriage is only permitted to a person of the same caste (Browne 1992: 12).

Tan (2001-2002) stated that inter-religious marriages are not seen as a taboo but there are still spiritual and religious challenges. For example, although inter-religious marriages between Christian-Hindu, Christian-Muslim and Muslim-Hindu or Jewish-Hindu take place, some parties claim that their religion is the only truth. Religious leaders may discourage inter-faith individuals from marrying and are glad when the marriage fails.

According to the argument by Chinitz (2001: 733), it is unresolved conflict over religious issues that is the main challenge and not the different religions. So if the religious issues are addressed, inter-religious couples can have a successful, fulfilling and satisfying marriage.

William and Lawler (2000: 210) indicated that if one is still struggling to have respect for one's spouse's religious beliefs, one might find it helpful to become friends with another inter-faith couple who has found a way to respect one another's religions. Meeting with others in the same situation can help one find a sense of belonging and acceptance, which in turn will benefit one's marriage.

2.7 COUNSELLING THEORIES AND THERAPY

Theories are important in providing the frameworks needed to make predictive hypotheses (Macmillan 2002: 3).

Theory is strongly influenced by culture and this is reflected more and more in multicultural societies where the values of Western and Eastern cultures meet and clash. The theories of Western counselling, for example, reflect the value placed on individualism while people from Eastern cultures place greater value on group harmony through religion and the extended family (Sue 1990: 5).

According to Berne (1961: 15) counselling is a psychological process in that to a greater or lesser extent all counselling approaches are aimed at changing how people think and feel.

2.7.1 Definition of Counselling

Though there are many definitions of counselling available, it has common elements. All agree

that counselling focuses on assisting clients to make choices and to act on it responsibly. Krumboltz (1965: 384), stated that “counselling consists of whatever ethical activities a counsellor undertakes in an effort to help the clients engage in those types of behaviour which will lead to a resolution of the client’s problems” – the attainment of a client’s goals. In simple terms counselling is guiding clients to solve problems or make decisions related to personal growth, marriage, family or other interpersonal concerns. Burkes and Steffire (1979: 14) indicated that counselling is a professional relationship developed with the counsellor and client or with more clients. The purpose is to assist clients to clarify and understand views of their existence to reach self-determined goals. This is done by making meaningful choices to solve emotional interpersonal problems.

2.7.2 Family Therapy

In *family therapy*, one or more families constitute the group. It is a form of therapy in which the family unit is treated as a client. Family therapy may be undertaken from various theoretical viewpoints. Virginia Satir (1967:81) in her ‘systems approach,’ indicated that the family relationship and communication is studied and changed to promote the growth of family members and the family. The family members with low self-esteem fail to accept different attitudes and behaviours from other family members. Weak communication between individuals of the family also creates problems and co-operation – family harmony is compromised.

Spencer (1990: 545) indicated that the family therapist, who is a specialist in this field, attempts to teach the family to communicate more effectively and to encourage growth and the eventual autonomy, or independence, of each family member. In doing so, the family therapist will also show the family how the identified client has been used as a focus for the problems of other members of the group.

2.8 CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING

Christian counselling is service rendered to people who are experiencing turmoil. It is therapy of attentive and careful helping of those who request spiritual guidance and intervention to solve their problems, including the use of relevant Biblical texts. Patterson (1973: 9) indicated that:

The goals of counselling and of education are the same – the optimum development of the individual as a whole person and not solely with respect of his intellectual training. Thus counselling is as fundamental a technique of assisting the individual to achieve a style of living satisfying to him and congruent with his status as a citizen in a democracy, as are the instructional techniques used by the teacher, in classroom and laboratory, to achieve stipulated academic or educational goals in the field of knowledge.

College (2002: 1) indicated that though a person-centered approach is used in counselling in helping relationships to set and achieve goals in certain areas of their lives, it is sometimes insufficient for constructive changes to take place. Hence, there is a need for intervention tools, methods and strategies – an eclectic counselor would utilize a variety of intervention methods.

Christian counselling addresses various aspects of counselling but the foundation of counselling is the Holy Bible. Christians are guided by the Bible and not by their own conscience to direct their behaviour. “All scriptures is by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3: 16-17, kjv). Hence, the Christian counsellor listens attentively, gain insight and assist in a specific plan of action based on biblical interpretation (Meier 1993: 313

2.9 SPIRITUALITY AND COUNSELLING

There is an important distinction between religion and Spirituality. Religion can be defined as an organized belief system that includes shared, and usually institutionalized, moral values, beliefs about God or a Higher Power, and involvement in a faith community (social functions) as a means of spiritual expression and experience. It provides standards and prescriptions for individual virtue and family life grounded in core beliefs. Rituals and ceremonies offer participants a sense of a collective self. Each ritual carries a significant meaning connecting family members with their larger community. Jinpa indicates that Religion is concerned with faith in the claims of salvation of one faith tradition to another, an aspect of which is acceptance of some form of metaphysical or supernatural reality, including an idea of heaven and nirvana. Connected with this are religious teachings and dogma, ritual, prayer and so on (cf. Jinpa 2001: 81; Carroll 1998: 31; Walsh 1999: 3).

Spirituality refers more generally to transcendent beliefs and practices. It can be experienced either within or outside formal religious structures and is more personal. It is something that connects one to all there is – experience of a dimension beyond the self that expands one's mind or consciousness. Spirituality concerns an active investment in an internal set of values. It fosters a sense of meaning, inner wholeness, harmony, and connection with others – a unity with all life, nature, the universe, God or a higher power, the significance of life and deriving purpose in existence. A spiritual person faces a life that requires reflection and experience, including a sense of who one is and how one knows it. Spirituality is connected to those qualities of the human spirit – such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony, which bring happiness both to self and others. Ritual and prayer, along with notions of nirvana and salvation, may also be directly connected to spirituality and religious faith (cf. Walsh 1999: 4; Jinpa 2001: 82; Elkins 1990: 14; Griffith & Griffith 1999: 17; Martslof and Mickley 1998: 27).

Walsh (1999: 3) quotes from Pierre Teilhard De Chardin that: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

In this sense, all humans are linked to spirituality (morality, a belief system and rituals that display dependence on God or some form of divinity) in some ways and are searching for meaning and purpose to pain, pleasure, life and death (Walsh 1999: 77). There are also diverse meanings and definitions ascribed to understand spirituality. It may refer to achieving and understanding the ultimate immaterial reality. Some refer to it has a human search for the essence of *being*, *values* and meaning by which people live (<http://www.whatisholistic.com/2001>). From the perspective of the religions, spirituality is integrally part of religious experience including the qualities of love, compassion, tolerance, contentment, patience, forgiveness, harmony, responsibility and caring for other people. The focus is on a relationship with others and on the cultivating of spirituality as derived from the religion. Spirituality also involves a nurturing of thoughts, emotions, words and action to the extent of pursuing harmony of body, soul and spirit (<http://www.maharaji.net/2012>).

In terms of spirituality, people ask questions such as: What is the meaning of life? What is the meaning of my life? Is there a God? How can I find love, peace and harmony? Freke (2000: 21) said that from the beginning of creation, people searched for meaning and value in their actions

and encounters. Hence, they observed rituals, songs, dance and cultural activities as these related to larger systems. According to this view, the definition of spirituality is as follows:

Spirituality exists wherever we struggle with the issues of how our lives fit into the greater scheme of things. This is true when our questions never give way to specific answers or give rise to specific practices such as prayer or meditation. We encounter spiritual issues every time we wonder where the universe comes from, why we are here, or what happens to our life. We also become spiritual when we become moved by values such as beauty, love, or creativity that seem to reveal a meaning or power beyond our visible world. An idea or practice is spiritual when it reveals our personal management of life (<http://www.belief.com/2005>).

Frankl (2006: 39 - 77) stated that man must take responsibility to complete the work assigned to him by discovering the right answers. He adds that every situation is unique and requires a specific response and the actions that are taken, shapes his life and future. A deeper meaning to life is experienced through the acceptance of his fate and the challenging encounters including all the sufferings and opportunities. As the inner life and hope intensifies and action is taken, one who experiences a traumatic feeling, psychic and physical stress can overcome apathy, irate feelings and preserve spiritual freedom in any circumstances. Through action and activities, he is able to instil values and produce creative work, goals and purposes, which is not the case in a passive life. This indicates that one also produces expressions of art and beauty while inculcating high moral behaviour, mainly in one's attitudes towards one's existence.

Spirituality involves all aspects of one's life, elements and experiences of life (good or bad), including experience of family, religious traditions, rituals and practices, belief systems, cultures, etc. (Walsh 1999: 3). Spirituality therefore plays a vital role in family life. Worthington (1982: 13-27) stated that spirituality and religion are also dynamic since when people take responsibility for change, their spirituality and attitudes towards meaning in life play a role.

In this regard, Frame (2000: 91) indicated that counsellors and counselees should be exposed to a family spiritual genogram that illustrates their religious and spiritual traditions across time. It may reveal to the counsellee and counsellor the emotionally triggered relationships that resulted from events and experiences in relation to religion and spirituality in the family of origin and the

extended family. A family traditional genogram would assist the counsellors and counselees understand the roots of the troubling beliefs or practices.

The counsellor should have clarity about their own religious and spiritual worldview prior to utilizing spiritual interventions. Prior to using spiritual interventions, the counselees' religious and spiritual backgrounds should be assessed. If counselees are not open to religious or spiritual aspects of difficulties, it is inappropriate to bring them into counselling, or to employ methods that are particularly based in religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. The counsellor should obtain consent from clients prior to using religious and spiritual practices as counselling interventions. Also one should select interventions that are respectful of the counselees' belief systems and work with their worldviews and values, taking care not to impose the counsellor's perspective on the counsellee. Of course, sometimes it is therapeutically helpful to assist counselees in examining their beliefs and to challenge ideas that are contributing to the difficulties presented in counselling. Such confrontations should be done in ways that would encourage the counselees to grow, rather than by judging counselees (cf. Frame 2000: 91; Fukuyama & Sevig 1999: 98; Richards and Bergin 1997: 11).

Given the background that this thesis also draws on approaches in Psychotherapy, Walsh (1999: 79) indicated that counsellors need to close the gap between psychology and spirituality. They should be aware of the client's levels of spirituality. In figure 1 below I represent how he discusses the consideration of spiritual, moral and clinical domains of practice in therapy (cf. Walsh 1999: 181-185).

The figure 1 depicts the three domains of language and meaning in therapy discussed by Walsh (1999: 181-185): the clinical world of mental health, the moral realm of obligations, and the spiritual realm of transcendent meaning. Common overlaps occur when the distinctive meanings of one become appropriated by another. The three domains also represent different traditions and cultures, and cannot be subsumed into one another. It gives examples of language that is specific to each domain. In examining the figure, pay attention first to the circles that reflect the language specifics to the clinical domain, the moral domain, and the spiritual domain. Clinical-only terms include *personality, mental illness, self, differentiation, and boundaries*, terms that reflect the language and scholarly tradition of mental health professionals. Moral-only terms include *right and wrong, should, and obligations*, terms that have historically not been central to the discourse of

therapy (however, it is used by them when borrowing language from the moral domain). Spiritual-only terms include *God's will, calling, and prayers*, terms that historically have been used within religious traditions.

At a more general level of abstraction, these domains relate to the disciplines of theology, ethics and psychology. The domains of theology, ethics, and psychology are categorical distincts, although they have implications for one another. All psychological theories have implicit metaphors that concern ultimate meaning in life, along with an implicit ethic about human obligations. For their own part, theologies and ethical models have implicit theories of psychological and family functioning. Thus, there is resonance across the categorically separate domains of spirituality, morality, and clinical care.

Figure 1

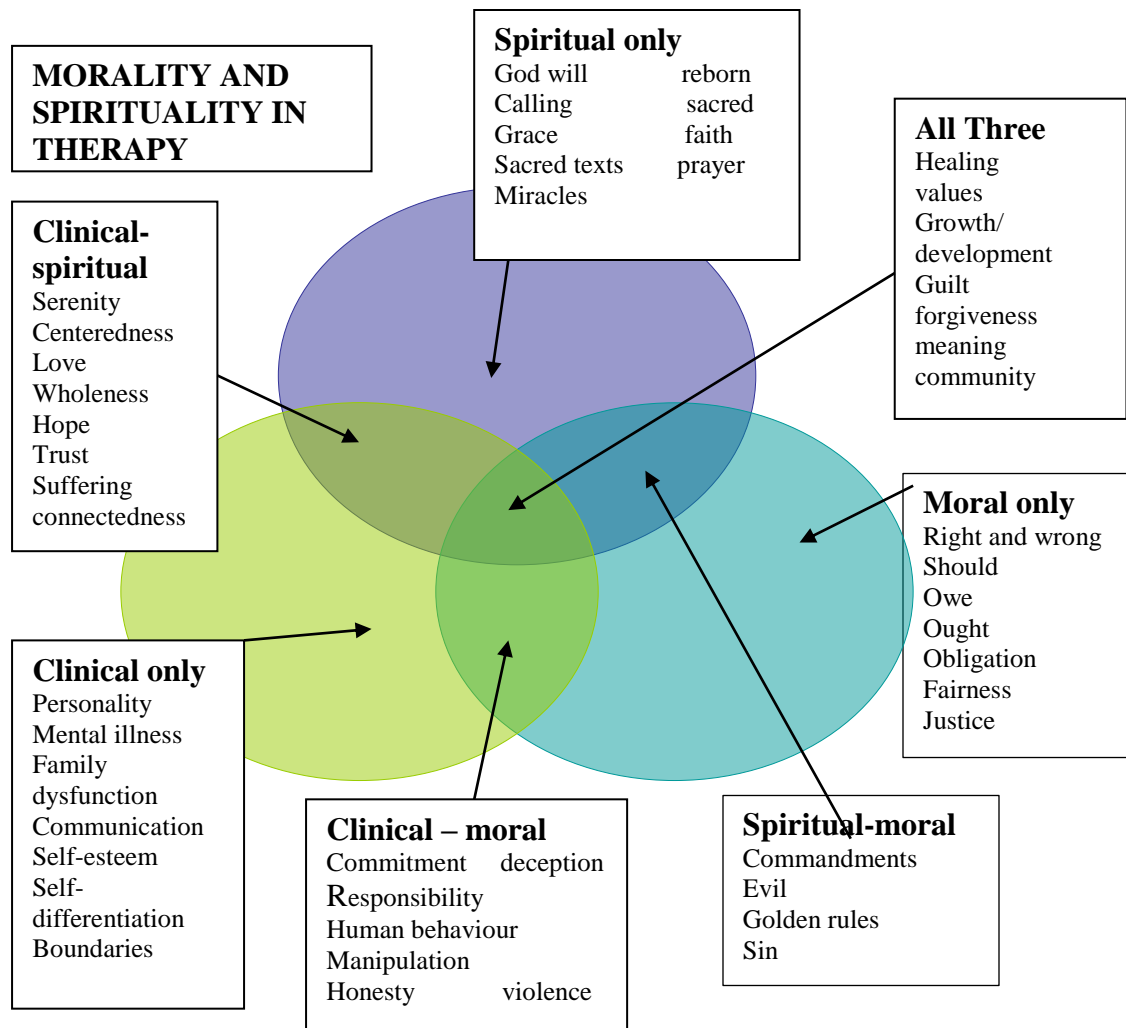


Figure 1 illustrates this resonance by showing overlap areas in which certain words and phrases carry meanings in two or even three domains. The clinical-spiritual overlap can be seen in terms such as *serenity, wholeness, hope, and trust*. The clinical-moral overlap can be seen in terms such as *commitment, honesty, responsibility, and violence*. Examples would be the Ten Commandments, sin, and the Golden Rule. Finally, in the center of the figure is the zone of overlap among all three domains, evident in terms such as *healing, values, guilt, and forgiveness*. These words resonate across spirituality, morality, and therapy. The aim is to illustrate the kinds of words that convey different kinds of spiritual, moral and clinical meaning in contemporary society.

Since it deals with the language of spirituality, moral, and clinical care, the three domains model has several implications for how therapy can approach spiritual issues in clinical practice. However, the therapist or the counsellor cannot assume common religious affiliation and spiritual orientation prior to gaining understanding an insight into the domains the counsellee falls into. First, without knowledge of the couple's spiritual beliefs and preferred spiritual language, the therapist is advised to avoid introducing terms in the 'spiritual-only' domain in exploring the client's experience. Secondly, therapists should be wary about self-disclosing their own spiritual beliefs and practices without establishing that the client shares them in some way or wishes to hear about the therapist's orientation. Third, if the therapist is familiar with the inter-religious married couple's spiritual language and faith traditions, and if the client is interested in using this language and calling on their faith traditions, then the therapist can serve as a spiritual consultant and co-explorer. Fourth, if the therapist does not know the client's spiritual beliefs, then spiritual issues can be broached implicitly through the language of the overlap areas. Fifth, when the therapist senses that a religious client is using spiritual-only language in an empty way, introducing clinical/spiritual or clinical/moral/spiritual overlap language can enhance the client's experience. Sixth, when a inter-religious married couple or family is in conflict over different spiritual beliefs or religious traditions, the therapist can use the overlap areas to search for core beliefs and values that are shared across the family. A fundamentalist Christian and an atheist can both believe in the importance of moral responsibility and of constructive guilt when we transgress our responsibilities, but they might well agree or disagree about whether the moral order originates with God or humanity. In other words, family members can meet at the level of values, which connect the clinical, moral, and spiritual domains, than rather stay with their theological differences. An appreciation of the language differences and points of connection among the clinical, moral, and spiritual domains can serve as a guide for therapists.

In spiritual consultation the following must be noted: the inter-religious married couple's spontaneous statements of spiritual beliefs must be acknowledged; ensure that inquiries about the client's spiritual beliefs and practices must be made; ensure that inquiries about how the client connects the spiritual, clinical, and moral dimensions of his or her life or problems; express agreement with the client's spiritual beliefs or sensibilities when such self-disclosure could be therapeutic; articulate the client's dilemma without giving your own position; point out the contradictions between the inter-religious couple's spiritual beliefs, or between spiritual beliefs

and clinical realities or moral issues; and to challenge the client's way of handling spiritual beliefs on the basis of your own spiritual beliefs, your moral beliefs, or your clinical beliefs.

The focus on the spiritual dimension and especially Christian spirituality in counselling is relevant for the counselling of couples of inter-religious marriages. This is important not only for this research, but also for marriages in general society. The potential for change in couples seeking counselling affects their attitudes towards their own mental health, the moral realm of obligations, and the spiritual realm of transcendent meaning. These should all be brought together also in the counselling of inter-religious couples.

2.10 CONCLUSION

Since there is limited research done in the area of this study, the gap that is evident compelled the researcher to research existing literature that impacts on the topic. As such, this literature overview provides a brief background for the research. All the perspectives impact on and make a contribution to close the gap related to the counselling of couples in inter-religious marriages.

The family unit is one of the most important social institutions, which is found in some form in nearly all known societies. Hinduism stands out in that its marriage laws recognize inter-religious marriages, even marriages between different castes, in modern times. According to a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible, inter-religious marriages are forbidden. However, in contemporary society young people are allowed the freedom of choice in mate selection. In some denominations permission must be granted first, before inter-religious marriages can take place.

Most of the literature also indicates that there is a higher divorce rate in inter-religious marriages compared to marriages between couples of the same religion or cultural group. Marriage is a very important institution and should be taken seriously as such. It should be nurtured because it feeds into and sustains growth, strength, peace and harmony for people. With inter-faith marriages acceptance and tolerance should be practiced for the marriage to prevail, especially with regard to religious issues.

There are definitely critical challenges that are prevalent in inter-religious marriages. These challenges have to be addressed and dealt with through counselling to ensure stability in the

marriage. This this is possible through drawing on the available diverse counselling techniques and models discussed in chapter three which may be utilized to assist counselees to overcome their challenges. In an endeavour towards developing a marriage counselling model for inter-religious marriages, a Pycho-Spiritual theory will be guiding this research. As such relevant techniques will be drawn from the counselling approaches and models discussed in chapter three and integrated, including spirituality based on biblical beliefs in order to develop a marriage counselling model that would target specific challenges faced in inter-religious marriages.

CHAPTER THREE

COUNSELLING THEORIES, APPROACHES AND MODELS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher focuses on the counselling theories and models in this section in order to disclose the available techniques that may be accessed to develop a relevant inter-religious marriage counselling model since it is the primary task of this research. The main objective is that these techniques provide the pool of knowledge and practices related to counselling that may be integrated to produce a psycho-spiritual inter-religious marriage counselling model derived from psychotherapy and Christian spirituality. To deal with the issues and challenges of inter-religious relationships, the relevant counselling theories and models, including coping skills will be reviewed in this chapter.

Theories provide counsellors with the framework of concepts to understand human beings and the means and methods of counselling. This is important because it aids the counsellors to make decisions and choices that would assist to understand the clients' behaviour and the ways to engage them. Theories also provide the frameworks needed for predictions that need to be proved (Macmillan 2002: 3).

Theory is strongly influenced by culture and this is reflected more and more in multicultural societies where the values of Western and Eastern cultures for instance meet and clash. The theories of Western counselling, for example, reflect the value placed on individualism while people from Eastern cultures place greater value on group harmony through religion and the extended family (Sue 1990: 5).

According to Berne (1961: 15) counselling is a psychological process in that to a greater or lesser extent all counselling approaches are aimed at changing how people think and feel.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory (Freud 1976) provided a deep well of personality concepts. He viewed the unconscious mind as the prime motivator in determining human behaviour. The

psychoanalytical concepts such as transference and resistance, free association and interpretation are important to all counsellors.

An insight into some of the popular theories, such as Psychoanalysis, Client-Centered theory, Rational Emotive theory and Behavioural theory, is necessary as they form a framework and influence diverse counselling methods employed by therapists and counsellors. Furthermore, they form the basis for the introduction of an integrated marriage counselling model that may be used by Pastors in counselling inter-religious marriages.

According to Client-Centred therapy Clientell (1975), every person has the potential to deal with obstacles and problems, in order to function optimally and move towards self-actualization provided that a right emotional environment prevails. People control the circumstances around which they live in – how they think, feel and behave (face reality, do right and be responsible) as introduced by Reality therapy. In problem solving therapy married couples have the ability to solve problems. Cognitive therapy deals with the processing of information and the way in which people interpret their experiences in how they feel and act – counselling corrects erroneous thinking and distortions. Rational emotive therapy or Cognitive Behavioural therapy attempt to assist in the correction of irrational thoughts and to facilitate behavioral change – irrational beliefs are changed to rational beliefs about the self and the environment. The behavioral theory by Skinner is also discussed. People seek for meaning and wholeness – the Gestalt therapy view is that when affective and cognitive experiences are isolated, people lack full awareness of their complete experience. Meaning to life is essential for growth and self-actualization as discussed by Frankl (1955) in his Logotherapy and spirituality has a role to play to achieve meaning to life. The multimodal approach by Lazarus is also central to this study as he shows how an integration of models can be used in counselling.

Counselling is of paramount importance not only to Christian counselling but also in the counselling of inter-religious relationships or marriages that experience conflicts, contradictory feelings about cultural, racial, or religious identities – where these include negative reactions by people on racism, prejudice and ignorance to inter-marriage. Counselees should be helped to engage in responsible behaviour – to face reality, do right, and be responsible. They are directed to goals and techniques to overcome their specific challenges, in line with insights from psychotherapy theories of counselling.

3.2 FREUD'S PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

The key concept in Freud's theory is the unconscious mind, which is the prime motivator in determining human behaviour.

3.2.1 Instinct Theory

Freud's (1973) instinct theory enhanced the understanding of the biological basis of human functioning, and his ideas on defense mechanisms allowed greater understanding of the way in which people sustain self-defeating behaviour (Macmillan 2002: 13).

According to Freud (1973: 140), human instincts can be divided into two broad categories, namely Eros and Thanatos. Eros is a group of erotic or life instincts that seek to combine more and more living substance into even greater unities. Included here are the instincts of self-preservation, preservation of the species, ego-love and object-love. On the other hand, Thanatos is a group of death instincts that oppose the efforts of Eros, lead what is living back to an inorganic state. It is a compulsion to repeat the earlier inorganic state. Consequently, death is the aim of all life. The main representative of the death instinct and derived from it is the aggressive instinct. For Freud, the evolution of human civilization represents the struggle between these life and death instincts in humankind.

3.2.2 The Conscious and the Unconscious

Freud (1973) stated that the mental life of a human being takes place on three levels:

- The unconscious;
- The preconscious; and
- The conscious.

Freud was strongly influenced by his study of dreams, the interpretation of which he saw as "the royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (Freud 1976: 769). According to him there are two kinds of unconscious: *the unconscious proper and the preconscious*. The unconscious proper contains repressed material (thoughts, feelings and facts)

that is not admissible to the consciousness. Psychoanalysis is used to draw out this material – strong resistance can be provoked during this process. The preconscious is latent and capable of becoming conscious. This area is involved in memories of these mental events, which can potentially be recalled. It is made up of everything that can move easily from the unconscious state to the conscious state. In dreams preconscious material can normally pass into consciousness without the assistance of a therapist (Frankl 1955: 22). The conscious act has a sense organ for the perception of psychical qualities. A state of consciousness is normally very temporary and unlike the unconscious has no memory. Material becomes conscious by inner excitement or the external world (Macmillan 2002: 13). This is the area of the mind that is aware of mental events such as thoughts, feelings and facts. The human mind has three parts (Freud 1976: 771):

- The id is involved in a never-ending struggle for the satisfaction of basic instincts.
- The superego represents parental and moral influence.
- The ego applies reality to the demands of the id. The ego has three taskmasters, which can be the cause of anxiety, namely the external world, the id and the superego. There are three types of anxiety, one for each of the ego's taskmasters: realistic anxiety, which arises from the dangers posed by the external world; moral anxiety, which results from conflict with the superego; and neurotic anxiety, which results from conflict with the id.

3.2.3 Defense Mechanisms

Macmillan (2002: 12) indicated that defense mechanisms develop to address the conflicting demands of the id and superego. Put simply, defense mechanisms enable individuals to cope with sources of anxiety. In Freud's view (1973: 26) the ego cannot cope without them. According to Freud (1973: 27), when the ego becomes aware of an endangering instinctual demand it uses the following defense mechanisms:

- *Repression*: the involuntary exclusion of painful, conflicting thoughts, memories or impulses. Repression works in two ways: material in the preconscious is forced into the unconscious; or unconscious material may undergo censorship to prevent it getting into the preconscious (Macmillan 2002:13).

- *Sublimation*: instinctual sexual activity is repressed and rechannelled into socially acceptable pursuits, such as art and sport (Macmillan 2002: 14).
- *Reaction formation*: the process of turning an attitude into its opposite, that is the ego acknowledges an impulse that is contrary to the one it feels threatened by. For example a sexual impulse may be countered by a feeling of shame, disgust or loathing of sexual matters. Likewise, an unconscious dislike of a parent may be transformed into a feeling of admiration (Macmillan 2002: 14).
- *Denial*: non-acceptance of the outside world because it is painful. The reality of the situation is not accepted. For example there may be refusal to accept that a person has died (Macmillan 2002: 15).
- *Fixation*: caused by anxiety about advancing to the next stage of sexual development, so the libido lags behind. Alternatively there may be fixation on an earlier stage in terms of sexual satisfaction (Macmillan 2002: 15).
- *Regression*: the return to an earlier stage of development at which the person was fixated, for example clinging to a parent. This happens when the individual is threatened (Macmillan 2002: 15).
- *Projection*: an instinctual impulse is externalized because it is unacceptable. For example people may attribute aggressive or sexual impulses to others because they do not wish to acknowledge the extent of these impulses in themselves (Macmillan 2002: 16).
- *Introjection*: the process of unconsciously emulating someone else (Macmillan 2002: 16).
- *Reversal*: a person detaches an attitude from its original object and directs it at someone else. For example the urge to harm one's father could be transformed into a self-destructive tendency (Macmillan 2002: 16).
- *Displacement*: an attitude is detached from its original object and directed towards someone else (Macmillan 2002: 17).
- *Conversion*: a psychological disorder is transformed into a physical one. For example if someone had an unconscious feeling of dependency, this could give rise to an illness that would require him or her to be looked after (Macmillan 2002: 17).

3.2.4 The Process of Psychoanalysis

The psychoanalytic process involves the following (Berne 1961: 15):

- Getting clients' weakened egos to take part in interpretation in order to fill in the gaps in their mental resources, and to transfer the authority of their superego to the therapist.
- To stimulate the clients' egos to fight the id's demands, and to defeat any resistance that results from them.
- To restore order to the clients' egos by detecting material and impulses that may have intruded from the unconscious.

3.2.5 Free Association

According to Macmillan (2002: 22) "encouragement of free association is a fundamental rule for analysts. Clients must tell their analyst everything that occurs to them, even if it is uncomfortable, painful or seem meaningless." They should share all thoughts, memories, associations, feelings and ideas, and the analyst should encourage them to put all self-criticism aside. The aim of this is to lift repression by making unconscious material conscious.

3.2.6 Transference

Transference is the process of unconsciously transferring feelings and emotions associated with a significant figure in earlier life, usually a parent, to a person in one's current life. This is presumed to be a common event in human relationships, and is used in psychoanalysis as an important technique in achieving change and growth (Meier 1982: 241-243).

Freud (1973) found that clients tended to see their analyst as reincarnations of people from their past, and that they tended to transfer onto their analysts the feelings and emotions they had felt for these people. Transference has three advantages. First, it gives analysts a positive start because their clients want to please them. The clients' weak egos become stronger and they gain from their love of the analyst. Second, analysts gain access to the power that clients' superegos have over their egos when they put their analysts in the place of their father or mother. During the course of therapy, repressed conflicts and fears, which originate from the original parent-child's relationship are unraveled, unconsciously directed towards the therapist, and worked through. Finally, vital parts of the clients' life history are reproduced, with defensive reactions and mental attitudes in connection with their neuroses being revealed. Transference can become negative and hostile when analysts frustrate the erotic demands of their clients by refusing to

satisfy them. Nonetheless analysts must not let transference get out of hand. Clients should be warned that transference might run out of control, and that they should guard against acting out transference issues away from the analyst's room (Freud 1973: 28).

3.2.7 Client Resistance

Resistance is defined by Freud (1976: 772) as all the forces that oppose the work of recovery. In practical terms, clients' associations become more distant from the repressed material, making the therapists' job much more difficult. According to Freud (1976: 773) there are five types of resistance: Repression resistance; Transference resistance; Resistance to forgoing, the gain from illness; Resistance by the id to a change in the direction of its fulfillment and the need to work through to a new type of satisfaction; and Resistance caused by the superego imposing an unconscious sense of guilt or need for punishment. This is the strongest of the five because clients feel they deserve nothing better than to remain ill.

3.2.8 Interpretation

Interpretations give explanations for the repressed unconscious material that is brought to the conscious mind, and of things that are currently happening to clients but are not understood by them. Therapists use interpretations for the following purposes (Macmillan 2002: 23): To understand the impulses of the id; to assist the client to understand the defence mechanisms and resistances employed by their egos to cope with repressed material and to evade the efforts of the therapist; to understand repressed impulses and objects to which they have become attached; to help clients replace repression by judgements that are appropriate to the here and now rather than their childhood; to help the clients' egos to overcome resistance; and to expose unconscious impulses to criticism by tracing their origins.

3.2.9 Implications of Psychoanalysis and Free Association to Inter-religious Marriage Counselling

According to Meier (1982: 243) Freud vents much hostility toward religion, declaring that it can be compared with neurosis (mental illness). In *Totem and Taboo* (1913: 62-65), Freud emphasizes the centrality of guilt in religion, "the do's and the don'ts" undermine mental health.

From Freud's perspective, religious faith produces a repression of impulses and thus keeps the personality secure at the expense of honesty.

Freud (1970) described religious activities such as rituals as compulsive behaviours performed to temporarily ease the intense guilt feelings that are fostered by religion. The mentally ill neurotic may compulsively wash his hands several times every hour, trying to symbolically wash away his or her unconscious feelings of guilt. Likewise Christians neurotically try to free themselves of guilt feelings by performing religious rituals. Freud seemed to think that all guilt is false guilt. Meier (1982: 244) indicated that Christians or any religion disagree that guilt is always an unhealthy thing. True guilt is the uncomfortable inner awareness that one feels when one violates God's moral law. In Christianity it is believed that the Holy Spirit of God convicts a person so that guilt is really experienced or felt within, especially for spiritual Godly disobedience and also a person's own conscience cause a person to feel remorse and guilt for doing wrong. Conscience is what Freud called the superego and is molded by the environment, religion and culture. True guilt is valuable as it can lead to change. Hyder (1971: 121) stated that the causes of false guilt stem back to childhood upbringing. Too rigid a superego or conscience can only be developed by too rigid expectations or standards imposed by parents. Adequate and proper punishment given in love and with explanation removes guilt. Some parents give too little encouragement. According to Hyder, the only treatment for false guilt is to understand and evaluate it for what it really is. Feelings of bitterness and pride need to be separated from feelings of guilt.

In inter-religious counselling, cognizance of a person's anxiety, shame, and guilt feelings of emotions must not be ignored. The moral guilt arises from violation of moral, ethical or contractual standards that exist outside his or her historical experience of the culture and God. The social guilt arises from failure to conform to conventional standards, social rituals and cultural norms. Frequently, it arises from over-ritualized, over-conventionalized contexts, which become oppressive or stifling. There are many religious and cultural issues that cause impact on emotions that affect behaviour and attitudes of the couples in inter-faith marriages. However, it can disappear once the cause is removed or the problem addressed (Augsburger 1986: 137).

When unresolved religious and cultural conflicts, even deep rooted beliefs and values are brought into the inter-faith marriage, it surfaces at some stage of the marriage. Also *repressed feelings* of

guilt of changing from one's cultural and religious practices and submitting to another's religion or resistance to family or resentment to mother-in-law will surface at some point in the inter-faith marriage (Chinitz 2001: 743).

Sometimes a person's emotional conflicts are so difficult for him or her to accept that the feelings are repressed altogether and are no longer consciously aware of them. Not only is it unwise but it is definitely unhealthy to keep emotional tensions bottled up. If the emotional stresses are ignored it will cause inner conflict and discomfort to the individual and the marriage (Meier 1982: 165).

Murstein (1976: 56) indicated that most people struggle with inner confusion about where they fit culturally and religiously. People who have experienced racism or religious persecution often feel that their group identification is an unwelcome burden. And when either partner of an inter-marriage experience conflicting feelings about race issues, religious, or cultural identity, it could contribute to confusion, inner conflict, and pain in the couple's relationship.

Freud's (1973) psychoanalytical and free association therapy may be utilized to uncover and bring to the surface suppressed emotions and guilt feelings in individuals of inter-religious marriages. Freud believed that insight into the conflicts of the unconscious mind was central to mental healing. These perspectives, however, are not sufficient for the counselling of inter-religious couples (Augsburger 1986: 145).

3.3 CLIENT-CENTERED THERAPY

“Every individual has the inherent capacity to deal constructively and successfully with his or her problems, and will do so given the right emotional environment. The counsellor facilitates this by establishing a special helping relationship, with the individual” (Meier 1982: 68).

According to Macmillan (2002: 75), trust is essential between the counsellor and counsellee and that clients move in the direction of understanding and to discover the abilities that they have within themselves to heal. Their subjective self-concept is made up of the ways in which they define and perceive themselves, and their single motivating drive is their inherent actualizing tendency to maintain and enhance themselves. Individuals behave primarily in ways that will enhance their self-concept, i.e. the way they perceive themselves as human beings. Individuals

start to develop a self-concept very early on in life, and many of the self-conceptions that form the self-concept are based on their own valuing process. Other self-conceptions reflect internalized conditions of worth or the values of others, which are treated as though they are based on the individual's own valuing process. Hence a conflict arises between the actualizing tendency and the self-concept because conditions of worth impede an accurate perception of inner and outer experiences. Disturbed behaviour results when people perceive themselves to be behaving differently to the way they believe they should behave. This belief is founded, often falsely, on the opinions and values of others.

3.3.1 The Actualising Tendency

The actualizing tendency is the basic motivating drive and is always operative. It is an active process that reflects the inherent tendency of all people to develop their capacities in order to maintain, enhance and reproduce themselves. It involves the differentiation of organs and functions, and causes people to engage in self-regulation and self-enhancement and hence realize their full potential without being controlled by external forces. As long as certain definable conditions exist, people have the ability to regulate, guide and control themselves. The psychological problems are experienced through the blockages that hinder the person's self-actualization, and counselling attempts to remove the blockages. When the person's experiences encountered in life is contrary to the individual's self-concept emotional problems are the result (Rogers 1951: 76).

3.3.2 Person-Centered Counselling

Macmillan (2002: 82) indicated that self-actualisation in fully functioning people have the following attributes:

- *Openness to experience.* This equips people to engage in existential living, deal with change and be aware of the range of life choices open to them. Openness to experience allows more efficient behaviour because it encourages a wider perceptual field and tendency to behave from choice rather than necessity. It promotes spontaneity and creativity.

- *Rationality.* Rationality is a feature of openness to experience. People's behaviour is likely to be rational in terms of maintaining and enhancing their lives when they are in touch with their actualizing tendency.
- *Personal responsibility.* This means that people take responsibility for their own self-actualization rather than feeling they are responsible only to others. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and accept that they are responsible for being different from others.
- *Self-regard.* Effective people have a high degree of self-acceptance and unconditional self-regard, based on their own organismic valuing process, as opposed to needing the praise of others.
- *A capacity for good personal relations.* People are less likely to be defensive and therefore more likely to be accepting of others if they have achieved self-acceptance. That means that other people are seen as unique, prized and able to be related to both freely and openly. Another feature of this capacity is the ability to communicate a strong and fruitful self-awareness.

Macmillan (2002: 83) continued to state that in order to foster these attributes, during counselling clients are directed in the following: (cited Karen Horney, 1945)

- Away from a preoccupation with keeping up appearances and other facades.
- Away from the internalized sense of duty that arises from externally imposed obligations.
- Away from trying to live up to others' expectations.
- Towards valuing 'realness' and honesty in oneself and others.
- Towards prizing the ability to direct one's life.
- Towards accepting and valuing one's self and feelings, whether these are positive or negative.
- Towards valuing the experience of the moment and the growth process instead of the endless pursuit of objectives.
- Towards a desire for greater intimacy and the cherishing of relationships.

- Towards a better understanding of greater respect for others.
- Towards valuing all forms of experience and being open to all experiences, both inner and outer, however unexpected.

Meier (1982: 68) believes that an individual can develop a better self-concept and move in the direction to actually achieving self-actualization, if the therapist provides certain therapeutic conditions. The therapist provides conditions, which clients use in their own innate tendencies to grow, to actively negotiate with the environment, and to realize their potential. The goal of Client-Centered therapy is to help people regain contact with their true feelings and values. Increased self-acceptance increases autonomy and reduces the destructive forces of anxiety; thus personal growth occurs. Thus therapists accept clients as people, show empathy and respect, and provide unconditional positive regard for clients. In Client-Centered therapy the therapist needs to be honest, genuine, transparent and totally accepting. Finally, the therapists should show genuineness, be 'themselves' in a session and express their thoughts and feelings without pretension. Client-Centered therapy is especially effective for individuals with a poor self-image.

Kirwan (1984: 41) indicates that this type of counselling by the counsellor is based on Rogers (1951: 76), who believes that all people have within them the ability and energy to strive and achieve personal growth, good health, and make changes to adapt, which he calls self-actualization. Tension, anxiety, and defensiveness interfere with basic human drives. If these forces can be reduced or relieved, a person can experience personal growth.

The Client-Centered approach is an approach to any relationship, where individuals want to understand and be understood and are willing to reveal themselves to some degree. The counsellor/pastor must have an unconditional positive regard for the other person. They must accept the client as a person regardless of how socially unacceptable that person's behaviour and feelings may be. Counsellors must possess empathy; they must try to understand as clearly as possible the feelings of the client.

A major technique in client-centered therapy is "reflection". This involves repeating what clients have said using different words and sometimes condensing and clarifying what they have stated. The "you feel" statements are used very often. Reflection is a good technique for helping people to really listen to one another, and could be used in testimony services, small groups, and counselling sessions. The pastor or counsellor who uses reflection and clarification may be able

to defuse a potentially explosive situation. The time taken to restate positions can give individuals who find themselves in conflict situations an opportunity to think before reacting, as well as clear up possible misunderstandings or miscommunications.

3.3.3 Directive versus Non-Directive Techniques

According to Meier (1982: 315), conventional psychiatry is essentially nondirective. The therapist does not attempt to tell patients what they should do, but rather operates on the principle that once patients understand why things have gone wrong, they will change; insight supposedly leads to changed behaviour. Directive counselling, on the other hand, attempts to teach patients better ways to meet their needs. If counsellors are too direct they defeat their own purpose, though, because only personal decisions will last. But counselling that is not sufficiently directive confuses counselees, since they are left with too few guidelines to follow.

3.3.4 Empathetic Understanding

Empathetic understanding centers on the clients' subjective perceptual world because counsellors must have a strong understanding of their clients' inner world in order to be trusted and seen as reliable by the clients. The counselors themselves must be first comfortable with their own identity before moving into the clients' inner world as it may cause harm to themselves. Once they are in the clients' inner world, the counselors must be gentle and tentative because if feelings and meanings that their clients have yet to become aware of comes too soon, this could drive them away from therapy (Macmillan 2002: 85).

3.3.5 Implications of Self-Actualization to Inter-marriage Counselling

Whether admitted or not, most people carry a mixed bag of contradictory feelings about cultural, racial, or religious identities (Crohn 1995: 32). This definitely contributes to tension and anxiety in inter-faith marriages.

The intense negative reaction of family and friends out of racism, prejudice, and ignorance to inter-marriage most definitely causes tension and strain in the relationships (William 1993: 47). Anxiety, conflict and tension can creep into the lives of inter-faith married couples when they are forced to deal with the differences in religion and with its many rituals and traditions. On the other hand, the lack of simpler rituals and traditions can also stress the marriage.

Rogers (1951: 76) believes that tension, anxiety, and defensiveness interfere with basic human drives. If these forces can be reduced or relieved, a person can experience personal growth, health and adjustment. Neurotic individuals, according to Rogers, have lost sight of their own values and have taken on the values of others. The goal of Client-Centered therapy is to help people regain contact with their true feelings and values. Increased self-acceptance increases autonomy and reduces the destructive forces of anxiety; thus personal growth occurs. Reflection in Client-Centered therapy would be a means to reflect underlying feelings and clarification may be able to defuse a potentially explosive situation.

3.4 REALITY THERAPY

Glasser (1965: 7-10) indicated that *control theory* upon which reality counselling is based has at least five main elements:

- Active language;
- Basic needs;
- Pictures in the head;
- Total behaviour; and
- People as control systems.

3.4.1. Active Language

Behaviour has three components: *thinking, doing and feeling* (people choose how to do them). Verbs are used to express doing and thinking, as in swimming and contemplating. Adjectives are used to express feelings as in being excited and nouns are also used as in feelings of depression. However, feelings do not just happen, people choose to feel a particular way, so Glasser does not use nouns and adjectives when he refers to feelings – he uses verbs. *Active language* describes the behaviour chosen by people as they strive to control their environment to satisfy their needs (for example angering is used for anger, depressing for depression) (Glasser 1984: 5).

3.4.2 Basic Needs

Macmillan (2002: 98) indicated that when a need arises one has to satisfy it, and when one has succeeded in this, other needs arise. Life is the endless striving to satisfy various needs and to

reconcile the continual conflicts between them. There are five basic needs according to Glasser (1984: 7):

- Survival and reproduction;
- Belonging;
- Power;
- Freedom; and
- Fun.

3.4.3 Mental Pictures

Glasser (1984: 7) stated that our senses combine to form a sensory camera that takes pictures of sounds, sights, tastes and textures. He uses the word pictures rather than perceptions because 80 % of the contents of personal albums are visual. Personal picture albums are a small selective part of the total memory bank. There is at least one picture for each of our needs, and it is practically impossible to have a need without a picture to satisfy it. Conversely we often have pictures that cannot be satisfied in the real world, and some pictures may be incompatible with each other or irrational. Pictures can be added, and those that don't satisfy the need can be removed.

An individual life is changed when change takes place to important pictures, but a picture can only be replaced by one that meets the same basic need. It is difficult to change our own pictures, and even harder to change other people's. This can only be done by discussion and making compromises. People do what they do because of the pictures in their own heads, not those of other peoples.

Glasser (1984: 8) continued to state that pictures are essential to comprehending the control theory view of motivation because behaviour always begins with the pictures in our heads and the difference between the pictures in our heads (what we want) and what is actually happening in the real world (what we have) determines our behaviour. When there is a difference we act to reduce this difference. This process is biologically driven, but what we do is usually our own choice.

3.4.4 Total Behaviour

According to control theory, behaviour is how people try to control the world to meet their needs rather than being a response to stimulation (Macmillan 2002: 95). Total behaviour is a term used by Glasser (1965:14) for his expansion of the concept of behaviour. Total behaviour is the sum of four components:

- Acting: this involves active behaviours such as swimming and walking, in other words anything that involves the voluntary movement of some part of the body. Routine activities are accompanied by involuntary actions. For example one swallows when one eats.
- Thinking: this has two aspects – voluntary thoughts, and involuntary thoughts such as dreams.
- Feeling: this consists of the pleasurable and painful feelings a person generates.
- Physiology: this comprises of voluntary and involuntary body mechanisms involved in the feeling, thinking and doing parts of behaviour, for example perspiring.

Behaviour is not a response to stimulation. It is how individuals try to control the environment to satisfy their needs. It is more than action and conduct (total behaviour). Reality counselling is designed to help clients to change their thoughts and actions.

3.4.5 People as Control Systems

All living organisms have basic needs that are genetically built into their systems, and they are constantly trying to control the environment to satisfy those needs. As control systems, people act upon their environment and themselves in order to secure the picture they want (Macmillan 2002:96). Macmillan listed two ways of controlling the environment:

- The input dimension: people have to perceive what is available in their environment to secure the picture they think will satisfy their needs.
- The output dimension: people need to control (to act on) what they see as fulfilling their needs.

For example hungry people must first perceive what hunger is and how it can be satisfied by food. Then they satisfy their hunger by controlling or acting on their environment to search for food.

According to Glasser (1984: 18) there are few genuinely stressful situations in the outside world, and a situation is only called stressful when individuals cannot control it with their chosen behaviours. People choose to rebel if others attempt to control them, or if they attempt to control themselves in ways that result in their needs remaining unmet. Rebellion can be direct or indirect. Indirect rebellion manifests itself as choosing to be ill or to be depressed, or have migraine. People cannot control their situations unless they can be persuaded to develop new pictures of their stressful situations.

3.4.6 Reality Therapy in Christian Counselling

Anecdotal evidence reveals that of the various secular schools of thought, reality therapy used in conjunction with Client-Centered therapy seem to have had the greatest influence on the Christian counselling of inter-faith marriages. Macmillan (2002: 92) stated that the focus of reality therapy is aimed at responsible behaviour. Its emphasis on responsibility and its attempts to distinguish between right and wrong are commendable; yet, in reality therapy, morality is relative because it is based on no absolute standard.

In pursuit of such behaviour the “**three RS**” must be observed (Meier 1982: 121):

- *face reality;*
- *do right; and*
- *be responsible.*

According to reality therapy most psychiatric help is sought because of the failure to meet two needs: love and the experience of self-worth. The focus should be on the present, not the past, and on behaviour rather than on feelings. Individuals must accept full responsibility for their present and future behaviour. Unconscious motivations are no excuse for misbehaviour. What is important, are present attempts to succeed and intentions for the future. The counsellor helps

individuals to devise specific plans for their behaviour and make a commitment to follow through with those plans (Glasser 1965: 18).

According to Macmillan (2002:95) human beings have a single most important social need - identity. This intrinsic need is inherited and transmitted from generation to generation. The identity we develop comes from interaction with others as well as interaction with self. An identity change follows a change in behaviour. To change what we are, we must change what we do and undertake new ways of behaviour. Reality therapy focuses strongly on helping individuals understand and accept themselves as they are with their limitations and abilities.

The counsellor in reality therapy must be personal, encouraging the individual or married couple to make a value judgement and a plan to alter behaviour. Making a commitment to a choice develops maturity. Positive in approach, the counsellor never focuses on criticism of behaviour, attempting instead to lead clients out of a failure of identity. In reality therapy, individuals are assisted in understanding, defining, and clarifying life goals (both immediately and long-term), in identifying the ways they hamper their own progress towards goals, and in comparing alternatives (Meier 1982: 121).

3.4.7 Goals of Reality Counselling

Macmillan (2002: 98) listed the following goals:

- To raise clients' awareness of their choosing behaviours and the way in which they control their environment through them.
- To help clients take responsibility for making choices that work for them.
- To help clients to identify and understand their needs in respect of survival, power, belonging, freedom and fun.
- To help clients to develop realistic pictures in their heads to satisfy their basic needs.
- To teach clients to evaluate how effective their total behaviour is in achieving what they want and to adopt new behaviours as needed.
- To help clients to develop and engage in behaviours that will help them to satisfy their needs now and in the future.
- To help clients to avoid being controlled by the negative controlling behaviour of others.

3.4.8 Implications of Reality Therapy on Inter-religious Marriage Counselling

Glasser (1965: 14-18) indicated that reality therapy attempts to produce behaviour to cause a person to become responsible, especially when the individual is not content, overwhelmed with fear, anger, stressed and frustrated.

Inter-marriage has an impact on cultural sustenance, and partners from different upbringing experience pressure and emotional conflict caused by love and the difference in religious practices. In order for inter-married couples to be loyal, they have to deal with the “ethnic identities and religious traditions” (Crohn 2005: 16). This can cause *anger*, a strong feeling of displeasure. It is also a natural reaction to feeling threatened, stressed and frustrated. The individuals are made aware that all their feelings and emotions, being pleasant or unpleasant, are normal and are an important part of their personality. When this anger is stored up so that it makes individuals bitter, resentful, or hostile, it becomes dangerous.

In pursuit of responsible behaviour the “three Rs” must be observed: face reality; do right; and be responsible. The focus is on the present, not the past, and on behaviour rather than on feelings (Glasser 1965:14-18). The couples of inter-religious marriage must face reality and admit that the past cannot be rewritten. They must accept full responsibility for their present and future behaviour. Unconscious motivations are no excuse for misbehaviour. The couples must realize that present attempts to succeed and their intentions for the future are important. The therapist in reality therapy assists the inter-marriage couple to devise specific plans for their behaviour and make a commitment to follow through with those plans.

Meier (1982: 309) stated that human beings have a single most important social need – for identity. That intrinsic need is inherited and transmitted from generation to generation. The identity a person develops comes from interaction with others as well as interaction with self. And identity change follows a change in behaviour. To change what we are, we must change what we do and undertake new ways of behaving.

The couples of inter-religious marriages are exposed to new identities, values, religious and cultural traditions and therefore subjected to a change in behaviour and to adapt to one another. Hence to overcome these challenges, problems arise. Glasser (1965: 10-18) indicated that reality

therapy focuses strongly on helping individuals understand and accept themselves as they are with their own limitations and abilities and to deal with these challenges. Such self acceptance is important in inter-religious marriage.

3.5 PROBLEM SOLVING THERAPY

According to Perry (1991: 66) “most individuals and married couples possess a limited ability to find solutions to impersonal problems. They are less able to produce new ideas and think flexibly or to consider alternatives and they may persist in ineffective problem solving even when a more effective strategy is presented to them. They are also less able to generate active cognitive coping strategies in the face of stressful life events.” Active cognitive coping strategies include self-comforting statements and instrumental problem solving. There is a lack of active problem solving that exists in individuals. Perry (1991:67) identified the following problem solving deficits prior to assisting the individuals in resolving them:

- Individuals lack an appropriate general orientation to problems;
- They have difficulty generating potential alternative solutions to problems once the problems have been identified;
- They tend to focus on potential negative consequences of implementing the alternatives generated;
- They do not adequately implement viable alternatives; and
- Problem solving provides the couples with strategies for dealing with specific problems in life.

Proposed steps in problem solving (Crook 1997: 50) are as follows:

1. A difficulty is felt;
2. The difficulty is located and defined;
3. Possible solutions are suggested;
4. Consequences are considered; and
5. A solution is accepted.

3.5.1 Implications of Problem Solving on Inter-religious Marriage Counselling

Meier (1982: 335) indicated that married couples are exposed to many challenges for which they

may need counselling, such as role conflicts, in-law conflicts, financial problems, and child rearing problems. If normal marriages have so many challenges, how much more challenges do inter-marriage relationships have? If the loyalties to ethnic identities and religious traditions, or even the religious identity of children are not resolved, these may bring about tension and hence distress into the marriage. Many other issues that have been discussed earlier can also become a handful to cope with. Problem solving is not limited to a single therapeutic approach. Family therapists have generally worked with clients using practice methods that focus on changing behavioural patterns, cognitive-beliefs, and social context as a major means of helping. In recent years, however, family therapists are emphasizing the importance of working with attachment processes and emotional states. The use of acceptance strategies is one of the major means of helping families resolve their differences. Emotional-focused techniques have offered effective results for distressed couples. Research has repeatedly shown that couples who are defensive, criticize, show contempt, and stonewall their partners are the most distressed couples, especially couples of inter-marriage and the ones who are most likely to divorce. The family counsellor attempts to teach the family to communicate more effectively producing growth and independence, of each family member – strategies should be turned into action (cf. Gottman 1998: 3; Spencer 1990: 545).

As such, problem solving may be used in inter-religious marriage to identify the core of the problem and assist couples to make an attempt to understand the precipitating factors relevant to the challenges they experience. An agreed upon solution must be reached and the possible consequences explored (Crook 1997: 50). For interpersonal, role and identity conflicts, the counsellor helps the couples understand the traditional and cultural implications and help them with suggestions where they may agree or disagree constructively. The role relations are clarified as applicable to culture and religion. The ability and weakness of couples to cope with stress are identified and strengthened by recommending suitable coping skills. Meier (1982: 335) stated that in problem solving couples are made aware of healthy interactions and how to temper the destructive features of conflicts.

3.6 COGNITIVE THERAPY

According to the principles of cognitive therapy the way in which people understand and process their life's experiences determines how they translate their feelings and responds in action. As such, cognitive counselling assist the counsellees to come to grips with their own understandings,

especially since the clients, during their mental growth, can come to understand their actions, habits and behaviors incorrectly. Hence, cognitive therapy aims at addressing distorted thinking, and assists in more real ways of understanding (Macmillan 2002: 171).

Beck (1990: 2) stated that schemas are the cognitive structures that organize experience and behaviour. Beliefs and rules are the contents of schemas and therefore determine the contents of the thinking affect and behaviour. Schemas are stable cognitive patterns and they influence how we select and synthesize data through our beliefs. Schemas contain anything from inanimate objects to personal relationships. There are five categories of schemas:

- Cognitive: these deal with abstracting, interpreting, recalling and evaluating the self and other people.
- Affective: these are responsible for generating feelings.
- Motivational: these are concerned with wishes and desires.
- Instrumental: these prepare people for action.
- Control: this category involves self-monitoring and inhibiting, modifying and directing actions.

Cognitive therapy, in contrast with other forms of psychotherapy, is problem orientated. The main goal is to help clients to solve the problems they have highlighted for change. Therapy aims to re-energize the reality-testing system to deal with dysfunctional interpretations. In short the process is a learning exercise aimed first at symptoms relief and ultimately at the removal of systematic biases in clients' thought patterns. Behavioural skills are also assessed. For example, shy people are taught assertion skills and communication skills for distressed relationships (Meier 1982: 70). There are five learning processes: Monitoring negative automatic thoughts; Recognizing connections between cognition affect and behaviour; Examining and reality testing evidence for and against distorted automatic thoughts; Substituting more realistic interpretations for biased cognitions; and Identifying and changing any beliefs that cause clients to distort their experiences.

Macmillan (2002: 98) states that the clients are taught to monitor their feelings, thoughts and behaviour, and to identify how they are interconnected. They are also asked to record their automatic thoughts in times of distress.

3.6.1 Distressed Relationships

What attracts a couple to each other in the first place is rarely enough to keep the relationship going. The relationship may be blighted by poor communication skills or unfulfilled expectations of the relationship and each other as expectations in marriage are less flexible than in uncommitted relationships. Marriages may run into trouble if the following communication skills are inadequate (Meier 1982: 75): No diplomacy and tact used; poor listening signals; No interruption; Questions asked skillfully; and Tuning into the partner's mood.

Macmillan (2002: 99) indicated that much behaviour in marriage has idiosyncratic, symbolic meanings attached to it, hinging on symbols of love or rejection. Security or insecurity can release powerful emotions and reduce the partners' ability to reality test their own interpretations, thoughts, feelings and actions and those of their partner. Voluntary and automatic thinking result in cognitive errors and the emphasis shifts to what is wrong in the relationship rather than what is going well. Their thoughts about each other tend to be in black and white terms and negative labels are applied, such as selfish, inconsiderate and then they react to these labels. They may also misinterpret and misunderstand the words and actions of each other, and attribute to each other malicious and undesirable motives. Also rash comments may be designed to hurt and anger, which may lead to hostility and fighting back, and hence destroy relationships.

There are many beliefs often expressed in the form of automatic thoughts that weaken the will to address a distressed relationship (Meier 1982: 60). There are four main groupings: Beliefs about change: "nothing can be done to improve the relationship"; "my partner does not have the ability to change." Self-justifying beliefs: "my behaviour is normal"; "my partner hurt me and so deserves to be hurt too." Reciprocity arguments: "I refuse to make an effort unless my partner does too." The partner is to blame: "my partner is impossible"; "I had no problem until I married my partner."

3.6.2 Cognitive Distortions

According to Beck (1990: 4) the following may activate cognitive distortions.

- *Arbitrary inference*: coming to a specific conclusion when the evidence contradicts it, or when there is no evidence.

- *Selective abstraction*: focusing on an out-of-context detail at the expense of more relevant information.
- *Personalisation*: relating external events to oneself without adequate evidence.
- *Magnification and minimisation*: evaluation of events as much more or much less than they really are, resulting in a serious distortion of the facts.
- *Overgeneralisation*: using a few isolated incidents to form a general rule, which are then used out of context, in too broad a sense and in unrelated situations.
- *Dichotomous, absolutistic thinking*: polarized, black and white thinking that puts experiences into one of two opposite categories.
- *Biased explanations*: partners make negative attributions about each partner when their relationship is going through a bad patch. They consider there to be a wicked motive behind what they regard as the offensive actions of their partner.
- *Tunnel vision*: believing whatever fits our state of mind when in reality it is only a part of a wider situation.
- *Mind reading*: this is divided into two errors – I know what he/she is thinking and he/she should know what I think.
- *Negative labelling*: the product of biased explanations, where partners label each other's actions in a critical way. This causes them to react to the labels allotted to each other.
- *Subjective reasoning*: if an emotion is felt strongly enough it must be justifiable.

3.6.3 Cognitive Behavioural Approaches

According to Meier (1982:61) Cognitive Behavioural Approaches believe that psychopathology stem from irrational, faulty, negative and distorted thinking or self-statements that a person makes to himself or herself. Most cognitive approaches share several elements:

- Firstly, cognitive restructuring is used to change a client's irrational, self-defeating, and distorted thoughts and attitudes to more rational, positive and appropriate ones.
- Secondly, skills training is used to help clients learn to manage and overcome stress.
- Thirdly, problem solving provides clients with strategies for dealing with specific problems in living.

Once the client begins to restructure his or her thoughts, the therapist begins the task of helping the client learn new ways to appraise and evaluate situations and to deal with situations.

3.6.4 Implications of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to Inter-religious Marriage

In Cognitive Behavioural therapy (CBT) or Rational Emotive therapy (RET) the goal is to change the irrational thoughts of couples in inter-marriage relationships in order to change behaviour. The focus is not on underlying causes or symptoms of the past but treatment of the current issues and difficulties. Since irrational beliefs have influence on behaviour. These irrational beliefs in couples of inter-marriage must be located, confronted, and then replaced by more rational beliefs. "One significant technique is to deconstruct situations of couples of inter-marriage that are stressful and causes confusion, and to list positive and negative thoughts, and then work towards transforming the negative thoughts into more positive ones" (Gottman 1999: 36).

When the inter-religious marriage relationship is going through a bad patch, partners make negative attributions about each other's behaviour (biased explanations). They usually blame it on the religious upbringing and even race, hence allot labels to each other. In CBT, the counselor may identify irrational, self-defeating and distorted thoughts towards religious and cultural practices that cause couples to distort their experiences and change it to more rational, positive and appropriate responses.

Skills training are used in inter-religious marriages to assist couples to overcome stress of having to merge religious traditions or practice a single religion. Hence, the couples are exposed to new ways to appraise and evaluate situations and to deal with cultural beliefs and practices.

3.7 BEHAVIOURAL THEORY

The underlying truth in this theory is that unwanted behaviour can be changed to new acceptable behaviour and negative behavior removed through conditioning by giving rewards or punishment. The assumption is that a person's behaviour, both good and bad, is learned through interactions with other people and the environment. Disturbed behaviour is thus considered to be the result of a learning process, and can be unlearned by using appropriate techniques (Meier 1982: 75).

Pavlov's (1927) experiments illustrated how the learning of a specific behaviour can occur by a simple process of association of stimuli, commonly known as Classical conditioning. This principle forms the basis for complex behaviour, and has helped in understanding how to learn certain responses which underlie our behaviour and, equally important, how the behaviour can be changed (Macmillan 2002: 199).

Skinner's (1957) observation indicated that behaviour occurs spontaneously, and if the event, which follows the behaviour is experienced as a reward, for example food or pleasure, this increases the chances that the behaviour will be repeated in the future. Unlike *Classical Conditioning*, where the reward is given simultaneous with the response, in operant conditioning the response takes place first and is then rewarded.

Applying the principles of *Operant Conditioning* to human behaviour, it follows that if the desired behaviour can be rewarded as and when it occurs, i.e. in the act of doing it, a person's behaviour can be substantially controlled or altered. Behaviour is thus viewed as the product of conditioning: of learning to behave in a particular way whilst interacting with the environment, because the outcome of that specific behaviour results either in reward, or is a means of avoiding punishment. And as all behaviour, including undesirable behaviour, is considered to be learned through conditioning, given the right circumstances the undesirable behaviour can be unlearned, and a new, more acceptable form of behaviour taught to take its place (Meier 1982: 76).

3.7.1 Behavioural Counselling

The aim in behavioural counselling is to teach new behaviour and to change old problem behaviour. The procedure to be used is first discussed in detail with the client, and his or her willingness to cooperate is then confirmed (Meier 1982: 66):

- Identify the problem: the problem must be identified in strict behavioural terms, i.e. how people behave or would like to behave, rather than how they think or feel. More often than not problems are expressed in terms of the results or emotions, which a problem creates, and not in specifics of the problem itself.
- Assessing the conditions maintaining the unwanted behaviour.

- Setting goals: goals need to be stated in strict behavioural terms, i.e. how a particular way of behaviour is going to be changed. One need to clearly state detail and what is to be achieved, who will do what and when, and the exact circumstances under which it will be done. Goals should be attainable, and wherever possible, both observable and measurable.

3.7.2 Behaviour Counselling Goals

Krumboltz (1966; 213) sets out three principles for establishing the goals of counselling:

- Each goal should be stated differently for each client.
- The goals need not conform to the counsellor's values, but they should at least be compatible.
- The degree to which the goals are eventually attained needs to be observable.

Goals are sometimes interrelated, but they are not always scientifically based because there are a great many influences on the client's choice of goal, and on the methods used by individual counsellors. Clients' goals may include the following (Macmillan 2002: 100):

- Overcoming deficits in behavioural repertoires;
- Strengthening adaptive behaviours;
- Diminishing or eradicating maladaptive behaviour;
- Conquering debilitating anxiety reactions;
- Gaining the ability to relax;
- Acquiring a capacity for self-assertion;
- Acquiring good social skills;
- Gaining competence at sexual functioning; and
- Gaining self-control.

3.7.3 Implications of Behavioural Therapy on Inter-religious Marriage

Many inter-religious married couples are exposed to inter-religious differences that bring into

the marriage tension and distress. The challenge of having to conform to a different religious practice can cause adapting problems and behavioural change and distortions. According to Gotman (1998:4) the use of acceptance strategies is one of the major means of helping families resolve their differences. Hard emotions such as anger are reframed into soft emotions such as sadness and uses discussions about behavioural patterns learned in one's family of origin as a way to help couples gain insight, empathy, and acceptance for each other's behaviour.

Maladaptive behaviour can be changed or modified systematically by application of techniques derived from learning theories. Direct behaviour modification leads to changes in feelings and attitudes and works particularly well with phobias and obsessive thinking (Meier 1982: 303). Unwanted behaviour that stems from inter-marriage can be altered or removed and replaced by new actions and responses by giving rewards for good behaviour and punishment for bad behaviour. Since it has been assumed that disturbed behaviour is considered to be the result of a learning process, it can be unlearned. Adams' (1973: 60) nouthetic counselling focuses on the reward of desired behaviour while undesired behaviour is punished.

The problems of inter-religious married couples are identified and modified and followed by motivation of new behaviour. Thereafter, goals that are attainable are set and learning skills are introduced.

3.8 RATIONAL EMOTIVE THERAPY (RET)

3.8.1 Theoretical Assumptions

According to Macmillan (2002: 120) there are three fundamental human goals in terms of Rational Emotive Therapy:

- To survive;
- To be relatively free from pain; and
- To be reasonably content or satisfied.

Rational emotive therapy (RET) is based on three fundamental hypotheses (Adams 1973: 60):

- Thinking and emotional feelings are closely related;

- RET goes with cause and effect relationships, so that thinking becomes emotion and emotion becomes thought.
- Thinking and experiencing emotions take the form of self-reflection that results in actions. These internal thoughts produce and change emotional feelings and actions.

Thought or cognition, emotions and behaviour are rarely if ever totally separable. Thinking and emotion interact with behaviour in that individuals normally act on the basis of thoughts and emotions. Moreover their actions influence how they think and feel.

Rational Emotive therapy and the behavioural strategies are similar in a number of ways. It is an extension of behaviorism that emphasises the influence of beliefs upon behaviour. There are two types of beliefs – rational and irrational beliefs. If individuals’ goals are hampered or blocked by an activating event they respond consciously or unconsciously, which results in appropriate or inappropriate consequences both emotional and behavioural. The irrational beliefs should be identified, faced, and then replaced by more rational beliefs. And also, for example, RET incorporates cognitive restructuring, skills training and problem-solving skills. RET engages clients in a rational debate as opposed to the client’s capacity for self-discovery. Rational Emotive therapy is active and directive. This school of thought operates on an A-B-C paradigm (Ellis 1988: 32-35):

“A” - refers to events in a person’s life;

“B” - refers to a person’s thoughts about event “A”; and

“C”- refers to a person’s emotions and behaviour as a result of “B”.

“When a highly charged emotional consequence (C) follows an activating event (A), “A” may appear to cause “C”. Actually, however, emotional consequences are largely created by “B”, the individual’s belief system” (Ellis 1988: 33). See illustration in figure 2 below:

Figure 2 A-B-C Paradigms

A	B	C
Event =>	Thoughts and beliefs =>	Behaviour
Client spills juice at breakfast	“I should always be perfect.”	Client cries

The goal of therapy is to reduce or remove an action that is harmful to the person and to help an individual to understand and respond to life in a more meaningful way. Pain may be alleviated through different means, including change in plans, decisions, direction, attempt to satisfy needs, and to change some bad attitudes. The person is guided in the way to think, especially by changing irrational beliefs to a rational one.

The R.E.T. is informal, active, energetic, and directive. Often a forceful approach is necessary to alter destructive and self-destructive patterns of behaviour.

3.8.2 The Counselling Process

According to Macmillan (2002: 123) irrational beliefs can be emotionally identified, cognitively and behaviourally within the ABC system. Emotionally, irrational beliefs are reflected by feelings of negative actions. Cognitively, they are revealed by subtle or overt signs of demandingness and reveal primary demanding beliefs. Behaviourally, irrational beliefs are revealed by self-defeating actions. Counsellors help clients to distinguish irrational from rational beliefs and to see how rational beliefs lead to positive outcomes while irrational beliefs cause inappropriate feelings and self-defeating behaviours.

Ellis (1988: 35) lists three irrational beliefs held by clients:

- I must do well at changing myself;
- You must help me to change; and
- Changing myself must occur quickly and easily.

The irrational beliefs must be disputed by counsellor and client together. The technique of disputing involves questioning and challenging clients' hypotheses about themselves and the world in general. Feelings, thoughts and behaviour interact when people form and sustain their irrational beliefs, so counselors have to work on all three. To support their beliefs, clients use logic, reason and facts, so the aim is to show them when, why and how their beliefs are irrational. Some examples of questions are:

- What irrational belief do I want to challenge and give up?
- Can I logically sustain this belief?

- What is the evidence for the falseness of this belief/
- Why is it terrible?
- Why can't I cope with it?
- How does this make me a dreadful person?
- What would be an effective new belief to replace my irrational belief?

In marriage and family counselling couples are seen together so that their complaints can be aired and discussed. The counsellees are guided to understand that what they feel and grieved about is not justified – they focus on the beliefs that cause a negative. Partners are taught relating and compromising skills. Parents and children are taught tolerance of their own behaviour and that of others, irrespective of how appalling the behaviour might be (Meier 1982: 75).

3.9 SELF-AWARENESS THERAPY (GESTALT THERAPY)

3.9.1 Theoretical Assumptions

The word “Gestalt” means “whole.” It emphasizes a person’s totality of experience, which should not be fragmented or separated. Meier (1982: 67) believes that when affective and cognitive experiences are isolated, people lack full awareness of their complete experience. The goal is to assist clients to progress from environmental support to self-support. The counsellor’s work is to promote their client’s sense of freedom and responsibility, that is, to increase their ‘response ability’ (Macmillan 2002: 110).

In Gestalt Therapy, clients are asked to discuss the totality of the here-and-now. Only experiences, feelings and behaviours occurring in the present are stressed. Past experiences or anticipated and future experiences are brought up only in relation to current feelings. As a means of opening clients to their experiences, therapists encourage clients to do the following (Meier 1982: 68):

- Make personalized and unqualified statements that help them “act out” their emotions;
- Exaggerate the feelings associated with behaviours to gain greater awareness of their experiences and to eliminate intellectual explanations for them; and
- Role-play situations and then to focus on what was experienced during the role- playing.

3.9.2 Implications of Gestalt Therapy to Inter-religious marriage

Pearls (1969: 49) indicated that Gestalt therapy attempts to bring to the person the experiences that increase awareness of self. He believes that people are kept from reaching their potential because they do not have the opportunity to discover fully who they are. Inter-religious married couples are responsible for their own decisions and actions, and cannot blame society, parents, or past experiences for their problems. Couples of inter-religious marriage need to accept their new identity and deal with conflicts and challenges that religious and cultural practices expose them to. When individuals know and accept themselves to the fullest extent possible, they can overcome conflicts within their personalities so that psychological growth occurs (Meier (1982: 308). Limited self-concepts constrict awareness and inhibit experiences, so that awareness is not allowed freedom. To counteract that limitation, inter-marriage couples need to broaden their experiences.

To open inter-religious marriage couples to new cultural experiences and religious practices, the counsellor must cause the individuals to act out their emotions and hence gain greater awareness of their feelings and experiences without intellectual explanation.

3.10 THE MULTIMODEL COUNSELLING APPROACH

Arnold Lazarus chose an eclectic approach to counselling instead of using a single one and chose the best treatment methods for each client relevant to their problems (Colledge 2002: 258). He does not integrate the theories but draws certain elements that can be used in his own work. Lazarus (1981: 17) indicates that he has the answers in his multimodal approach to make it easy for counsellors to easily remember, to administer and to point the direction to effective treatment interventions. The multimodal assessment would focus on:

- What behaviours are getting in the way of experiencing happiness?
- What makes a person sad, glad, fearful and mad and how does a person behave as a result of this?
- How do the negative feelings and emotions, anger, depression, guilt or anxiety affect a person?

- What are peoples' likes or dislikes on seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling?
How does the sensation experienced change a person's feelings and behaviours?
- How does one's understanding (self-image/concept) cause change to one's behaviour, moods, and sensations?
- Do one's beliefs and values direct one's thoughts and how does it affect one's emotions?
- How do the actions of the important people of one's life impact on one's life and visa versa?
- How much do one focus on one's health?

The above questions are related to the BASIC ID approach by Lazarus (1981: 18 - 25; 1992: 244).

3.10.1 Eclecticism

Unsystematic eclecticism indicates when the techniques adopted have no coherent rationale. On the other hand, systematic or technical eclecticism employs techniques or procedures but also draws from other approaches without giving in to those theories (Colledge 2002: 258). Lazarus (1992: 244) warned that in the integration of theories and techniques, caution should be applied as theoretical ideas may be incompatible. "Pulling techniques from many sources without a sound rationale, can only result in syncretistic confusion" (Lazarus 1996: 60, and Beutler & Norcross 1992: 11). Lazarus (1996: 59 – 68) stated that some scholars hold the view that the developing of an integrative counselling approach is the future of counselling practice as no single group of counselling techniques is effective when assisting clients of diversity and diverse cultural backgrounds. Norcross and Newman (1992: 3) stated that the drawing from many approaches the differences and using of many techniques is referred to as Technical eclecticism but the creation of a theory instead of blending techniques is referred to as theoretical integration. Counsellors must have an accurate, in-depth knowledge of theories in order to draw from, synthesise and develop an integrated counselling approach.

3.10.2 Threshold

Tolerance levels to frustration differs with different people. How high the tolerance level to

frustration in people is, is called the *threshold* – some people may be able to tolerate great pain and some may not have the strength to survive some of the most common pains or anxieties (College 2002: 263).

3.10.3 Modality

The cornerstone of multimodal therapy is the concept of modality – seven dimensions with reciprocal interactions. Lazarus (1992: 244-245) talked about the BASIC ID, which is the acronym for: Behaviour (some people like action and are always busy – “doers, taking effective action to achieve realistic goals”), Affect (some people may or may not express their emotions easily), Sensation (“being in touch with and enjoying one’s senses” - some people focus their attention on sensory experiences like food, music, and art whilst others on discomforts, aches and pains), Imagery (“using coping images and being in touch with one’s imagination” - some people create pictures of real experiences in their minds), Cognition (“having adequate and accurate information and thinking realistically” - some people find reasons and analyze everything – think and plan), Interpersonal (“having good relating skills” - how people socialize and have friends – intimacy), and Drugs (“taking proper care of one’s physical health” - to what extent do people take care of themselves – too much drinking or taking drugs or even are they health-conscious) (Lazarus, 1981: 22 -25).

BASIC ID is essential in the understanding of other people. Lies, distortions and other inconsistencies are easily detected through the multimodal interview and the strengths and weaknesses of the counsellee are determined. According to Lazarus this is relevant to the extent of interaction between threshold levels and the modalities preferred. A person with a low frustration tolerance, moderate activity level and highly analytical will be in contrast to the one who has high activity and clear imagery, low tolerance to pain, and not easily frustrated. Lazarus states that behavior is acquired through social learning via classical and operant conditioning, and modeling – behavior outputs, affective responses, sensory delights and displeasures, images, interpersonal skills and deficiencies are learnt (Lazarus, 1989: 213; 1981: 18). People don’t respond to the real environment but to the way they understand it. “We have different levels and degrees of awareness, and subliminal or unrecognized stimuli influence feelings, thoughts and behaviour. In altered states of consciousness we have access to memories and skills that are not available to conscious recall” (Lazarus 1989: 214).

Lazarus (1992: 245) said that in order to avoid pain, discomfort, guilt, depression, shame, anxiety and other negative emotions defense reaction is most prominent. It serves to maintain helpless elements of the BASIC ID. When these bad habits become a part of a person's life, it becomes a hindrance to achieving full awareness of the behavior of others and even oneself. This misinformation can cause a weakness in people's lives causing them to be less equipped to deal and cope with the demands of society. The conflicting ambivalent feelings and reactions including the learning from previous experiences can lead to not being able to make decisions and rectify their incorrect functioning in society.

Each client's problem is unique and therefore the counselling goals are unique for each counsellee - as such their basic beliefs, goals, situational contexts, affective reactions, coping behaviours and resistances are taken into consideration. The techniques from Freud, Adler, Perls, Rogers, Ellis and the behaviorists are used in counselling to meet the unique need of each individual client (Colledge 2002: 263).

3.10.4 Techniques

According to Watzlawick (1978: 102) if a client is tense, relaxation should be used. If a person is unassertive then assertiveness training should be given. The correction of misconceptions should be used to address faulty cognitions and erroneous beliefs. The specific complaints or problems will be placed under certain modality profiles according to the BASIC ID. Compulsive problems fall under the modality of Behavior and the technique to be used is self-monitoring and response prevention. Anxiety attack falls under the modality Affect and assertiveness training is required. If a person experiences tension, this is related to the modality Sensation and the technique to be employed is relaxation training and threshold training. Internal self demands and perfectionism is linked to the modality of Cognition and cognitive restructuring is required. Competitiveness, power and control are linked to the Interpersonal modality and friendship and relationship training is required. These are some of the problems linked to the modalities as an example (Lazarus 1981: 147 – 149). Research has shown that obsessions and compulsions can be treated also with response-prevention which is the most effective strategy in addition to cognitive restructuring and various stress-reducing methods like relaxation, distraction, and thought stopping (cf. Rachman, 1978: 88; Foa & Goldstein, 1978: 56). The selection of techniques is not so difficult in multimodal therapy or counselling. The BASIC ID analysis deals

with problems like anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, frustrations, unhappiness, marital problems and family conflicts and reduces to specific, discrete, and interactive difficulties. Hence, the selection of techniques is simple but implementation requires skills. If for example, “low self-esteem is identified as the problem and it reveals social skills deficiency, false cognition, failure to take emotional risks, negative self talk, persistent failures – for this the technique will be social skills training, rectify misconceptions, risk taking assignments, positive self instructions and coping exercises” (Lazarus, 1981: 155).

Prochaska (1978: 51) indicated that until recently, the emphasis in nearly all approaches to psychological malfunctioning was aimed at the individual, at exploring conflicts and forces within the client. Interpersonal processes were linked to the activities of the psyche. Mittleman (1948: 22) states that in the marital counselling and therapy of individuals, psychoanalytical preoccupation is clearly evident. On the first visit in multimodal marriage therapy/counselling, the therapist or counsellor interviews the couple to establish the challenges and to construct an initial modality profile. The treatment or counselling is shaped according to their specific requirements. Anger expression is not regarded as an end in itself – many clients experience a struggle in recognizing their anger or are afraid of admitting it. The anger once realized can be removed rationally by using appropriate assertive expressions. For the culture shock of inter-religious marital changes, the clients are assisted with coping with the change – clients are facilitated to accept the inevitable. The counsellor deliberately causes the counselees to produce feelings of anxiety that they already encountered and then perform the opposite action by relaxation and focusing on optimistic and calming thoughts – by turning anxiety and irrational ideas off and replacing these with self control and self confidence. Many marriages lack communication skills, especially expressing ideas and conveying feelings – messages that sent are vague, ambiguous, contradictory and difficult to follow. The counselees are introduced to good sending and receiving skills. The integrated counselling model intends to view problems as separate entities to people, assuming that individuals’ set of skills, experience and mindset will assist counselees reduce the influence of problems throughout their married life (cf. Lazarus, 1981: 166–240; Denning 2006: 16).

3.11 LOGOTHERAPY THEORY

“Logotherapy” (existential analysis) was coined by the neurologist and psychologist Victor E.

Frankl in the 1930s. *Logos* denotes *meaning* in the Greek. It focuses on the meaning of human existence and man's search for finding meaning to life. Frankl (2006: 99) says that: "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a secondary rationalization of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning." It has been further defined that a person is responsible for his or her actions which he or she has initially consented to from within (<http://www.existentialanalysis.ca/2002>). It is a person-orientated psychotherapy that assists clients to understand and cope with their experiences and to responsibly face life mentally and emotionally. Contrary to religion which is *man's search for ultimate meaning*, logotherapy is meaning centered psychotherapy – man's search for ultimate meaning as human beings rather than related to something divine. The spiritual man is noted by psychotherapy from a logotherapy perspective – the search for spiritual meaning not related to religion but the human dimension (cf. Frankl 1983: 1 - 5).

Wong (1997: 88 - 91) gives a breakdown of logotherapy and exposes three fundamental assumptions:

- *The freedom of will* – that is to choose a positive attitude in any condition;
- *The will to meaning* – there is always a primary motivation to discover meaning (makes sense of human existence, to make sense of events, and to create meaning); and
- *The meaning of life* – is present in any situation. Logotherapy was used by Wong together with cognitive-behavioural processes to practice Meaning-Centered Counselling.

Frankl indicates that the difference between psychoanalysis and logotherapy is that Logotherapy is less retrospective and less introspective. In contrast to the Freudian psychoanalysis that is centered on the *pleasure principle*, he focuses on a *will to meaning*. It does not focus on stories or issues of the past or present but on the meanings to be fulfilled in the future – a meaning centered psychotherapy. The Reality principle is not opposed to the pleasure principle – it is an extension to achieve its goal. Pleasure is not the goal but what is experienced on the way to reaching aspirations and finding meaning. Meaning to life is not possible to achieve from pleasure – linked with materialism and is just a condition of the psyche. Hence, it is worth living, experiencing suffering, and engaging in active good deeds to experience temporary pleasure – release tension. The therapist causes the patient to understand and find meaning to his or her

life, hence to overcome the neurosis, anxiety or problem. Logotherapy is not a replacement for psychotherapy but a supplement.

He continues to say that people are frustrated with their existence and seek to find a concrete meaning to their personal existence and being – this *existential frustration* leads to neuroses, despair or distress. Instead of recommending medication, the focus should shift to growth and development of the client. Existential analysis and logotherapy aim to bring the patient to reach a point of concentration and dedication. Logotherapy focuses on assisting clients to find meaning in life. The mission to search for meaning may cause inner tension instead of inner equilibrium. A person can survive the worst conditions if there is meaning to life or existence – the tension of what a person is and what he or she should become is an essential contributor to mental well-being. Frankl says that people do not need a tensionless state or equilibrium but need to strive and struggle for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. As people solve the problems life brings to them, they find meaning to life and as such when life brings challenging situations to them, they should not question but be responsible to act in finding solutions that will contribute and translate into meaning. The clients of logotherapy are not pressured into change but are left to make responsible decisions on their own. “The logotherapist’s role consists of a widening and a broadening of the visual field of the patient, so that the whole spectrum of the potential meaning becomes conscious and visible to him” (Frankl, 2006: 110). Frankl said that although people must realize and actualize their full potential and meaning of life, they must discover it out in the world instead of looking within themselves. People can discover meaning by creativity or doing a good deed; by experiences or encounters; and positive attitudes – even in hopeless situations one can find meaning in life just by a change of attitude. The notions like being (existence), relation (values), freedom of decision, and responsibility (conscience) conceptualize into meaning. Existential analysis is structured to make individuals aware of their responsibilities and to successfully complete those tasks and to reach their desires and goals. It is difficult for neurotics to establish or identify their concrete personal tasks in life because they are not confident in knowing or sensing their tasks. A neurotic plays one life task to another. Only when a person removes the mistaken self analysis and behavior, will progress be made in engaging in all life’s activities and utilizing and actualizing full potential to reach desired goals. A person’s ability and temperament is only challenged when faced by a demanding situation where answers can only be created for this concrete situation and not before – no planning is possible. Questions are asked by life and people’s response to this is to take responsibility for the situations faced daily and

consciously act out the solutions through trial and error, being fruitful and producing growth and development of self – hence finding meaning to life (peace, harmony and rest) that is reasonable and logical. What needs to be realized is that human experiences (especially the bad ones) are irreversible but can be corrected, improved and not repeated in the future. One cannot escape responsibility though one is subjected to limits and restrictions – people are free to realize their own destinies or destructions (cf. Frankl 2006: 110 – 115; Frankl 1983: 55 – 75; <http://www.existentialanalysis.ca/2002>).

The technique used in logotherapy, especially for neurosis, anxiety, and fear is hyper-intention (Frankl, 2006: 122-123); paradoxical intention (“where fear brings on what one is afraid of” like forced intention - one will do what one is afraid of); and hyper-reflection – focus is on self and not where it should have been (dereflection - in therapy the focus is re-directed to the correct proper object instead of self – especially in an intimate husband and wife relationship).

Frankl (1983: 255 – 260) referred to four characteristic patterns of response to neurotic problems: *Wrong Passivity* – clients of anxiety neurosis or phobic conditions withdraw from situations that may expose them to situations that may cause the fear to recur. *Wrong Activity* – in obsessive-compulsive neurosis (psychotic condition) attempts to avoid conflict situations but fight against the obsessive ideas and neurotic compulsions and in this action reinforces them. *Right Passivity* – symptoms are ridiculed rather than running from the fear or to fight the compulsions. *Right Activity* – the patient is directed to move the focus from the neurosis and himself and focus on the meaning of life and the task. The Logotherapy approach for psychoses is different from neurosis in that in psychoses there is a detachment from the patient’s personality and psychotic afflictions. Hence, logotherapy in psychosis is directed to personality that remains healthy. Logotherapy is useful in caring, educational, preventive, social, psychological, psychohygienic and pastoral fields (<http://www.existentialanalysis.ca/2002>).

3.12 CONCLUSION

The focus in this chapter was to examine and understand the different counselling theories and models that scholars developed during the twentieth century and that are used as frameworks to a variety of all counselling and therapy models.

The key concept in Freud's theory is the unconscious mind, which is the prime motivator in determining human behaviour. According to him there are two kinds of unconscious: *the unconscious proper and the preconscious*. The unconscious proper contains repressed material (thoughts, feelings and facts that are not admissible to consciousness). It is the responsibility of the psychoanalyst to draw out this material – strong resistance can be provoked during this process. The human mind has three parts:

- The id is involved in a never-ending struggle for the satisfaction of basic instincts;
- The superego that represents parental and moral influence; and
- The ego that applies reality to the demands of the id. The ego has three taskmasters, which can be the cause of anxiety, namely the external world, the id and the superego.

It was discovered that the defense mechanisms enable individuals to cope with sources of anxiety, which arise from the conflicting demands of the id and superego. When the ego discovers that it cannot cope with them, it uses defense mechanisms such as, repression, sublimation, reaction formation, denial, fixation, regression, projection, introjection, reversal, displacement, and conversion.

Freud also introduced interpretations in therapy. Interpretations are a way of finding explanations of repressed unconscious material that is brought into the conscious, and of things that are currently happening to clients but are not understood by them.

The Client-Centered theory acknowledges that every person has the ability to overcome and cope successfully with their problems, provided that the circumstances that influence their living and emotional condition is changed. The actualizing tendency is the basic motivating drive and is always operative. It is an active process that reflects the inherent tendency of all people to develop their capacities in order to maintain, enhance and reproduce by themselves. Rogers believed that all people have the ability to achieve personal growth, good health, and adapt to change, which he calls self-actualization. Tension, anxiety, and defensiveness interfere with basic human drives. If these forces can be reduced or relieved then it may become possible for a person to experience personal growth. The goal of client-centered therapy is to help people regain contact with their true feelings and values.

A major technique in Client-Centered therapy is “reflection”. This involves repeating what clients have said using different words and sometimes condensing and clarifying what they have stated with regard to their feelings. Also non-directive techniques are introduced to make clients understand why things have gone wrong and this will make them change.

The focus of Reality therapy is responsible behaviour. The individuals are made to distinguish between right actions from the wrong. Reality therapy used in conjunction with Client-Centered therapy proved to have the greatest influence on the Christian counselling of inter-faith marriages. It focuses strongly on helping individuals understand and accept themselves as they are with their limitations and abilities. The counsellor in reality therapy must be personal, encouraging the individual or married couple to make a value judgement and a plan to alter behaviour. Problem solving therapy provides couples with strategies for dealing with specific problems in life.

According to the principles of Cognitive therapy the way in which people understand their experiences determines their feelings and responses. Because clients learn incorrect processing and interpreting habits during their cognitive development, the counselling attempts to help to correct incorrect thinking and distortions and to practice more realistic ways of understanding information.

The underlying truth in Behavioural therapy is that unwanted behaviour can be changed or removed and replaced by acceptable behaviour by giving rewards or exercising punishment. The assumption is that a person’s behaviour, both good and bad, is learned through interactions with other people and the environment. Disturbed behaviour is thus considered to be the result of a learning process, and can be unlearned by using appropriate techniques.

Rational emotive therapy operates on an A-B-C paradigm, where “A” - refers to events in a person’s life; “B” - refers to a person’s thoughts about event “A”; and “C”- refers to a person’s emotions and behaviour as a result of “B”. Thinking and emotion interact with behaviour in that individuals normally act on the basis of thoughts and emotions. Moreover their actions influence how they think and feel. RET incorporates cognitive restructuring, skills training and problem-solving skills.

Lazarus' integrated counselling model is useful in counselling especially multiple problems that cannot be dealt with by a single technique and his approach has been labeled the BASIC ID. Spirituality even Christian Spirituality proved to be necessary in counselling as it introduces a way to achieve meaning to life.

The researcher feels that it is now imperative to disclose that perspectives from Psychoanalysis, the Client-Centered model, Cognitive Behavioural therapy, Rational Emotive therapy, and Logotherapy must make contributions to the Christian Counselling model researched in this thesis.

The next chapter will focus on understanding the transformation process of the new South Africa, since it was the dismantling of apartheid that opened the door to forming relationships with different ethnic and cultural groups. Hence, inter-religious marriages have increased and became free for all people as it was no longer a taboo – all prohibitions and restrictions were lifted. Thus, the issues, challenges and problems that were experienced by inter-religious married couples, became too much to handle. Hence, the need for a relevant counselling model for inter-religious marriages is required.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSFORMATION AND INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGES IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has undergone momentous changes over the past twenty years. The dismantling of apartheid and the creation of a democratic system of representation have not been a single process (Howarth & Norval 1998:1). Although there also existed inter-religious and inter-cultural marriages prior to 1994, it was further influenced by the new democratic South Africa. The transition to democracy not only freed South Africans, but also opened the doors to and exposed all people to the cultural diversity of a “rainbow nation.” This resulted in the potential growth of cultural and marriage relationships (inter-religious marriages). Inter-religious relationships (complex in nature) have produced in some individuals, intense challenges. In view of this, the Acts that governed marriages also experienced some relevant changes.

In order to appreciate the positive changes that are being experienced in South Africa today, one has to survey the progressive national historical events of the past. The transformation process (Apartheid to Democracy) of South Africa has been included in this research, not only as a catalyst to inter-religious relationships, but also since it creates an understanding of how, through its evolution, it has affected the marriage system by not prohibiting inter-religious or inter-cultural marriages.

The concept of culture and its definition will be discussed. Culture refers to a community who shares symbols, the way they guide their lives, understand their encounters of life and how they perceive the behaviour of others. Acculturation (culture change) involves the drawing of ideas from other societies – traditions, drift, process tension, adaptation and innovation. All cultures possess intrinsic values that can be the foundation for social transformation and social stability.

The constitution of South Africa recognizes customary marriages under any of the religious traditions. Christians believe in one marriage to one person and it is a sovereign institution of God.

Mixed marriages were not traditionally allowed by the Jews, but Christianity does not prohibit mixed marriages. The Muslim marriage laws do not allow marriages between blood relations and relatives. Islam also does not allow inter-religious marriages. However, Muslim men are allowed to marry women that are Christians and Jews. Hindus understood marriage as a legal union between two persons of opposite sex. However, the caste system, especially in India was seen as an extreme categorization in relation to status of families – if partners belong to different religious groups or castes, the marriage could be pronounced illegal in that community and culture.

This chapter will deal with the transformation from apartheid to democracy, how this must be understood in terms of cultural change, the marriage acts, and most basic rules or laws in the three religions addressed in this dissertation. The chapter will end in a discussion and insight into the Indian conversions to a new religion in the post-apartheid new South Africa. The ministry of reconciliation and emotional healing (from depression, oppression and exploitation) increased in the new democratic South Africa which resulted in more conversions – the search for meaning in spirituality, especially Christian Spirituality.

Let us focus on the transition from apartheid to democracy which will form a foundation to our discussion in this chapter.

4.2 THE TRANSFORMATION: FROM APARTHEID TO DEMOCRACY

In the following summary only selected political events of the apartheid regime, which preceded the democracy in South Africa, will be described.

During the nineteenth century “change” consisted largely of wars and conquests, the annexation of territory and the partial land dispossession of indigenous peoples; the large-scale movement of peoples both within the area and from abroad as immigrants, the destruction and creation of states and eventually the forging of a single major state in the area under White control (Nünberger 1979:51). For instance, the Cape was first established by the Dutch and then taken over by British Settlers, which resulted in increased tension between British interests and the Earlier Settlers, which culminated in the Great Trek of the 1830s.

As a result of the Great Trek, South Africa was divided politically into British colonies, Boer Republics and African tribal lands. There were those who believed that separation of Blacks from Whites was the only way to secure justice for the former and safety for the latter, in the midst of the conflicts.

It must be stated categorically that the blame for racial injustice in the twentieth century cannot be blamed solely on the Afrikaner, for if the British had bequeathed a steadily widening non-racial franchise to the young union, the history of South Africa might have been more humane. The new union parliament had only white members. In 1911, it passed the Colour Bar Act, extending the Government's power to determine who could do skilled work in mining and engineering. In 1913, the Native Land Act was introduced, which prevented Blacks from acquiring land outside the so called "reserves" which constituted just 13 % of South Africa and was generally poor land as well (Hope & Young 1981:27).

Strong reaction to these blatant discriminatory laws was the order of the day. On 8 January 1912, the South African National Congress (ANC) (initially the South African Native national Congress) under the presidency of Dr. John Langalibalele Dube was formed. Two years later an ANC delegation arrived in London to protest the Land Act. Then, in 1919, the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union and the South African Indian Congress were formed. Two years later, the SA Communist Party was launched and passes were burnt throughout South Africa in protest.

Meanwhile, Afrikaner Nationalism gained momentum under Dr. D.F. Malan in the 1930's. In a direct interrelatedness between the fear of the rising tide of colour and hope in Afrikaner nationalism, the electorate believed that the salvation of the White race in South Africa lay in entrusting the National Party with the defense by every possible means of their White heritage. Thus, in 1948, the National Party came into power (Florin 1967:9).

During the 1940's the African Mine Worker's Union, the ANC Women's League and the ANC Youth League were established. The leader of the ANC Youth League was Anton Lembede with Nelson Mandela as secretary. Among its members, at that point in time were Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu. In the early 1940's the ANC set out to develop mass support and regain its primary position in African politics by establishing a well-organized network voicing more assertive claims for justice. Under the vigorous leadership of AB Xuma, president general from 1940 to 1949, the

Congress called for recognition of African trade unions, abolition of the colour bar in industry, abolition of pass laws, freedom of tenure, equal welfare services, and a per capita allocation of funds from general revenue for education. Although World War II brought further integration of the economy, and people of different racial groups were mingling into the cities, Prime Minister Smuts turned a deaf ear to these claims (Hope & Young 1981:39).

When the National Party came into power in 1948, they banned the Communist Party and disenfranchised Coloured voters. The ANC launched a nationwide defiance campaign to commit breaches of certain discriminatory laws. Rural action, industrial strikes and anti-apartheid demonstrations were to culminate in mass action.

In 1955 delegates from the ANC, SAIC, the SA Coloured People's Organization, the Congress of Democrats (leftist Whites), and the inter-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) met at Kliptown for a nationwide congress of the people. At these deliberations, the meeting adopted the Freedom Charter, which proclaimed that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White," thus implicitly denying the idea of "Africa for the Africans." This alliance proposed the transfer of mineral wealth, banks and monopoly industry to the ownership of the people as a whole. The Government responded with raids, political bans and the mass arrest of 156 leaders on charges of treason.

The Africanists believed that the land, which the White settlers had subtly acquired from the indigenous people, should be returned unconditionally to the people. They resolved that, if the leadership propagated the notion of liberation correctly, resistance would be spontaneously created among the masses.

In 1961, the ANC began to hit back by establishing a military wing called Umkhonto We Sizwe with Nelson Mandela as Commander-in-Chief and thereby the first acts of sabotage were committed. Mandela and others were arrested for conspiracy to overthrow the Government. Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island.

In the 1970's the youth continued the struggles, which their leaders initiated. The Education Policy of the day, gave rise to the Soweto Uprising in June 1976 and a nationwide revolt erupted. This revolt was overtly a rebellion against the use of Afrikaans, the language of the hated oppressor, as

the medium of instruction in schools, although it was clearly a furious rejection of the whole educational system.

In 1977, P.W. Botha in a meager way, began to warn Whites to adapt to a new situation by accepting relaxation of some aspects of petty apartheid, that is, laws pertaining to segregation of sports, eating and toilet facilities, park benches, post offices, but not to fundamentals such as equal wages, marriage rights, residential rights and suffrage (Hope & Young 1981:70).

Apartheid was further entrenched, by ushering in of a “new political dispensation” of power-sharing where the constitution makes room for a State President, and also three houses of parliament (tri-cameral parliament) whose members were elected from the White, Coloured and Indian communities. This political dispensation certainly did not appease the vast majority of South Africans due to the fact that the Black majority was deliberately excluded from this constitutional body.

Economic sanctions, which were instituted and propelled by the United States, were beginning to take its toll on the South African economy and the dawn of liberation for millions of South Africans was in sight with the resignation of State President P.W. Botha. His successor, F.W. de Klerk was now faced with the tremendous task of manoeuvring the country out of isolation, sanctions, violence and disintegration into a future of purposeful change, reconciliation and democracy.

After many meetings between the government and major political players, on 2 February 1990, the state President F.W. de Klerk announced a reversal of the policy of almost 300 years of White supremacy, to release Nelson Mandela, to unban the ANC, PAC and other political organizations. Thereby, he committed South Africa to a process of irrevocable change and reconciliation.

In September 1990, in a momentous break with the past, the government decided that in 1991 White State schools would be free to admit pupils of all races. All the discriminatory political legislations were repealed. Thereby, the pillars of Apartheid, viz. the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the Group Areas Act of 1966, which have caused untold suffering and humiliation to millions of people, have been laid to rest. In November 1993, the Multi-party Negotiating Council accepted the interim constitution, laying the foundations for a democratic South Africa and terminating the era of minority rule (*Sunday Times* 13 April 1994: 16 – 17). This

culminated in the end of a long painful history, when millions of South Africans, irrespective of race, colour or creed went to the polls in April 1994, to cast their votes. This election (86 % poll), was declared free and fair by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The ANC gained a majority of votes, by obtaining 62.5 % of the votes. Thereby, Nelson Mandela became State President of the government of National Unity with Thabo Mbeki and F.W. de Klerk as deputy Presidents. The new South Africa promised a better future for all people. The interim constitution, on which the April 1994 elections were contested, did not really bring the period of transition to an end. Consequently the period of transition in South Africa can be said to have extended over a period of nine years, from 1990 to 1999 (Shaw 2001:22). However, Africa's experience has shown that democratization is not a short-term process but an on-going process.

This is just a brief overview of the historiographical currents of change in South Africa. I now move on to the impact it had on cultural transformation.

4.3 CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The South African population consists of groups of people from Africa, Asia and Europe, resulting in a mosaic of groups with differing cultural traditions (First/Third World mix), forming the so-called "Rainbow nation" of South Africa. With our cultural diversity it is inevitable that certain groups would find changes difficult to assimilate or even find them unacceptable (Shaw 2004: 100). There is also an intense process of westernization in the South African context and varied cultures are under indirect, if not direct Christian influence.

Transformation is part of our nation-building process, which demands that we desist from imposing our cultures on others. And greater cultural contact, which comes with an open society, means greater cultural awareness.

The culture of every society, inter alia, the South African society, is in a state of constant change. In other words, no culture is static. Therefore, we can say without any reservations that the cultures prevalent in our country have elements of both continuity and change.

The Church too by her nature and mission, is an agent of cultural transformation. Luzbetak (1988:300) postulated that in anthropological or in purely human terms the work of the

establishment of the Kingdom of God requires culture change. The following deals with the meaning of the concept of culture and cultural change, a Christian view on culture and provide some factors that give impetus to cultural change.

4.3.1 The Concept of Culture

Paredes (1987: 31) postulated that the concept of culture should not be confined to a group of people with privileged access to selected aspects of their culture. Culture should not be identified with knowing and listening to classical music, reading the classical literature of one's country, or having formal education. This limited view excludes from the group of "the cultured", the great majority of the people who have no access to formal educational systems connected with the Western tradition and thereby should not be belittled just because they do not fit our own or someone else's conceptions of what culture is (Samuel & Sugden 1987:62).

In this regard, a need to seek a more inclusive definition of culture is imperative, although an exact concise definition for the said term is not easy to find. One of the papers from the *Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, the Willowbank Report on the Gospel and Culture*, says that culture is an integrated system of *beliefs* (about God or reality of ultimate meaning), of *values* (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of *customs* (how to behave, relate, trade, farm, etc.) and of *institutions* which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law-courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops unions, clubs, etc.) which bind society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity (*The Willowbank Report* 1978:7). Lingenfelter and Mayers (1986) define culture as "the conceptual design, the definitions by which people order their lives, interpret their experiences, and evaluate the behaviour of others." Culture, then, must then also not be confused with race, ethnic or national origin, or religion. Culture is the lens through which one sees, focuses, and filters one's life.

Finally, according to Edles (2002:1), the definition of "Culture" can be divided into three groups:

1. Humanistic refinement and elite artistic activities (classical ballet, opera);
2. An entire way of life of a people or group (as seen in *National Geography*); or
3. Systems or patterns of shared symbols.

These categories can be understood respectively, as aesthetic, ethnographic, and symbolic definitions of culture. The above definitions will contribute to some extent to the understanding of the cultural distinction, which is demonstrated in the various communities in South Africa

4.3.2 Definition of Cultural Change

Paredes (1987: 55) defined cultural changes as follows: “A modification of the ideas, society, technology, economy, and ecology which influence people is due to factors working from within or without.”

From the above definition, one could say that it is an internal or an external change, which are experienced in a living creature. Internal changes are brought about from within the South African context, and may be either, a technological or of a social nature. The external changes involve the borrowing of ideas from other societies in the sense of acculturation. Mayers (1975: 13) states that change is that “alteration is brought about by the interplay” among the following forces and movements:

- Tradition;
- Drift;
- Process tension;
- Adaptation; and
- Innovation.

Change is involved in “*tradition* in the sense that the firming of a form with the dynamics of the change process affects a very subtle variety of change.” For example, in the past the White Government viewed Apartheid or “Separate development” as something good but the majority of the South African population responded to it immediately and automatically as an unjust evil system. Thereby, the expression has remained the same, but the meaning has changed across cultural boundaries. The two groups will have difficulty communicating simply because a form, utilized by groups within the whole, refers to two different experiences of life: one positive and the other negative.

Drift is the term used for the process by which tradition effects change inconsistently and erratically for the desired effect, or for the undesired one (Herskovits 1964: 31). This process takes place when

a number of people adopt certain deviations from established norms and continue the tendency until it becomes a trend.

Herskovits (1964: 32) states that:

Process includes a series of interlinked events commencing under certain defined conditions and concluding under certain other defined conditions. Life and the continued association it brings are forever linking and interlinking parts of the whole of social interaction and thus forming new patterns and mosaics.

Tension results when two life-ways refuse to yield to each other. Since it causes selection from alternatives in the decision-making process, this tension brings change.

Adaptation to a second society or acculturation as the process is described by a technical term occurs when two or more previously separated cultures come into contact with each other to a degree sufficient to produce significant change in either or both. The demand for acculturation may also be faced when one encounters another subculture within one's own society. Thereby ultimately every encounter becomes an opportunity to practice adaptation.

Innovation follows the introduction of anything new within the source society. Whereas acculturation introduces a flow of new times, practices, and ideas across cultural boundaries, innovation develops from within the society when any part of the society is re-arranged (Mayers 1975: 14).

4.3.3 The Christian View of Culture

From a Christian point of view, all cultures are a part of God's creation. By his Blood, Christ purchased for God, people of every tribe and language, people and nations. He has made of them a Royal House, to serve God as priests, and they shall reign (Revelation 5: 9-10). In other words, Christ respected all cultures by entering fully into Jewish social and religious life with all its traditions. No culture is pure and holy, but we know from Christ's attitude towards it, that all have intrinsic values that can be redeemed and used as a basis for social transformation. Therefore, if any culture is destroyed, a part of creation and of all humanity dies. In another development theory, however, the vital importance of the cultural heritage and creativity of all people is respected as a Biblical idea. Thereby, change effected by the Gospel must be appropriate because it would arise out of the culture endogenously (Bragg Wayne 1987:45).

At the Lausanne 11 conference, the following was said concerning Evangelism and Culture, which is a basic view of culture from a Christian perspective.

The development of strategies for World Evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of Churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture, which must always be tested and judged by scripture. Because man is God's creation, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted by sin and some of it is demonic. The Gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the Gospel an alien culture and Churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to the scriptures. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and Churches must seek to transform and enrich culture all for the Glory of God (Lausanne 11, 1974: 37).

The above Biblical understanding of culture is more or less accepted by the Churches of Reformed tradition as a point of departure when encountering the various cultural groupings in South Africa with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

4.4 MARRIAGE ACTS IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, marriages are governed by Marriage Acts (Act No. 25 of 1961). In different cultures and communities there are various conventions and laws that limit the choice of a marriage partner (religious and customary laws will be discussed in the next chapter). Marriage between "European" and "non-European" people in South Africa was illegal until 1985 (*Webster's New World Encyclopedia* 1992:713). However, since independence we also have changes to the Marriage Acts.

4.4.1 The Constitution

The Constitution of the "New South Africa" (Act 108 of 1996: 8 - 9) stipulates explicitly under the Bill of Rights the *freedom of Religion, belief, opinion and freedom of expression*.

According to section 15 (3a), the Constitution says that this system does not prevent legislation, recognising:

- Marriages concluded under any tradition, or a system of religious, personal or family law; or
- Systems of personal and family law under any tradition, or adhered to by persons professing a particular religion.
- However, marriages are recognized as civil marriage upon registration in terms of the South African marriage act 25 of 1961, section 3 (1) – solemnizing marriage according to religious law.
- All valid marriage must be registered under the relevant legislation. Civil marriages under the South African marriage act. Customary marriage under the customary act. Hence, all religious marriages to be legally valid should be registered as civil marriage.

According to section 16 (2c), the *freedom of expression* does not extend to:

- Advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

Although the freedom of religion is embedded in the Constitution, there is no protection to the practice of Islam by the South African legal system. However, the Muslims are tolerant to all religious beliefs practiced in South Africa (Mofokeng 2007: 125).

4.5 RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE LAWS

The institution of marriage occupies a unique place in the realm of institutions and it is this institution, which is instrumental in perpetuating human society through regulations of conjugal and filial ties (Hussain 1976:34). All society is governed by laws that guides the ceremony of valid marriage. The three major religious groups of South Africa are Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. However, since this research will focus mainly on the Christian perspective, Judaism will also be included because Christianity shares many views with Judaism derived from the Old Testament.

There are seven essential central laws governing marriage, both religious and secular in these three religions. The first are the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Christian Marriage Act, 1872, and Indian Divorce Act, 1869, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939. For the secular, it is the Special Marriage Act, 1954 (<http://www.hindu.com/mp/2006>).

The first set of laws mentioned are a reflection of what the lawmakers perceived to be the religious prescription or requirements under the individual religions. These laws indicate and formalize the ceremonies to be performed for a valid solemnization of marriage. These requirements must be met if a marriage is to be regarded as valid. For instance, the Hindu law and the Parsi law require that both parties to the marriage be Hindus or Parsis respectively. The Christian law requires that at least one party be a Christian, while the Muslim law (which follows the prescriptions of the Shariat) permits marriages between Muslims, and kitabias (persons following a holy book, viz., Christians and Jews).

All these laws require that religious customs be followed. Apart from the above, these laws govern situations of breakdown of marriage and provide the grounds on which a divorce may be obtained.

Becker (2006: 29) stated the couple is obligated to the contracts arising out of the religious marriage, although they are not registered according to civil marriage. Shemtov (2006: 2) indicated that none of the preceding considerations apply when the parties choose first to register their marriage under the Special Marriage Act. Under this law any two persons, irrespective of their religion, can register their marriage by making a declaration of their intention to be married to each other before the Marriage Officer. Another special feature of this law is that parties can marry under any religious law and register such marriage under this law. The effect of this would be that all rights of the parties flowing from the marriage will be governed by this law.

While the contemplation of issues or problems in the marriage is furthest from the minds of couples when marriages are planned, these issues are important when inter-religious marriages take place. This is important especially for women since they can be assured that the ceremonies adopted are valid and be informed of their rights under the relationship. The solemnization of marriage has the scope for choice that can be exercised to secure the best interests of the woman.

4.5.1 Judaism and Christian Marriage Laws

Warrier (2001: 70) stated the Christian laws do not allow for Polygamy. The Christian marriage is a life-long commitment between a man and a woman and the couple seriously make a promise to each other in the presence of God that they would love and cherish one another and also live in obedience to God. A valid Christian marriage requires the full consent of both partners.

According to the Bible marriage is ordained by God in the beginning of creation – that is one man for one woman and one woman for one man (Barkley 2008: 2). In Genesis (2: 24) it is absolutely clear: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Jesus confirmed in Matthew (19: 5) this Old Testament verse and stated it to be His concept of marriage: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh”. According to the stories in the Old Testament the Kings usually had many wives, even though it was against God’s instructions in Deuteronomy (17:17) which states: “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away ...”

The Israelites were frequently reminded not to marry into the heathen nations (Deuteronomy 7: 3). According to the Talmudic law and the Rabbinic code, the Jews were not allowed to marry the Gentiles, including Christians (‘Abd al ‘Ati 1977: 137). In the Mosaic age God also did not allow His people from marrying those who were not among the chosen (Deuteronomy 7: 14), “Because they will turn them away from following God”. However, in the New Testament of the Bible, the Jewish Christians were exhorted by Peter to accept the Gentile Christians (Acts 10-11). Also in 11 Corinthians (6: 14), Paul exhorts the Christians on marriage relationships: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”. The Bible declares clearly that a Christian is not to marry an unbeliever but it was fine if one was married to an unbeliever before conversion to Christianity.

According to Dively (1971: 4) some Christians freely ignore the Biblical principle of marriage and choose partners from outside the faith. This is harmful as some may move out of the faith, especially the woman. If there is no conversion of one of the partners, it can bring into the marriage challenges of the different religion and contribute to disharmony and lack of satisfaction, even feelings of guilt.

The Christian Family Law controls divorce and marriage. In India Christian marriages are governed by the Indian Marriage Act 1872 and amended Act of 2001. The marriage may be dissolved on grounds of adultery, cruelty and desertion for over seven years, insanity, incurable diseases, conversion to another religion, willful refusal to consummate the marriage and failure to obey the order for restitution of conjugal rights. In addition, the wife may divorce if the husband is guilty of rape, sodomy and bestiality (Singh 1993: 30).

Sayyid (2003: 14) stated that the divorce Act of 1869 for Christians in India was implemented and is grounded in the English Law. However, Christian marriages are based on the fact that

spouses are pre-chosen by God and are permanent unions until eternity, except on reports of infidelity due to an adulterous act committed by either spouse. The Christian man after conversion to Islam may consider divorcing the wife, if she does not convert. However, if the woman converts to Islam, the marriage is automatically dissolved, according to the Muslim law that indicates that a woman cannot marry a non-Muslim. Maintenance and dowry are governed by the Family Court Act, 1964. The Christian Canon Law (1234) by the Roman Catholic Church does not allow divorce, and only recognizes annulment of marriage after a civil divorce.

4.5.2 Islamic Marriage Laws

The Islamic scholars and Muslims mostly refer to their law as the *Shari'a*. The *Shari'a* is a divine law. The *Shari'a* covers all aspects of a Muslim's life (Hodkinson 1984:3).

Islam has not permitted polygamy. If one has to marry to replace an existing wife, they have to be first divorced. However, this is not easily allowed at will or a free licence since the second marriage is only permitted if the differences between husband and wife have reached a climax. Hence to have more than one wife is permitted with a valid reason or under extra-ordinary circumstances under condition that the wives are treated equally and they are able to cope financially. In this case, the first wife must give consent to this practice (Sayyid 2003: 8).

Sayyid (2003: 140), stated that it is compulsory for all Muslims to marry who are able to care for the family and that the fear of poverty displays the lack of faith in God. When a spiritual and material bond is formed between husband and wife, and is embedded in God's will (supreme law of God), the marriage and family is satisfyingly filled with love, peace and mercy. In contrast to Buddhism and Christianity which considers celibacy and monasticism a great virtue that give meaning to salvation, Islam considers the marriage as the most virtuous approved institution to continue the human race.

Marriage is allowed by the Muslims, only if the parties contracting have attained puberty, are of a sound mind and are able to freely give consent. The Qur'an does not stipulate the minimum age for a legal marriage. The marriages within the prohibited degrees, consanguinity, affinity, fosterage and without consent (adult and sane) are declared void. However, the Shari'a declares that among the conditions required for a valid marriage, most important are understanding, puberty and

freedom. The marriage contracted by a minor who has arrived at the age of discretion, who does not possess understanding or who does not comprehend the consequences of the act, is regarded as null and void. In many Islamic countries, the minimum age of marriage has been laid down by secular law. A contract of marriage is decreed to be invalid unless both the parties understand its nature and mutually consent to it. The various schools of Islamic law, however, tend to differ with regard to the necessity for obtaining the consent of the woman. According to the Hanafi and Shia schools, a woman may consent to her marriage with or without a guardian. The marriage law in Islam forbids marriage with blood relationship and relatives (Warrier 2001: 92). Bekker (2006:143) disclosed the conditions included by the Muslim jurists for a valid marriage: *Shurut al-in iquad* (conclusion of the marriage contracts); *Shurut al-sihha* (no impediments to the proposed marriage); *Shurut al-nufudh* (the effectiveness of the marriage, capability of parties to enter in contract); *Shurut al-luzum* (binding of the marriage to the doctrine of equality of wives); and *Shurut al-sijill* (requirements of registration by the law of the country).

Hodkinson (1984: 4) further stated that the institution of marriage is at the center of Muslim personal law. A Muslim marriage contract is a sanctified religious contract (not civil contract) referred to as *Nikah* (not necessarily a sacrament). The contract does not prohibit the parties to marry each other. The marriage without a valid *nikah* is considered adultery and death is the punishment. At the time of *nikah*, a *Mahr* (like a dowry or a gift) is compulsory payment to the wife or even after the marriage. If the *Mahr* is not fixed at the time of the marriage then it will be acceptable under mutual consent. It is the property of the woman and may not be just money. It is her right or she may decide to take a part or ignore the whole amount or gift.

In the case of Muslim marriages, the law of Exogamy is applicable only to very near relatives – blood relations (Hussain 1976: 43). Islam does not allow inter-religious marriages (‘Abd al ‘Ati 1977: 135). The general rule in Islam is that marriages should be within the same religion as the first choice, but allowance to marry a person from another religion comes with conditions. The Islamic canon law (*Shariah*), in general, does not freely allow inter-religious marriage unconditionally, especially Muslim women from marrying outside the Islamic faith. However, it conditionally allows marriage to a Jewish or Christian woman, where the man must dominate the upbringing of the children according to Islamic traditions and the mothers should convert to Islam. Marriage laws in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are discriminatory in nature. Muslim men are able to marry non-Muslim women who are “People of the Book,” Christians and Jews. Christianity

receives more preferable treatment as opposed to other, non-Abrahamic faiths. A Muslim man should not marry a *mushrika* (unbelieving woman) until conversion to Islam and this also applies to the Muslim woman.

If a Muslim woman were to marry a non-Muslim man, they would be arrested, tried, and imprisoned on the grounds of fornication (<http://www.religionandpolicy.org/2007>). However, according to Islamic Law no Muslim woman is allowed to marry a non-Muslim man. Warner (2005: 231) stated that a wide divergence of opinions exist between the Shia and Sunni schools of law regarding inter-marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. The Sunnis recognize a marriage contract between a Muslim man and a woman believing in a revealed religion such as Judaism and Christianity as legal and valid. Some Shia sects, however, place conditions on such marriages (Warrier 2001: 93).

Islam abhors discrimination, since diversity is one of its principles as a universal religion. The Qur'an teaches that *taqwa* (righteousness) is the factor for preference: "Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Al-Hujurat 49: 13).

Why can't Muslim women marry outside the religion but the men can? This question was asked on the internet. One of the answers indicated that the fundamental goal of Islam is to establish a one world Islamic state. It is therefore implied that if the men marry outside their religion, most of the time, if not all, the women or wives at some point or before marriage always convert to Islam. If this happens then the growth of Islam is guaranteed. It is said that it is easier for a woman to convert than men. On the other hand, majority of non-Muslim men prefer observing their faith of origin and as such the Muslim women are lost to another religion. Men in general are more aggressive than women, and women in general are more open-minded and accepting than men (<http://inanswers.yahoo.com/question/index/2006>).

According to Aaminah, that Muslim women cannot marry non-Muslim men is in fact a protection for the Muslim woman. A non-Muslim man in most cases is not capable of fulfilling a Muslim woman's rights, and is easily able to fall back on his own culture as an excuse to not give her rights as a Muslim wife. How many Christian men offer an appropriate mahr (dowry)? How many allow their wives to raise their children in Islamic knowledge and practice without undermining it? How many will even respect her to wear hijab or to allow her to fast Ramadan? She continues to say that

the non-Muslim cannot provide her Islamic education and support (<http://www.maryams.net/dervish/2008>).

In Malaysia's law too, Muslims cannot marry non-Muslims but there is no issue over the conversion of religion. However, the contradicting Syariah Court laws rule that Muslims cannot convert to another religion and anyone who applies to renounce Islam can be found guilty of apostasy, which is punishable by jail and a fine. For many Muslim Indonesians, marriage outside of the religion is entirely forbidden and some will virtually disown any member of the family who marries a non-Muslim. It is believed that it is acceptable for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman since, as head of the family, the husband will continue to be able to steer a 'proper' course. Conversely, a Muslim woman may not marry a man of a different religion. Presumably, any such marriage would expect any children to be brought up as Muslims (<http://theultimatefallacy.blogspot.com/2007>).

Marriage in Islam may be dissolved by the husband without the court's interventions (*Talaq*) – free consent in writing or oral, by mutual consent, by judicial decree or by contractual right of divorce by the wife are however required (Abdal-Haqq 2002: 7). The marriage dissolved according to judicial decree is when the wife wishes to be divorced under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939, including the Khul (to put off) section 10(4) of the Family Court Act 1964. The wife is prepared to let go of the dowry and other benefits received from the husband (Dowry and Bridal Gifts Restriction Act, 1976). However, according to the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, the wife is entitled to maintenance.

4.5.3 Marriage Laws According to Hinduism

The Hindu marriages are declared sacred and seldom end in divorce (<http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk.2002>).

It is believed in Hinduism that marriage makes two separate bodies become one as marriage is understood as the final process of the living body. According to this tradition, a married man should not make an offering alone but his wife should accompany him or also participate as a married man's offerings carried out without the wife is useless. The wife must leave the father's house and live with a husband's household as she is regarded as the other half – the marriage is an indissoluble

contract and is also a religious sacrament (Gupte 1976: 3; Gokul 2002: 4). The Indian model should serve as the basis for the recognition of Hindu marriages in the South African context.

According to Warrior (2001: 35) marriage was looked upon by Hindus as a legal union between two persons of opposite sex. Polygamy was tolerated only when no male child was born to the first wife within the first few years of marriage. Even in such cases, however, considerable sanctity was attributed to the first marriage and the consent of the first wife had to be obtained before subsequent marriages could be contracted.

Though rarer, polyandrous marriages are also known to have been in existence among Hindus. However, in later times the right to contract polygamous marriages was questioned, and considerable pressure was exerted by social reformers during the mid-nineteenth century onwards to ban the practice. Bigamy was abolished by the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 and since been a criminal offence.

The child Marriage Restraint Act was passed in India in 1929, and the minimum legal age for the marriage of girls was fixed at 15 years. With the spread of education among girls, particularly in urban areas, the age at marriage has since risen to 18 years (Warrior 2001: 36).

The selection of marriage partners for a son or daughter is guided by both proscriptive and prescriptive rules. Two basic requirements are sub-caste endogamy and regional and linguistic endogamy. Hindu society was traditionally divided into four castes: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), Vaishyas (agriculturalists and traders) and Sudras (menial workers). Each caste was further divided into numerous sub-castes. Endogamy was believed to be the minimum criterion for the maintenance of the caste system and each sub-caste had a more or less institutionalized set of rules which ensured that the socialites of kinship and affinity did not extend outside its boundaries. The marriage circles are arranged in a hierarchy, and within each the constituency villages are considered to be of a higher or lower status. Whereas hypergamy (the practice of marrying one's daughter to a person of superior status) is tolerated and even encouraged; its converse, marrying one's daughter to a status inferior, is looked upon with extreme disfavour. Subramanian (1994: 33) disclosed that some castes in India searched for a new identity from one of a lower status to a higher status through marriage or conversion. The Pariah or untouchables, in order to receive some social status and political recognition found it fit to convert into Christianity

for their liberation from Brahman dominance and also for progress. Some fast growth of Hindu conversions to another religion (especially Christianity) in India and South Africa are motivated by the need for upward social and economic (to find work) movement and also a desire to be recognized by society – it is an escape route for those who are depressed. In addition to a new identity (Christianity), it instills in the socially degraded, poverty stricken and exploited people a new socio-spiritual worldview (Massey 1993:56). Patidars living in England today continue to be mindful of their relative status within caste, and the custom of arranging marriages within a particular circle still continues (Hussain 1976:43).

Under modern Hindu law, a breach of the endogamous boundary between sub-castes does not invalidate a marriage, although the rules of *gotra* (clan) and *sapinda exogamy* continue to be effective (Warrier 2001: 37). According to the Indian legal authorities, marriage within the same clan was prohibited. This restriction prevented marriages between maternal or paternal relations “with the consequent fixed custom of extra-clan marriage.” The Hindu exogamy is of two kinds, namely the *gotra exogamy* and the *sapinda exogamy*. The *gotra exogamy* aims at disallowing marriage within the same clan. The *sapinda exogamy*, on the other hand, disallows marriage with same blood relations. (Sarkar 1936:30; Karandikar 1929: 61). That is, marriages cannot be contracted between persons having ancestral affinity up to seven degrees on the paternal side and five degrees on the maternal side. Inter-caste marriages are strictly forbidden (Hussain 1976:43). According to Harlan and Courtright (1995:6), the Hindu Marriage Act (India) of 1954 requires that men who marry one woman will marry within their own caste, as inter-caste marriages or affairs produce relatively impure relationships. Love marriages within the same caste and financial background are favoured, compared to inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. Couples who dare cross the social conventions have to cope with a lot of social pressure within their families and from outside. Bekker (2006; 232) stated that inter-religious marriages were prohibited, although marriages of higher class to a female of a lower caste was allowed.

The Hindu Marriage Act (India) of 1955 removed the endogamous restriction of caste and exogamous restriction of *gotra*. The Act, however, held that the parties to a valid Hindu marriage must not be *sapinda* (family or class relationship) of each other unless they had the sanction of custom in their favour and would thus permit a sacramental marriage between the two. The violation of this rule would make the marriage void - Hindu Validity Act 38 of 1949 (Ghureye 1952: 369).

In 1949 the *Hindu Marriages Validity Act* enacted that:

No marriage between Hindus shall be deemed to be invalid or ever to have been invalid by reason only of the fact that the parties thereto belonged to different religions, castes, sub-castes or sects (Chatterjee 1972: 368).

Hindu marriages are also not recognized in South Africa as a valid marriage, unless the marriages are compliant to the Marriage Act 25 of 1961. The polygamous marriages are regarded as two marriages, one according to Hindu rites and the other in terms of common law and therefore not recognised (Bekker 2006: 242).

Religious customary marriages were regarded by Hindus as approved marriages. The Brahma (arranged) and Asura (love) marriage are recognized marriages (Gokul 2002: 124). However, the former was the most approved marriage – marriage between similar class and caste, mainly high class.

The legislations also governs divorce (Divorce Act/Laws, 1956). Gokul (2002:17) indicated that divorce of Hindu marriages rarely occurs but male and female divorce under the law may take place according to the Law. However, custom is given preference over the text of the Law. According to Family Court Act 1964, in the case of divorce, the wife is eligible for maintenance.

In India, the latest amendment to the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954 was introduced in 2010 to make divorce easier in the irretrievable breakdown of marriages. The words, “not earlier than six months” and “upon receipt of a petition” were replaced. This is in the favour of the wife who due to financial constraints that would be experienced by divorce may oppose the grant of a decree. However, in 2013 the bill was amended to allow the wife to waive the six months clause and include the words, “upon receipt of petitions by the husband and the wife” (<http://www.bokakhat.gov/2014>).

4.5.4 Post Apartheid South Africa and Indian Converts

The ministry of reconciliation and emotional healing (from depression, oppression and exploitation) increased in the new South Africa. The Church (especially the Anglican Church) increased in mission work by deploying more Indian converts into mission work and to ensure

that it was a genuine conversion and that they did not just convert for other selfish reasons but healing and salvation and then to practice the teachings of Christ (Selvanayagam 1994: 42).

The Indians experienced a new socio-religio-cultural identity through conversion. Hence, they confronted a new ethnic identity in Christianity. In the healing process they grasped the new traditions and practices, rituals and observations very smoothly and strong. However, their spiritual growth of many was stifled as they needed first to experience healing related to a socio-psychological condition before and after conversion to Christianity – including religious conversion and the adopting of a new cultural identity. Becoming unsure about a person's identity, affects the individual's self-esteem negatively – hence the person would manifest inability to function and achieve meaning to living and self-actualization. In Christianity converts are exposed to counselling and healing processes (Schreiter 1998: 5).

New inter-religious converts are found to be more passionate and at the same time also defensive about their new faith. In being defensive, they often disassociate themselves socially from unbelievers and family structures (Jayakumar 1999: 229). Inter-religious married converts also disassociate themselves from all past religious beliefs, traditional practices, rituals and observances. They follow the Bible text 11 Corinthians (6: 14), “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”, and also 11 Corinthians (5: 17), which talks about “old things are passed away and all things become new.” According to Jayakumar (1999: 277) the transition especially from Hinduism and Islam to Christianity impacted both on the converts and on their relationship to society. It was said that they have chosen a “Western culture” and alienated their Indian culture and society. Hence, religious conversion had a great impact on their cultural and religious identity even self-concept – exposed to a new socio-spiritual worldview and religio-cultural identity. In “new birth” the converts experience inner change of heart and also outward change in behaviour patterns – towards a higher actualization through Christian spirituality (Schreiter 1985: 17).

Against the background of the research done for this chapter, in the search for identity, the formation of a strong self-concept, towards optimal functioning and developing meaning to existence, an inter-religious marriage counselling model is needed, not only for marriages but also for individuals who convert to another religion as they are exposed to a new religious culture. The researcher needs to take the differences between the religions with regard to their marriage

laws into consideration, as well as the existing counselling theories and models in forming a specialized counselling model that would be able to address the challenges inter-religious couples face. One of these may be the issue of guilt feelings that stem from abandoning family and the religion of birth.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the focus was on the transformation process from apartheid to democracy, cultural transformation and its impact on religious marriage acts and laws.

South Africans understood that in order to live together in harmony there must be a dismantling of apartheid. The process of transformation from apartheid to a democracy has been a mature one. Also with this transition came religious and cultural tolerance.

The South African population has been affected by acculturation due to the fact that all minority communities and majority communities are intimately involved with each other. With our cultural diversity it is inevitable that certain groups would find changes difficult to assimilate or even find them unacceptable.

Transformation has caused a huge impact on our society, religiously and culturally. The Church, Mosque and Temple have become more multi-racial and multi-cultural. The doors to communication across culture and religion have opened up. Racial, cultural and religious barriers are dismantling gradually, thus, creating relationships across cultures and religions. Inter-religious dating has not been discouraged officially. Hence, this scenario has promoted inter-religious relationships and marriages.

The new constitution of South Africa stipulates explicitly the freedom of religion, beliefs, opinion and freedom of expression. This includes marriages concluded under any tradition. Hence, inter-religious marriages are not forbidden.

The transition from apartheid to democracy in the new South Africa also contributed to Indian conversions to another religion, especially Christianity. The Church missionaries grabbed the opportunity to address the issues and feelings of oppression, depression and reconciliation

through counselling interventions and introduced a new way of life of peace, healing and the belief in salvation.

Many Indians experience a new socio-religio-cultural identity through conversion. Hence, they confronted a new identity in Christianity. In the healing process they grasp the new traditional practices, rituals and observations very smoothly and strongly. The conversion and new identity have to be addressed through counselling as identity confusion may impact a couple's self-esteem negatively – hence the person would manifest inability to function and achieve meaning to living and self-actualization. Christian missionaries and counsellors assist the new converts through Christian spirituality.

The next chapter will focus on understanding the dynamics of family, religion and culture. It will also include a selection of theories with regard to the family. The family dynamics is the core foundation of the family, religion, marriage and more so inter-religious marriages and therefore an understanding of family religion and culture cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FAMILY, RELIGION AND CULTURE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher in this chapter will attempt to conceptualize the terms: Family in terms of theory and types of families, the notion of the religious family, family laws, the three religions and their traditions, and inculturation and religious conversion. Together, the theories related to these focuses form the structural framework that contains the fundamental elements which form the basis in all marriage relationships. It is imperative that these terms as well as marriage dealt with in the next chapter) be understood prior to conceptualizing inter-religious marriages. The issues and challenges that are experienced in an inter-religious marriage are influenced by these perspectives on the family. Furthermore, the traditions and belief systems related to the family need to be disclosed, examined and understood by counsellors prior to introducing a marriage counselling model, which is the main purpose of this research.

The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1971: 341) stated:

Since patterns of family life vary, no single form need be regarded as inevitable or more 'natural' than any other.

Queen (1985: 2) paraphrased the above statement by simply stating that, while the family is found practically everywhere, there is no natural law making the family universal.

The term family has been employed in several ways. In the simplest biological sense, the family consists of those individuals who are related by mating and descent, regardless of whether there is any other connection. But the biological concept of the family also takes account of a parent or parents and the caring for offspring. On the human level, the interaction between man and woman, parents and children, is not only physical; it involves the development of feelings and ideas, attitudes and sentiments, mutual awareness and a sense of belonging together. Hence in the sociological sense, the family is an intimate social group of persons, most of whom, are usually related by ties of blood relations that form a distinctive social unit. The limited biological family and the sociological family usually coincide in our culture (Winch 1979: 164).

Every person is directly or indirectly linked to a family. In most circles, if not all, religious and cultural, family is regarded as the most important social relationship. The family, factually speaking, is one of humanity's oldest social institutions. According to Charles Frankel's article that was published in the *Social Casebook* (1976: 355), of all the institutions that have shaped human life, the family has been the most important. However, in time, societal, social, cultural and religious transformations have definitely impacted on the family. The families in multicultural perspective travel across geographic, cultural, religious and historical boundaries. According to Smith (1995: vii), in modern times, cultural diversity influences family life.

This chapter will then provide an overview of major family theories that shaped our understanding of family life. Some theories view the family as a nuclear unit with certain functions. Cheal (1991: 31) advises that we need to explore the roots of family variations in a multitude of ethnic, racial and cultural identities. Theories give insight into family life, knowledge and understanding about the family dynamics. Theories that will be addressed are the sociological and social psychological theories. The Social Exchange approach, not only is about trade-offs but also meeting each other's needs – a rewarding relationship is sought. The various forms of family interaction patterns are discussed in the Symbolic Interaction Approach – human interaction takes place through commonly shared symbols. An insight into how the family understands meaning and share the meaning of symbols will assist in the understanding of the family. The meanings shape behaviour. Family conflicts and disharmony are the expected features of the social system and are understood through the Social Conflict approach. However, ways to reduce disharmony through conflict management are emphasized. On the other hand the Structural-Functional approach is quite the opposite in relation to the Social Conflict approach, in that it views the family as a complex system of interrelated parts. Each component or part activities, behaviour and decisions affect the others in the system so that the system functions as an integrated whole – there exists an interdependency relationship in the system. As such the family cannot be understood in isolation systematically speaking in accordance with Bowen's Family Systems approach – where the focus is on the system processes rather than on the separate parts of the system. Bowen discloses how the emotional system operates in a family – he discusses eight interlocking concepts: *Triangles, differentiation of self, the nuclear family, emotional system, family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, emotional cut-off, sibling position and societal emotional process.*

This chapter will also make attempts to understand the different types of families that exist religiously speaking. The focus pertaining to religious family would be mainly to understand the families of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The religious traditions and beliefs of the three religions will also be discussed.

The family structures, cultural and religious diversities assert enormous impact and influence on marriage, especially inter-religious marriages. In order for inter-religious marriages to survive in South Africa, an insight into notions of the family and religious diversity is necessary. All family theories may contribute in different ways to our understanding of family diversity precisely because they offer differing perspectives.

Since human beings co-exist in this world, inculturation or even religious inculturation is inevitable. However, through religious conversion and inter-religious marriages, inculturation takes place. Pinto (1985: 2) states that this involves: “That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Therefore, in order to accept religious conversion within the inter-religious family, the culture and traditions of religion should be clearly understood. Hence, to counsel inter-religious married couples who face issues and challenges, the counsellor should be aware of cultural and religious factors that impact inter-religious relationships, including the notion of conversion.

5.2 FAMILY THEORIES

The word “*theory*” is rooted in a Greek word that means to look at, view or contemplate (Osmond & Thorne 1993: 591). According to Smith (1995: 8):

A theory is a set of interconnected ideas that frames the world in a certain way and guides how we observe and explain phenomena. Family theories structure how we think about families, what we observe, how we interpret this knowledge, and how we use the information in programmes and policies that affect family life.

Theories have a profound effect on what we know about families. Yet a theory presents a certain, limited view and interpretations of family life (Sprey 1990: 21). The Sociological and Social

psychological theories such as the Social Exchange Approach; the Symbolic Interaction Approach; the Social Conflict Approach; the Structural–Functional approach; Family Systems Theory; and Role Theory will be reviewed. An understanding of each of these theoretical approaches is necessary for any meaningful understanding of the family and marriages. These approaches provide perspectives on the family and together create a clearer background for the understanding of inter-religious marriages. Such understanding is necessary, because it would contribute towards an effective inter-religious counselling model.

5.2.1 The Social Exchange Approach

The central focus of exchange theory is on motivation, which induces a person to act out of self-interest (Aldous 1996: 16). Operating primarily from an economic framework, social exchange theorists believe that any behaviour is either potentially rewarding or costly (Cheal 1999: 67).

The *social exchange approach* causes one to understand that people come together to meet each other's needs and also share with each other their inheritance – partners compliment each other. The relationship resembles a bargaining situation, that is, each partner weighs the rewards gained (companionship, intimacy, social acceptance, social approval prestige, power and enjoyment) against the costs incurred (time, money, unpleasant interactions and punishments). At the heart of this theory is the notion that individuals will seek rewarding relationships and avoid those that are too costly (Jovanovich 1988: 15). Contemporary exchange theory uses the concepts rewards, resources and costs as the foundation of interpersonal exchanges. Resources are any “commodity,” such as “love, status, goods, information and money” (Sabatelli & Shehan 1993: 398).

Relationships are generally viewed as satisfying when partners make about equal contributions and receive about equal positive outcomes. Under these conditions, a relationship must meet expectations of fairness. Levi-Strauss (1969: 55) emphasized that exchange behaviour is regulated by social norms and values; thus, exchange interactions are not restricted to direct interaction among individuals but include “complex networks of indirect exchange among various social groups.” Yet, culturally defined social obligations may limit individuals' abilities to seek their own rewards (Osmond & Thorne 1993: 601). Inter-religious marriages also experience social exchange in that family seek after what they can gain not only through assets or valuables but the couples seek relationship satisfaction through compromises and meeting each other half way for the

marriage to be at peace and in harmony – including foreexample, observing certain religious holidays and traditions from one another's religion (<http://www.jewiahdatingand marriage/2002>).

5.2.2 The Symbolic Interaction Approach

According to LaRossa and Reitzes (1993: 135), *Symbolic interactionism* was the principal theoretical orientation of the 1920s and 1930s and provides one of the most popular perspectives on the family today. The reason is that the theory is able to accommodate an interest in the individual in the context of family. *Symbolic interactionism* is a social-psychological approach which examines the various forms of family interaction patterns such as courtship, the honeymoon period, child rearing practices, divorce and separations, the role of the elderly and so on.

The basic assumption underlying symbolic interaction theory is that human interaction takes place through commonly shared symbols. A symbol is any sign that is agreed upon by convention. The *Symbolic Interaction approach* seeks to show how families interact through symbols – including social roles, words, and actions. Proponents of this approach, explore how the meaning attached to these symbols, influences daily interactions. To cite an illustration, when the social roles of mother and father are assigned to a couple, attitudes and expectations regarding oneself as well as one another are affected. As other examples, a wedding ring, anniversary gift and baby shower are symbols that prompt people to interact in certain ways. Unique gestures and expressions displayed within the realm of family life are other instances of symbols that influence the way we relate. Symbolic interactionists emphasize how we come to learn the meaning of symbols, how meanings are shared among family members and how they can undergo transformation (Jovanovich 1988: 15).

Humans create symbolic worlds through their interactions and these in turn shape human behaviour. They act toward things or people on the basis of the meaning these symbols have for them. Meanings are based on cultural symbols and social values, which are communicated through verbal and nonverbal interactions. At the same time, they interpret and assign meaning to others' responses. Through these social interactions, individuals gauge the appropriateness of their behaviour in particular settings and align themselves with cultural expectations communicated by the other person. This process of aligning actions helps to explain how cultural values are understood and responded to at the individual level (LaRossa & Reitzes 1993:136). With its focus

on the individual and how the individual relates to the symbolic universes of people, *symbolic interactionism* also provides insight into the individual's growth towards finding identity through family and social interactions. As such people acquire understanding of cultural symbols and social values.

In inter-religious marriages, how the couples attach meaning to religious interactions in the family system shapes their behaviour and religious identities. The way is opened for them to adapt to religious and cultural expectations of the partner – such compromise may be experienced either positively or negatively. Especially in cases where experiences are negative, counselling intervention is necessary to consider the issues that contribute to weakening the inter-religious marriage relationship. The counsellor needs to assist in couples' understanding of the symbols of one another's religion, and helps them to increase flexibility in family transactions (<http://www.pinkvilla.com/2006>).

5.2.3 The Social Conflict Approach

Jovanovich (1988: 16) states that the "*Social Conflict approach* seeks to expose how disequilibrium, disharmony and conflict are inevitable features of human interaction." Because of its inevitability, conflict is not viewed as disruptive or as an "evil" force; rather, it is an expected feature of social systems. Consequently, the main focus is to cope with conflict and to achieve harmony. The conflict that often exists in husband-wife or parent-child relationships, to cite but a few areas, provides fertile grounds for the exploration and application of conflict resolution strategies.

Important to the understanding of the family in a conflict framework, are the processes involved in competition, conflict, dissension and its relationship to social change and disequilibrium (Dickinson & Leming 1990: 51). Klein and White (1996: 184–185) elaborated on the notions upon which these processes are based:

- Human beings are self-centered and are therefore inclined to pursue their self-interest at the expense of others;
- Conflict is endemic in social groups despite the amount of time spent and expectations or togetherness in the achievement of common interests;

- Human beings have hopes and aspirations and there are no limits to this. This suggests that no matter how much a human being has, he still aspires for more, thus remaining in a state of competition; and
- Competition is endemic to all social relationships to the extent that a gain for one person may result in a loss for the other.

Conflict theorists maintain that conflict is inevitable in society, in the family and in interpersonal relationships. Not all conflicts are viewed as negative and leading to social disorganization, because conflict could lead to positive change (Eshelman 1991: 54).

Conflict in an inter-religious marriage is inevitable due to different traditions and religious and cultural symbols, values, and practices. The raising of children makes an inter-religious marriage more complicated. The counsellor has to find techniques to guide the couple in facing the reality of the conflicts through negotiations and compromises from both partners. In order for the relationship to experience growth and spiritual meaning for self-actualization, conflicts should be identified, and addressed. The couple should cooperate to ensure peace and harmony or else the relationship would remain a dysfunctional one and my end in divorce (<http://academic.udayton.alouise@multi-racial/2003>).

5.2.4 The Structural-Functional Approach

Queen (1985: 5) states that towards the end of the nineteenth century, scientists' basic assumption was that urbanization and industrialization had resulted in a loss of family functions. In traditional society, the family performed economic, educational, religious, protective and recreational functions. In modern society, most of these functions had been taken over by outside agencies (schools, factories, churches), leaving only companionship and emotional support as the cornerstones of family life. This focus on the family in the twentieth century had led to the school of thought that has come to be described as *structural-functionalism*.

Structural-functional theory has been a major influential approach to the study of the family for more than 30 years (Broderick 1993: 149). In many respects the structural-functional approach is just the opposite of the conflict approach. Society is seen as parts or units put together to function together and each part has a special role to play to maintain harmony, stability and balance. In other

words, subsystems within society (religious, political, economic) are in a relationship with one another and work to promote total cohesion and stability. Related to the family, the sum of the parts (husband, wife, off-spring) are vital to one another and seek to maintain an ordered and functional existence together (Turner 1988: 17).

Sociologists Dickinson and Leming (1990: 50) state that, “society is stratified by certain institutions or social structures that exist for broad social functions.” These social institutions are considered vital to perform important functions for a society. Each social institution is considered to be interdependent on the other. If one institution is in a state of disequilibrium it is likely to cause dysfunction in the entire system.

Structural-functionalism made some major theoretical contributions with regard to the family, i.e. with regard to especially six functions that families perform (Queen 1985: 6):

- Economic functions – each family must provide food, shelter, and other amenities of life for its members.
- Family legitimizes sexual relationships. However, some cultures approve of and even encourage sexual relations before marriage, while in others a woman is expected to prove her ability to bear a child before she marries.
- Reproduction – new births ensure continuity.
- Families provide for care and the socialization of children.
- Family membership provides individuals with a place in the social structure.
- Family functions are especially those of companionship and emotional support.

As in the case of religion and its structures so does inter-religious marriages also function in a structure in that it also has inter-related parts and inter-dependent parts or units forming the family system. As such, if one or any component of this functional structure is affected or troubled or out of unity with the other members of the household, then the whole household is out of equilibrium. If one person in the family breaks one of the rules that governs the family then the whole family is dysfunctional and out of harmony. A behaviour change in one can affect the whole household either negatively or positively. The practice of two religions in a household may cause disruption, confusion and disharmony. If this results in ongoing conflict, it produces negative feelings between husband and wife. The dysfunctional family structure has to be modified by counselling or even

therapy. The issues that are responsible for the breakdown in the family structure need to be identified and addressed. In this instance a decision may to be taken by the couples to follow a single religion, both religions, or a neutral religion to release the family from stress and conflict. The counsellor should use techniques that would engage disequilibrium and change (<http://www.inter-faithfamily.com/2012>).

5.2.5 Family Systems Theory

The *family systems theory* is a theory introduced by Dr. Murray Bowen (a psychiatrist at Menninger Foundation from 1946 to 1954). He suggested that individuals have to be understood in the context of the family unit without leaving anyone who belongs to that family out since the family is an emotional unit and each member depends on one another. Virginia Satir, in her 'systems approach,' indicates that how the family system works should be examined and should be adjusted if out of line to sustain the growth of family members as a whole. Those family members with low self-esteem for instance may not tolerate the strong attitudes and positive bold behaviours from other family members. Faulty family communication and lack of skills may also create problems and family dysfunction (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 346; Virginia Satir 1967: 81).

Systems theory examines the system processes rather than the different parts of the system. Systems and sub-systems are not independent entities, but are in constant interaction with each other. A system has the capacity to influence other systems and similarly influence itself. Systems are made up of boundaries, defined by rules and norms, which guide interaction. These boundaries could either be closed, opened or in-between (Janosik & Green 1992: 13).

According to Hill and Rodgers (1964: 171), the basic concept is that the family is an organic system striving to maintain balance as it confronts external pressures. The process by which the family systems operate is as follows (Bubolz & Sontag 1993: 419):

- Family members are considered interdependent parts of a larger whole; each family member's behaviour affects all other family members.
- To adapt, human systems take in information, make decisions about alternatives, try out a response, get feedback about its success, and modify behaviour as needed.

- Families maintain permeable boundaries that establish them as distinct from other social groups, such as separate residences, family rituals and “inside” jokes.
- Like other social organizations, families must accomplish certain tasks in order to survive, such as physical sustenance, economic maintenance, the reproduction of the family members, socialization for family and work roles and emotional nurturance. This task performance is functional not only for families but also for larger society.

The *Family Systems theory* is based on general systems theory. According to general systems theory, “a system is a set of elements (the elements being the parts of the system) standing in interaction among themselves and with the environment” (Whitechurch & Constantine 1993: 332). Basically, the theory proposes that living systems exchange information with the environment and use energy or feedback from the environment to grow, differentiate, or modify or correct a course of action (Broderick 1993: 176).

Family systems theory emphasizes the whole family rather than the individual within the system. Broderick further states that the qualities of the family can only be described from the combined characteristics of its members, that is, the relationships among them. This system strives to maintain equilibrium (homeostasis) and adapts to changes in the environment through a complex communication process of information exchange.

The family systems approach is unique compared to other systems models in that it examines the communication process family members use to develop cohesiveness and resolve conflict. The theory looks at the reciprocal impacts of individuals’ behaviour on others in the system and of everyone’s action on the entire system (cf. Whitechurch & Constantine 1993: 334; Broderick 1993: 176). Systems theory could be adopted to describe the interactional process among members and the outcome of such interaction and communication, in any cultural setting.

Bowen’s family systems theory is a theory of human behaviour that views the family as an emotional unit and uses systems thinking to describe the complex interactions in the unit. It is the nature of a family that its members are intensely connected emotionally (<http://www.thebowencenter.org/theory/1988>).

According to Bowen (Kerr & Bowen 1988: 347), a family is a system in which each member has a role to play and rules to respect. Members of the system are expected to respond to each other in a certain way according to their role, which is determined by relationship agreements. Within the boundaries of the system, patterns develop as certain family members' behaviour is caused by and causes other family members' behaviours in predictable ways. Maintaining the same pattern of behaviours within a system may lead to balance in the family system but also to dysfunction. For example, if a husband is depressive and cannot pull himself together, the wife may need to take up more responsibilities to pick up the slack. The change in roles may maintain the stability in the relationship, but it may also push the family towards a different equilibrium. The new equilibrium may lead to greater functionality or dysfunction as the wife may not be able to maintain this overachieving role over a long period of time. People solicit each other's attention, approval, and support and react to each other's needs, expectations, and distress. The connectedness and reactivity make the functioning of the family members interdependent. A change in one person's functioning is predictably followed by reciprocal changes in the functioning of others. For example, if a person takes too much responsibility for the distress of others in family relations, this may lead to unrealistic expectations of him or her by these other family members.

Cognisance must also be given to the *Structural-Strategic Family Therapy* of Salvador Minuchin (1960). Minuchin's central idea was that an individual's symptoms are best understood from the vantage point of interactional patterns within a family and that structural changes must occur in a family before an individual's symptoms can be reduced or eliminated. The goals of family therapy are two-fold: reduce symptoms of dysfunction and bring about structural change within the systems by modifying the family's transactional rules and developing more appropriate boundaries.

In addition, the eight interlocking concepts in Bowen's theory are also informative. He formulated the theory by using systems thinking to integrate knowledge of the human species as a product of evolution and knowledge from family research. A core assumption is that an emotional system that evolved over several billion years governs human relationship systems. The emotional system affects most human activity and is the principle driving force in the development of clinical problems. Knowledge of how the emotional systems operate in one's family, work, and social systems reveals new and more effective options for solving problems in each of these areas (Broderick 1993: 176; <http://www.genepro.com/genegram/family-systems-theory/1998>):

- *Triangles*: According to Bowen's theory (1978: 381) triangle is a smallest stable three-person relationship system. Triangles usually have one side in conflict and two sides in harmony, contributing to the development of clinical problems. A triangle can contain much more tension without involving another person because the tension can shift around three relationships. Spreading the tension can stabilize a system, but nothing gets resolved. People's actions in a triangle reflect their effects to ensure their emotional attachments to important others, their reactions to too much intensity in the attachments, and their taking sides in the conflicts of others. Someone is always uncomfortable in a triangle and pushing for change. Terkelsen (1974: 2) conceded that emotional triangles take place when a third party is drawn into a two party relationship – "a two-person relationship is stable when things are calm."
- *Differentiation of Self*: The variance in individuals depends on their susceptibility to depend on others for acceptance and approval. Families and other social groups tremendously affect how people think, feel, and act, but individuals vary in their susceptibility to a "group think" and groups vary in the amount of pressure they exert for conformity. These differences between individuals and between groups reflect differences in people's levels of differentiation of self. The less developed a person's "self," the more impact others have on his functioning and the more he or she tries to control, actively or passively, the functioning of others. A person with a well-differentiated "self" recognizes his or her realistic dependence on others, but he or she can stay calm and clear headed enough in the face of conflict, criticism, and rejection to distinguish thinking rooted in a careful assessment of facts from thinking only emotionally (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 95; Virginia Satir 1967: 81).
- *Nuclear Family Emotional System*: There are four relationship patterns that define where problems may develop in a family. People's attitudes and beliefs about relationships play a role in the patterns, but the forces primarily driving them are part of the emotional system. *Marital conflict* – when two people live as family or couple, they try to perform as a unit and endeavor to become one; the process is called fusion. Such togetherness may create anxiety. The more indifferentiated each partner is, the greater likelihood there will be emotional responses from one or both partners to minimize anxiety in the family system and relationship. As the family tension increases and the spouses get more anxious, each

spouse may externalize his or her anxiety into the marital relationship. Each focuses on what is wrong with the other, each tries to control the other, and each resists the other's efforts at control. *Dysfunction in one spouse* – one spouse pressures the other to think and act in certain ways and the other yields to the pressure. Another perspective is that both spouses may accommodate on another to preserve harmony, but one may do more of it. The interaction is comfortable for both people up to a point, but if family tension rises further, the subordinate spouse may yield so much self-control that his or her anxiety increases significantly. Such anxiety may fuel, if other necessary factors are present, the development of a psychiatric, medical, or social dysfunctional response. *Impairment of one or more children* – this is where both spouses focus their anxieties on one or more of their children. They worry excessively and usually have an idealized or negative view of the child. The child is more reactive than his or her siblings to the attitudes, needs, and expectations of the parents. The process undercuts the child's differentiation from the family and makes him or her vulnerable to act out or internalize family tensions. The child's anxiety can impair his or her school performance, social relationships, and even his or her health. *Emotional distance* – people distance themselves from each other to reduce the intensity of the relationship. Doing this, they may risk becoming too isolated (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 54; Papero 2000: 24; Virginia Satir 1967: 81).

- *Family Projection Process*: The family projection process describes the primary way parents transmit their emotional problems to a child. This process can impair the functioning of one or more children and increase their vulnerability to clinical symptoms. Children inherit many types of problems as well as strengths through their relationships with their parents. The projection process follows three steps: the parent focuses on a child out of fear that something is wrong with the child; the parent interprets the child's behaviour as confirming the fear; and the parent treats the child as if something is really wrong with the child (cf. Bowen 1978: 204; Papero 2000: 24).
- *Multigenerational transmission process*: The concept of the multigenerational transmission process describes how small differences in the levels of differentiation between parents and their offspring may lead over many generations to marked differences in differentiation among the members of a multigenerational family. The information

creating these differences is transmitted across generations through relationships (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 221).

- *Emotional Cut-off*: The act of reducing or cutting off emotional contact with family as a way of managing unresolved emotional issues (cf. Bowen 1978: 382; Papero 2000: 24).
- *Sibling Position*: This refers to the impact of sibling position in the family on development and behaviour. The basic idea is that people who grow up in the same sibling position predictably have important common characteristics (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 54; Virginia Satir 1967: 81).
- *Societal Emotional Process*: The concept of societal emotional process describes how the emotional system governs behaviour on a societal level, promoting both progressive and regressive periods in a society (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 334; Broderick 1993: 176).

The emotional status of the inter-religious marriage is easily affected by conflicts, disagreements and anxiety. Diverse religious beliefs may impact the operation of the whole family system. Within couples' relations, the behaviour pattern of one in the marriage impacts on the other and on the family – which may be either positive or negative. In terms of family systems theory, counsellors should ensure that couples achieve greater understanding of the systems that impact their relationship, and that they reach compromises between them, so that the family can experience equilibrium (<http://interfamily.com/2008>).

5.2.6 Role Theory

Role theory is a branch of symbolic interactionism and it also falls within the framework of structural functionalism. It acknowledges that each member has a role to play in the family as a system. Questions that are raised concern why some members have key roles and others don't even participate. Sociologists indicate that the roles of family members are different in different cultures. The acquiring of roles is either achieved or ascribed by society. For example, certain statuses related to sex, age and race are generally ascribed by society, whilst marital, occupational and parental statuses are achieved within the broader societal framework provided by society. As a consequence, each one of these statuses carries certain role expectations in terms of what is appropriate and what is not (Eshelman 1991: 59).

In general, all societies expect that husbands must take a providing role, whilst wives take on more nurturing and caring roles within the family. Roles for male and female siblings and roles in terms of the birth order of siblings are also within broad societal expectations, with variations from one society to another. Despite these variations, the functioning of the family is dependent on the ability of its members to fulfill their societal roles. The inability of a particular member to fulfill a role adequately is likely to cause strain on its functioning. Sociologists call this role conflict.

Inter-religious married couples should ensure that the role confusion issues, if they exist, are addressed. In general, all traditional religions perceive the husband as the sole bread winner and head of the household and family. In modern life this has changed, and need to be factored in especially in the context of the impact of religions on family life.

5.3 TYPES OF FAMILIES

Diverse family types have existed throughout human history. Many of these have taken on different forms due to the changing demands made by society. In this section, the researcher only focuses on the four main types of family, which have been discussed by Smith (1995: 100).

5.3.1 The Nuclear Family

The most common, smallest and elementary type of family is the *nuclear family*. It is usually a marriage with the husband as the head of the household, wife and children. According to Murdock (1949: 1), the nuclear family consists of at least two adults of the opposite sex living in a socially approved sexual relationship, together with one or more of their own or adopted children. Das (1991: 3), states that the nuclear family is the most commonly found form in highly developed countries and it is also to be found to a lesser extent in developing and underdeveloped countries. Socially it is an independently operating unit separated from family units and parental families. The nuclear family may be part of a greater collection of families that are ultimately grouped together into an *extended family*, which has as its head a responsible adult (Smith 1995: 100).

5.3.2 The Extended Family

“The *extended family* is a corporate economic and a political unit, as well as a kinship-based group”

(Das 1991: 3). All family members work towards a common goal and that is to maintain the welfare of the extended family. The extended family is an ongoing body that may have a geographical base. It transcends the lifetime of its members. The composition of the extended family with its nuclear families and independent single adults change constantly, but the extended family itself continues on with new leaders and new members as individuals depart or as generations pass away (Smith 1995: 100).

5.3.3 The Joint Family

The *joint family* is a kinship-based group that comprises of more than one nuclear family that live together. They depend on each other for support and also work together for the welfare of the family. It too is, ultimately headed by one person or a small coalition of leaders. The distinction between the extended and joint family types is that the joint family is not an ongoing, long-term unit. It is made up of close relatives, usually brothers, who are affiliated together under the rule of their father. When the father dies or becomes physically or mentally unable to continue on as the leader, the eldest brother may assume the role of head of the family (Smith 1995: 101).

5.3.4 The Single Parent Family

The single parent family is a result of divorce, separation, death and desertions. The *single parent family* may be conceived of as an alternative to the nuclear family. In the past females falling pregnant outside the institution of marriage would readily consider settling down with the reputed father. However, with increasing economic independence and social support in developed societies, fewer women are opting to give their babies up for adoption and making increasing demands on the father of their baby for child support (Robertson 1987: 41).

5.4 RELIGIOUS FAMILY

5.4.1 The Patriarchal Family of the Ancient Hebrews

In Jesus' time, the family was a patriarchal clan and kinship structure that functioned as a religio-political unit, valued the blood relatedness of both nuclear and extended family, and was generally in tension with other clans, the state, and the national cult. This kind of family structure could

readily function in terms of other super-ordinate wholes such as the notion of the Kingdom of God. It was sometimes polygynous. Early Judaism, like most ancient and more recent cultures, including most forms of Christianity and traditional Judaism to the present day, was patriarchal; kinship and blood relatedness certainly were central, again, as they remain today; Jewish families of antiquity, like Jewish families and families of all religions throughout history, valued their own religious beliefs and culture, which they wished to transmit largely unchanged to their children (Neusner 1996: 133).

In the earliest times of which we have record, the Jews were nomadic desert groups living in tents, driving their sheep in search of pasture and water. The ancient Hebrew society of historic times may be legitimately described as patriarchal and polygynous. This was especially marked during the period of nomadic pastoral life. Polygyny was recognized in the Hebrew law, although not without some restrictions. During the nomadic period, the headship of the household usually went to the patriarch's eldest son. Wives were expected to be submissive to their husbands, and were often viewed as little more than property (Queen 1985: 37).

The basic unit of ancient Hebrew society was the household, which often included several marriage groups. Marriages were affairs, arranged between families. The girl belonged to her father until she was sold (brideprice) to her husband. Typically, betrothals were arranged at about the time of puberty (Kephart & Jedlicka 1991: 26). Although there is evidence of loving husband-wife relationships, love was not the key purpose of marriage. It was a responsibility expected of everyone, in order to ensure the continuation of family lines through childbearing. The commandment to multiply and replenish the earth was taken seriously, and large families were seen as a sign of God's blessing. There was strong endogamous pressure to preserve cultural identity (Habenstein 1985: 39).

During the nomadic period, the household included the patriarch, his wives and concubines, their small children, grown sons with their wives and children, slaves, bond servants, and sometimes strangers who had placed themselves under the patriarch's protection. All lived in the same camp, occupying numerous tents. A number of related households constituted a clan; a number of related clans constituted a tribe; and in Israel the twelve tribes constituted the nation. All these groups were regarded as extensions of the family, and the whole people was united by a sense of kinship (Smith 1995: 37).

5.4.2 The Family in Christianity

The heart of the Christian faith and family is founded in the divine authority of the inspired “word of God,” the Bible. Hence, the role of the family is founded on the teachings of the Bible. Thus, the Christian family seeks to conform to the will of God, the law of God and the Holy scriptures. The nuclear family in Christianity consists of a husband, wife and their children (Neusner 1999: 130).

The Bible is clear on how the husband and wife in a Christian family should operate. The submissive relationship of the husband and wife constitutes a living image of the relationship between Christ and the Church. In Ephesians (5: 22 – 33) the wives are instructed to submit unto their own husbands as they submit to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church. However, in the same voice it states that the husbands must love their wives as they love themselves and even as Christ loved the Church. Therefore, the man leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh. The scripture also instructs the children to obey and honour their parents and the fathers are not to provoke their children but are to admonish and nurture them in the Lord.

In the first century after the life of Jesus Christ, Christian domestic values were not distinctly Christian but were, rather, a mix of Jewish, Greek, and Roman customs. Many types of families existed with different lifestyles and moral codes. Gradually, however, a single uniform rule was observed for marriage, sex, and family life. Included in these values were support for the family, emphasis on the husband-wife relationship and parental responsibility, and opposition to infanticide, adultery, and sexual excess. In almost every culture, the family is a basic institution honoured in the values and desired by individuals (Queen 1985: 137).

The family in Christianity has a religious role. A father is the spiritual head, the priest, and the teacher of the family, just as God is the head of His great family and Christ the head of the church. The fathers are responsible for family decisions. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians (11: 3-10; 14: 33-35) (NIV) exhorts the Church:

Ye wives, be subject to your own husbands, and have them in esteem, and serve them with fear and love... In like manner, ye husbands love your own wives as your own members, as partners in life, and fellow-helpers for the procreation of children.

The actual roles to be played by women in the Christian family were stated by Paul in his epistle to Titus (2: 4-5): “To be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.”

This was set forth in more detail in *The Instructor* by Clement (1886: 211):

Nor are women to be deprived of bodily exercise. But they are not to be encouraged to engage in wrestling or running, but are to exercise themselves in spinning, and weaving, and superintending the cooking if necessary. And with their own hands to fetch from the store what we require. And it is no disgrace for them to apply themselves to the mill. Nor is it a reproach to a wife – housekeeper and helpmate – to occupy herself in cooking, so that it may be palatable to her husband. And if she shake up the couch, reach drink to her husband when thirsty, set food on the table as neatly as possible, and so give herself exercise tending to sound health, the instructor will approve of women like this.

According to Smith (1995: 44), the Christian family was considered even less important than the nuclear family, because kinship, descent, and the rights and obligations of relatives outside the nuclear family are barely mentioned in the New Testament or the patristic writings. However, due to the observance of one man and one woman marriage and, abstinence of sexual relations before marriage sustained the nuclear family.

The Christian family is protected by God. The ultimate goal is to worship and serve Christ and please Him in all their ways. The family is to live in purity, holiness, love and forgiveness under the grace of God. Christ takes a central position in the home. The family is compelled to build on this foundation, Christ the Lord.

5.4.3 The Family in Islam

The Muslim family and culture is very important and sacred to the Muslims. Despite differences in the Muslim world, the basic teachings of Islam are practiced universally. The universalistic character of Islam sets identical standards of morality, obligations and familial relationships for all Muslims around the world. Laws and regulations concerning marriage, divorce, inheritance, proper relations between men and women, the treatment of widows and orphans, the training of children, and the position of the aged are prescribed in the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam (Cockerham 1995: 503).

The corporate family is the most typical organization and the normative ideal in the Muslim community, but the functional unit is the extended family system. This includes the nuclear families of brothers, sons, nephews and sometimes, male cousins. Not all male relatives and their families live in one household, but extended households are made up of several nuclear families under the authority of the oldest male (Blitsen 1963: 199).

The Muslim community places great emphasis on kinship. Traditional reciprocities between grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts and nieces, nephews and cousins, as well as those between members of the nuclear family unit, create close family ties. Lineage is recognized by kinship through the male line. Family continuity through sons is a prime value and all children belong to their father's house. Muslim families are generally patriarchal and authority is vested in the males. Children are subordinate to their elders and women to men (Blitsen 1963: 200).

However, the traditional Muslim family has undergone tremendous social change due to westernization, urbanization and industrialization, and the extended household is often no longer a viable economic proposition. The extended household has tended to separate into nuclear family units in order to meet the greater economic demands of society.

Muslim females were traditionally confined to household duties and child rearing functions. Due to economic stress, the Muslim female has become greatly emancipated from her traditional role and many are now competing in the open labour market to supplement the household income.

5.4.4 The Hindu Family

Family life is very important for Hindus. Eerdmans (1994: 172), states that not everyone who is born a Hindu is a practicing Hindu, but it is claimed that 'they are Hindus because they are born into a Hindu family'. For many Hindus, family life means being part of a large family with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and children all living under one roof. However, not all Hindus live in large family groups. In the cities, families consist of mostly parents and children only. In Hindu tradition, the family is a spiritual institution. A family is an emotional communion of inseparable love (Bahree 1995: 22).

Along with the need for being disciplined and just, the family also recognizes the need for the individual to pursue wealth and joy in life. This is the core concept of the *purushArtha* which means "meaning of life" or essence of life. There are four *purushArthas* or the things to seek for in one's

life. They are *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* (virtue, wealth, joy and liberation). The Hindu view of caste, *ashramas* (essence of life), and family are inseparable – every person is born into a family belonging to a particular caste, and passes through the four stages of life by practicing Dharma.

Among the four ashramas, the second stage of the married householder is central because it births and sustains the three other *ashramas*. When a man marries, he pays the three debts he owes to the ancestors, the gods, and his teacher (guru). To the ancestors, a married man pays his debt by having children, especially a male child, to continue the family lineage. Since the surname of the average Hindu is usually the family name, when a son is born the family name continues. This is not the case with daughters, who marry into another family and take the surname of their husbands. Continuing the family lineage and its name is crucial because the memories and integrity of the ancestors are kept alive through these. The name (specifically surname) of a family is often synonymous with integrity and respect. Maintaining family integrity is necessary because it reflects the extent to which family members are faithful to their *dharma* (duty). When a son marries a woman from a reputable family, earns a living through a just and honest vocation, and provides for his family, he honours the ancestors. Furthermore, because dharma is inclusive of religious traditions and practices relating to *moksha* (liberation), when a man imparts family *dharma* to his children, he enables their salvation and that of generations to come (Jayaram 2007: 71).

Dively (1971: 47) indicates that, as a householder, a man pays back debts owed to the gods, the providers of prosperity and comfort, by offering appropriate sacrifices and prayers to them. Giving alms to the poor and religious mendicants, and occasionally feeding and financially remunerating them for their services, are also deemed as acts symbolizing gratitude to the gods for material benefits enjoyed by a family. A man pays back debts owed to his guru by transmitting knowledge and wisdom received from the guru to his children. However, in the cities and towns of India, and in some villages, the average child rarely studies under a guru. In these contexts, a Western school system is the common mode of education. Furthermore, girls are equal recipients of education in cities and major towns. Urban Indian women who receive a Western form of education hold professional jobs just like their Western counterparts. Many of these women also contribute substantially to household income and have an equal voice in family decisions.

For Hindus, family is larger than the nuclear family. The family includes the extended family – maternal and paternal grandparents, aunts, and cousins. In India, especially in towns and villages still untouched by a free-market economic structure and modern culture that dominates the cities, many people are born into a joint family system. A joint family basically comprises paternal parents, their sons, daughter-in-laws, unmarried daughters, and grandchildren. Here, the oldest male is the head of the entire household. Respect for a family member is based on age because the older a person, the wiser he or she is about family *Dharma*. The older men make the financial decisions, and the older women are often informally consulted. In instances where a joint family does not exist, older members are still consulted before decisions are made, especially in relation to marriage. Among Hindus, the family is the ideal environment through which Hindu Dharma is passed from one generation to another – a child begins learning about religious traditions, epic stories, ethics, norms, and values, especially by the examples set by family members (Jayaram 2007: 72).

When a person marries in the context of a Hindu family, he or she may literally wed an individual, but on a broader level a person marries into a family. Because a family is the embodiment of *dharma*, a prospective bride is considered a candidate only when the traditions, practices, and economic status of her family match that of the prospective bridegroom's family. Traditionally, most Hindu marriages are arranged – relatives and friends suggest the name and family of prospective brides or bridegrooms. Before a family considers a person as a candidate for their son or daughter, the family *Brahmin* is consulted to examine the horoscopes of the two individuals concerned, and to suggest whether there is a possible match. In a rural setting, after the approval of the family *Brahmin*, the decision of the marriage is almost always made by the parents and the extended family of the people involved. In this context, the search for a bride and bridegroom continues until two families agree that their son and daughter would make a good couple. Among middle class families in Indian cities, depending on the level of conservatism, the man and woman may be allowed to meet alone on one or a number of occasions before a marriage decision is made. Since the 1990s, with the increase of the influence of Western culture, many young men and women in major Indian cities find a prospective bride or bridegroom through the process of a friendship or dating, and then inform their parents of their mutual attraction. However, in the final decision, the families of the man and women are definitely involved. Unlike in the West, a man and a woman do not get engaged and then inform their families of the “good news” (<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/2006>).

5.5 FAMILY LAWS IN THE RELIGIONS

The Family laws in Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are here examined as these influence inter-religious marriages and relationships. The focus is mainly on laws that govern marriage, divorce and maintenance, wills and inheritance, and family responsibilities. It is clear that every religion follows its own personal laws concerning the family matters of marriage and divorce, etc. There are laws and acts in place to guide the families in making decisions, namely the Marriage and Divorce Act of 1936, the Muslim laws Application Act 1937 (Muslim personal laws and Hindu law Act 1955). However, certain issues are excluded as it has already been discussed in the previous chapter under marriage in the three religions.

5.5.1 Family Laws in Christianity

The Christian personal laws are applicable to Christians. In India, the relevant laws come from the Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1972, the Indian Act of 1869, and the Marriage Dissolution Act of 1936.

Marriage is only permitted between one man and one woman (Monogamy). In Christianity, marriage is a sacrament, a holy institution of God. However, the marriage is registered under the law of the land. The Special Marriage Act of 1954 allows for the appointed marriage officers by the state to register and solemnize the marriages. The prescribed age of 18 years for a female and 21 for a man applies (Sayyid 2003: 11).

The Christian Family Law controls divorce and marriage. In India Christian marriages are governed by the Indian Marriage Act 1872 and amended Act of 2001. The marriage may be dissolved on grounds of adultery, cruelty and desertion for over 7 years, insanity, incurable diseases, conversion to another religion, willful refusal to consummate the marriage and failure to obey the order for restitution of conjugal rights. In addition, the wife may divorce if the husband is guilty of rape, sodomy and bestiality (Singh 1993: 30).

Sayyid (2003: 14) states that the divorce Act of 1869 for Christians in India was implemented and is grounded in the English Law. However, Christian marriages are based on the fact that

spouses are pre-chosen by God and are permanent unions until eternity, except on reports of infidelity due to an adulterous act committed by either spouse.

In the case of conversion to Islam, a man may consider divorce of the wife, if she does not convert. However, if the woman converts to Islam, the marriage is automatically dissolved, according to the Muslim law that indicates that a woman cannot marry a non-Muslim. Maintenance and dowry are governed by the Family Court Act, 1964. The Christian Canon Law (1234) by the Roman Catholic Church does not allow divorce, and only recognizes annulment of marriage after a civil divorce.

A will should be drawn up by a person who is not a minor, who is of sound mind, free of fraud, coercion, under no influence and is competent to draw a will. The Christian will and distribution subscribes to the law of the land. The general principle of the Talmudic law in Judaism, requires that the heirs of the deceased father inherit the estate but the daughters are to be supported in living the lifestyle that they experienced prior to the death of the father. The canon law subscribed to the Roman law where the heirs receive a quarter of the estate but the early Church also decided to assist the widows and family members through the drawing up of the will accordingly (<http://www.law.wm.ed/inheritance/2008>).

5.5.2 Family Laws in Islam

The Muslim personal law, which is the Sunni Law and the Shia Law, is only relevant to Muslims. The source of the Muslim laws is the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnat and the Ijma.

The laws, including the jurisprudence of Islam are embedded in the Islamic law (Abdal-Haqq 2002: 27). The Shari'ah is the primary source of the laws (the Qur'an and the Sunnah – traditions of Muhammad) and the jurisprudence is referred to the subordinate sources which govern Muslims. Muslims also subscribe to the legislation of the land.

The Islamic scholars and Muslims mostly refer to their law as the *Shari'a*. The *Shari'a* is a divine law. According to Hodkinson (1984:139), the divine nature of the Shari'ah does not submit to any legislative authority on earth. The *Shari'a* is the path of the believer, the way which Allah wishes man to pass, and the word is used of the collection of Allah's commandments revealed in the Holy

Qur'an or conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The *Shari'a* covers all aspects of a Muslim family's life (Hodkinson 1984:3).

According to the Qur'an and Hadith (that governs Islamic marriages), Muslims are instructed to marry those who are single and it is complete when the other party accepts the proposition to marry. However, the husbands are permitted to have up to four wives at the same time and not more. The marriage would be valid if the parties have the capacity to marry; permission granted for proposal and acceptance; free consent; and no legal disability. After 15 years the person is regarded as an adult and is allowed to marry with consent from the father and paternal grand father. Marriages of blood relations are not permitted (consanguinity) and for a male it is called affinity (Al-Hujurat 49: 10).

If a Muslim woman were to marry a non-Muslim man, they would be arrested, tried, and imprisoned on the grounds of fornication (<http://www.religionandpolicy.org/2007>). However, according to Islamic Law no Muslim woman is permitted to marry a non-Muslim man. Warner (2005: 231) states that a wide divergence of opinions exists between the Shia and Sunni schools of law regarding inter-marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. The Sunnis recognize a marriage contract between a Muslim man and a women believing in a revealed religion such as Judaism and Christianity as legal and valid. Some Shia sects, however, place conditions on such marriages (Warrier 2001: 93).

Islam abhors discrimination, since diversity is one of its principles as a universal religion. The Qur'an teaches that *taqwa* (righteousness) is the factor for preference: "Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Al-Hujurat 49: 13).

According to the Muslim Marriage Act 1939 section 2(7) (law of puberty), divorce is granted if the marriage occurred prior to the age of 15 years; the marriage was not consummated; and the repudiation of the marriage prior to attaining age 18 years. Marriage in Islam may be dissolved by the husband without the court's interventions (*Talaq*) – free consent may be given in writing or orally, by mutual consent, by judicial decree or by contractual right of divorce by the wife (Abdal-Haqq 2002: 7). The marriage dissolved according to judicial decree is when the wife wishes to be divorced under the Dissolution of Muslim family Act, 1939, including the Khul (to put off) section 10(4) of the Family Court Act 1964. The wife is prepared to let go of the dowry and other benefits

received from the husband (Dowry and Bridal Gifts Restriction Act, 1976). However, according to the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, the wife is entitled to maintenance.

It is the duty of a Muslim to write a will before his death. The will will be a legal document disclosing to whom the inheritance must be divided or given too (Qur'an 4:12). One third of the estate may be bequeathed to any body outside the family or of no relation (charity). The follower of another religion may not inherit anything. The will helps to resolve any possible disputes that may take place after a person's death. If there is no will, then the estate will be divided according to the law of the land (<http://aishastacey/islamreligion.com/2012>).

5.5.3 Family Laws in Hinduism

The Hindus follow customs to guide their family decisions. However, the Hindus also subscribe to the laws legislated in the country. The acts such as the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, the Hindu succession Act 1956, the Hindu Minority Guardianship Act 1956, and the Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956 are applicable.

The four categories of Hindu family laws are: *Scruti* (contains very little law); *Smariti* (laws that were passed down from one generation to the next); *Customs* (conflicts between *Custom* and a *Smariti* texts will end in the texts of law being outweighed as there is a clear distinction found in the laws); and *Statutory laws* (implemented by parliament and overrides all forms of law) (<http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/2002>).

The selection of marriage partners for a son or daughter is guided by both proscriptive and prescriptive rules. Two basic requirements are sub-caste endogamy and regional and linguistic endogamy. Hindu society was traditionally divided into four castes: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), Vaishyas (agriculturalists and traders) and Sudras (menial workers). Each caste was further divided into numerous sub-castes. Endogamy was believed to be the minimum criterion for the maintenance of the caste system and each sub-caste had a more or less institutionalized set of rules which ensured that the socialities of kinship and affinity did not extend outside its boundaries. The family circles are arranged in a hierarchy, and within each the constituent villages are considered to be of a higher or lower status. Whereas hypergamy (the practice of marrying one's daughter to a person of superior status) is tolerated and even encouraged;

its converse, marrying one's daughter to a status inferior, is looked upon with extreme disfavour. Patidars living in England today continue to be mindful of their relative status within caste, and the custom of arranging marriages within a particular circle still continues (Hussain 1976:43).

Under modern Hindu Family law, a breach of the endogamous boundary between sub-castes does not invalidate a marriage, although the rules of *gotra* (clan) and *sapinda exogamy* continue to be effective (Warrier 2001: 37). According to the Indian legal authorities, marriage within the same clan was prohibited. According to Harlan and Courtright (1995:6), the Hindu Family Act (India) of 1954 required that men who marry one woman will marry within their own caste, as inter-caste marriages or affairs produce relatively impure descendants. Love marriages within the same caste and financial background are favoured, compared to inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. Couples who dare cross the social conventions have to cope with a lot of social pressure within their families and outside (Hussain 1976:43). Bekker (2006; 232) states that inter-religious marriages were also prohibited, although marriages of higher class to a female of a lower caste was allowed.

According to Subramanian (1994: 30), the mass conversions of Hindus to Christianity are from those who are regarded as no caste, outcast or untouchables (Pariahs) in South India. The Hindus of higher caste would not mingle or even touch an outcast as to avoid pollution. Marriages were restricted to clean castes or upper castes even inter-religious marriages. Since the caste system was intense, the people of the lower caste searched for identity, dignity and recognition by the people of society, and for their survival they converted to Christianity as Christianity was regarded, a Western culture and class or caste was of no concern. Hence, the door for inter-religious relationships and marriages was opened.

Gokul (2002:17) indicates that divorce of Hindu marriages rarely occur but male and female divorce under the law according to the Hindu texts may take place. However, custom is given preference over texts. The legislations also govern divorce (Divorce Act/Laws, 1956). According to Family Court Act 1964, the wife is eligible for maintenance.

The will that indicates the distribution of the estate should be made by a sane person under no influence whatsoever. The Hindu Succession Act 1956 states that the property shall devolve firstly, to the sons and daughters or any children and husband of the deceased Hindu female. If no

immediate family exists then the estate of the deceased wife will be distributed to parent and even going down to family relations if necessary. In case of the deceased husband, the property goes to the wife and the heirs of the husband. If there is no wife or heirs, then the estate goes to the relatives of the husband (<http://www.hanishadesai.com/interstate/2005>).

5.6 RELIGION AND TRADITIONS

5.6.1 Definition of Religion

‘The word *religion* comes from the Latin *religio*, which means: an obligation or a duty’ (Weber 1969: 1). It is, sometimes assumed by most scholars that it is fruitless and unnecessary to try and define and conceptualize something as complex and intimate as religion (Weber 1965: 1). Durkheim (1969: 42) defined it as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.” Robertson (1971: 376) defined religion by substantive cultural context as “that set of beliefs and symbols pertaining to a distinction between an empirical (natural) and a super-empirical (supernatural), transcendent reality; the affairs of the empirical being subordinated to the non-empirical.” Berger (1967: 26), on the other hand, stated: “religion is a human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established.” By sacred is meant here a quality of mysterious and awesome power, other than man and yet related to him, which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience. Finally, Bellah (1969: 263) defined religion as “a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence.”

Throughout history and across the world there have been people who believe that something exists beyond the physical realm that they experience through their senses. There is no single definition of religion, but organized religions and religious beliefs are likely to include all or some of the following features (Masih 1993: 80):

- A belief in the supernatural (some sort of belief in God or gods) or in symbols which are in some way regarded as sacred, such as a cross or totem pole.
- A set of teachings and beliefs (theology), usually based on some holy book, such as the Bible or the Qur’an.

- A series of rituals or ceremonies to express these beliefs, either publicly or privately. For example, most religions contain rituals such as getting on your knees to pray, church services, singing, fasting, or lighting candles.
- The religious organizations that consist of churches, mosques, and temples, including worshipers, priests and believers.
- A value system that contains moral laws which guide the life of religious people, such as the Ten Commandments in Christianity.

The sociologist Browne (1992: 302) stated that the role of religion in society can be broadly categorized under three headings: individual support, social integration, and social control.

5.6.1.1 Individual Support

Religion can provide a source of comfort, explanation, and meaning for individuals when faced by strains and crises in their lives, such as death, accidents, and natural disasters. Religious ceremonies can give believers a feeling of identity and security and a sense of belonging to a group that cares about them, and unite them around a shared moral code of behaviour. Religion can provide a source of explanation and understanding of questions such as the meaning of life and death, or an explanation or justification for an individual's social position. Religious groups still carry out some important welfare roles for individuals.

5.6.1.2 Social Integration

Religion is part of the culture or way of life of a society, and it helps to maintain cultural traditions. Society can only survive if people share some common beliefs about right and wrong behaviour. Durkheim (1969: 31) viewed religion as a kind of social glue, binding society together and integrating individuals into it by encouraging them to accept basic social values. He saw worshipping together as a means of reinforcing a sense of solidarity in a social group, and it is through religion that an individual is socialized into the values of society. The moral beliefs and values may have been so deeply ingrained through socialization that it may have an effect on the everyday behaviour of religious people. Religious beliefs and customs are often a means for these groups to maintain their cultural identity and traditions.

5.6.1.3 Social Control

Karl Marx (1844) described religion as the ‘*opium* of the people’. He saw religious belief as an *illusion* – a hallucinatory drug – attempting to justify existing arrangements in society and encouraging people to accept them. He saw religion doing this in two ways.

Firstly, religion justifies existing inequalities in income and power in society, by explaining the position of the rich and poor as ‘the will of God’. For example, the Hindu religion makes provision to address weakness and unfairness of the Indian caste system, and the Bible is riddled with quotations such as “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mark 10:25). The problem is that the poor are more likely to accept their position in society.

Secondly, Marx believed religion provided comfort for the poor, and drew their attention away from their present misery and the inequalities and injustices of this world with promises of future life after death. In this way, the poor are encouraged to put off their pursuits of personal happiness and rewards in this life for some future reward in heaven. These two aspects of religion, Marx believed, could only benefit the privileged and powerful, since the poor are encouraged to find ‘salvation’ through religion rather than challenging the position of the rich and powerful.

Smart (1973: 50) explained a dimension of religious significance:

The understanding of a diversity of religious traditions is a way of understanding their significance, that is, what they mean to those who belong to these traditions, both in the past and at the present time. Certain values in a religious tradition may be significant to us because they throw light upon ethical and social problems at present besetting us. Religious traditions may be significant because they contain materials for *expressing* the truth about the world and about human life. The significance of religion might be viewed in terms of the role it has played in human society, art, etc. The significance of religion may have to be seen in the light of the most plausible and sensitive theories of its *genesis*: for instance, does the myth-making aspect of human culture throw light on the structure of human social psychology? Or again: are religious beliefs a form of projection, and if so, is such projection inescapable.

Religion usually, though not always, involves revering or worshipping a higher, unseen power, which is thought to have created the world and now oversees it. This higher power is sometimes referred to as the *Absolute*. In some religions it is seen as an impersonal force, often called *God*, to

which people can appeal for help and guidance. Some religions have several gods. Religions ask and try to answer certain important questions: Why was the world created? How should people live? Why is there so much suffering? What happens after death? Religion plays a role in the life of every being, controlling their behaviour in dressing, eating, place to live, partner to marry and even the way to think. Religion has been a powerful force in the development of different cultures around the world (Meredith 1995: 4-8). The researcher will only focus on the three major religions of the world, especially on exposing the beliefs and religious practices, since these have significant influence and impact on inter-religious marriages.

Lieberman (1991: 1) states that for almost every person, life is dictated by religious traditions. The traditions serve to keep the families together in faith and instill a sense of identity and a sense of belonging. In current times and changing circumstances people find themselves in a situation where they grasp onto traditions for hope, assurance, comfort and love due to life's uncertainty. According to the research conducted by Newell (1999: 2) there exists the interplay between faith and traditions. "Traditions are the cement that keeps the family together ... and help you withstand the storms that come." The research conducted in 1998-1999 revealed that eating, praying, observing holidays, and family activities bring closeness and unity to the family. The traditions give families and family members a sense of identity as values are shared and a sense of belonging are established. The rituals make a connection to family and community and to beliefs. Finally, the research affirmed that the family traditions contribute to the family strength, identity, and to ensure that the family line continues.

5.6.2 The Christian Religion

Christianity, a world religion, began in Israel in the early parts of the first century. Christianity is the religion of Christians. The founder of Christianity was a Jew named Jesus, a teacher and healer who lived some 2000 years ago in Palestine. After being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus presented himself as "the way, the truth and the life". He attracted a core of 12 disciples and commenced a vigorous mission. To those who followed him, he promised salvation and chartered the route towards its achievement. His life, death and resurrection became the basis for the religion practiced by Christians. At the center of Christianity is the person of Jesus – the one whom Christians believe to be both human and divine (Barnes 1999: 108). The cross has become the universal symbol of the faith, representing the sacrifice made by a loving God 'that the world

through Him might be saved'. Christians follow the teachings of Christ (Christ or Messiah: means Saviour), a title always used by His followers. Jesus was a charismatic and authoritative prophet preacher. He posed a threat to the religious leaders and the civil rulers of his time. The former persuaded the latter to take action against him. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, condemned Jesus to death. Jesus was crucified. Christians believe that after three days Jesus rose from the tomb in which he had been interred. He appeared to his disciples and, a month or so later, he ascended into heaven (Eerdmans 1982: 344).

Warrier (2005: 63) indicates that the disciples commenced a Jesus movement. Initially the movement engaged Jewish followers and continued Jewish practices such as baptism and circumcision. Within a short while, it attracted Gentiles (non-Jews), Greeks and other outsiders. The members of the new movement were essentially followers of Jesus, the Messiah of the Old Testament, or the Christos as the Greek converts translated his messianic title. By the second half of the first century the followers of Jesus were known as Christians.

Christianity is monotheistic. For Christians, Jesus is the Son of God: God in human form (John 3: 16-18), and as such He is still alive today. They believe He came to earth to save everyone from their sins. He did this by sharing in the human suffering and sacrificing His life. Jesus said He had not come to alter the scriptures or abolish the law, but to fulfill them. He taught by example, living a simple and selfless life based on love. Christian love has two elements – love of God and love of other people:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments (Matthew 22: 37-40).

The religious authorities during Jesus' time always opposed His teachings because they failed to comprehend His purpose and plan on earth. Due to a misunderstanding of His teachings, the religious authorities eventually crucified Him to death on the cross, benighted of the fact that the cross was the plan of God. However, Jesus triumphantly rose from the dead. This miraculous resurrection was taken as proof that He was indeed the Son of God and that His message of salvation was true. Before His ascension into heaven, He commanded His followers to pass on to others what they have witnessed (Meredith 1995: 30).

Eerdmans (1982: 352) indicates that to be a Christian is to be one of God's family, a part of a new community, the church, old divisions – sexual, racial, cultural – are broken down: in Jesus all are one.

The Holy Bible is a collection of books written over a period of more than 1000 years, both Old and New Testaments, in widely-differing cultural and historical situations, and in a rich variety of styles and language. Almost all that is known about Jesus Christ is contained in the pages of the Bible. For Christians, the Old and New Testaments carry God's message for humanity. This is why it is read aloud in churches and studied by groups and individuals. It is a guide to correct and bring human minds into line with God's will and intentions. Christians believe that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God:

Knowing this first that, no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (11 Peter 1: 20-21). All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness (11 Timothy 3: 16).

This is why the Bible, for all its variety, is treated by Christians as a unity, progressively revealing not only God's acts, but his mind and will. In theory, therefore, all Christians accept the Bible as authoritative, both in guiding their actions and in forming their beliefs (Eerdmans 1982: 372).

5.6.2.1 The Christian Beliefs

Warrier (2005: 64) says that Christians acknowledge the manifestation of God through the inspired Word of God, the Holy Bible. The manifestation of the divine being reveals to them a single God who could appear as three persons, namely Father, Son and Holy Spirit, sharing a single "substance". This aspect of the Godhead is called the *Trinity*. All Christians have faith in the existence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of a Virgin Mary, and nurture a personal commitment to Him.

According to Eerdmans (1982: 357), the Christian faith is directly descended from the religion of the Jews. At the time of Jesus this had the following characteristics, as taught in the sacred book of the Jews, the Old Testament:

- Belief in the existence of one God, the Creator and Lord of the universe who is sovereign over all.
- Belief in the fact that human beings are made in the image of God, but have rebelled against their Creator and stand in danger of judgment.
- Belief that God, who is the righteous judge, is also gracious and merciful. He has provided a way for people to be set free from judgment by the penitent offering of sacrifices.
- Belief that God revealed himself to the nation of Israel and called them to be his people.
- Belief that God would some day establish his rule in a sinful world, setting his people free from their enemies, and appointing his chosen agent, the Messiah, to rule over them for ever.
- The practice of a moral life under the guidance of the Law is given in the Old Testament.

The Christian belief in God is monotheistic with the concept of a compound deity - *the triune God* – consisting of three personalities, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit whom together form the Godhead. The Christian concept of the Trinity is its central doctrine for it distinguishes Christianity from other monotheistic religions. They believe that God is able to manifest Himself in these forms. According to Christians, this is a mystery, which man has failed to understand. However, it has been realized that with God all things are possible. The perception is that God is the creator of the whole universe and all that is within it. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and has all things in control. The Bible teaches that God is Spirit and therefore can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth (Meredith 1995: 32).

The *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* is very significant in the life of a Christian. Only through this experience is a Christian able to overcome the devil, sin, temptation, face trials and tribulation, and be a witness for Christ. The gifts promised to a Christian, are only imparted through the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Barnes 1999: 110).

Some Christians believe in the *Rapture* (snatching away of believers in Christ), to meet the Lord who is to return in the clouds one day. According to the Holy Scriptures, no man knows the hour or the time in which He will appear. This sudden event has been described to be ‘lightening fast’ and unexpected. Jesus is coming to take away those who accepted Him and lived holy, God-fearing and righteous lives – those who are ‘born again, blood-washed and spirit filled’. In the *Rapture* the dead in Christ shall rise first and those who are alive shall be caught up to meet Him in the air,

henceforth to live with the Lord eternally. The saints will experience no more pain, suffering, and sorrow but peace forever (1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17).

Christians believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to Eerdmans (1982: 358), the fundamental belief is that the death of Jesus makes provision to reconcile God and human beings, hence freeing them from the fear of judgment. It also brings to an end the system of animal sacrifices. The death of Jesus was understood as a means of canceling sin, provided by God Himself and displaying His love for sinners. Sinfulness must inevitably bring separation from God, or death. But, Jesus died this death Himself. Alongside the death of Jesus, belief in His resurrection was a crucial thing for the development of Christianity. It was the confirmation of His claims to be ‘God’s agent’, and above all it demonstrated that He was triumphant over the power of sin and death.

According to Warriier (2005: 64), Christians believe that whereas they understand and relate to God in a somewhat clouded manner in the here and now, they have the promise and hope of seeing God “face to face” in a life of permanent happiness after death. They understand God to be the creator of the entire universe. On the formal liturgical occasions the Christian congregation frequently recites a creed, or summary of beliefs, called the Nicene Creed, originating in the Fifth-century Council of Nicea. The following are extracts from the creed:

We believe in one God, the father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Son of God...of one being with the father. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy spirit and the virgin Mary and was made man... he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again and ascended into heaven...we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

For Christians the moral code is imbedded in the precept of charity, which Jesus expounded: “You must love others as yourself. By this will everyone know that you are my disciples if you have love, one for another.”

5.6.2.2 Religious and Cultural Practices in Christianity

The Church religiously follows the command of Jesus by baptizing all believers in water - in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Baptism* is a right by which a person becomes a member of the Church. A new Christian adult is totally immersed in water. Now infant

baptism is more or less universal and entails the pouring or sprinkling of water on the head of a child on whose behalf the parents speak. This action, however, follows when an individual repents for his or her sins and acknowledges in their heart the Lord Jesus Christ. The individual promises to renounce evil and follow Christ's way of life and adhere to the Christian faith as stated in the creed. *Water Baptism* symbolically indicates that the old life of sin has been washed and buried (purification) and the person experiences the resurrection of a new life in Christ (Masih 1993: 81).

Warrier (2005: 69) indicates that *Confirmation* is a ritual performed by a bishop in which the Holy Spirit comes upon an already baptized person in a renewed and fuller way. In the Byzantine Orthodox Church, confirmation is conferred with baptism and is followed immediately by the *Eucharist*. In the West there is a considerable gap between each ritual. Young persons are confirmed after the age of seven in the Roman Catholic Church and a little later in the Anglican Church. Before receiving confirmation, a candidate must be instructed in the faith and be able to show sufficient understanding of Christianity. Once confirmed, the young person may receive communion.

Barnes (1999: 121) indicates that the *Eucharist* (Holy Communion or mass), is at the heart of Christian Worship. It commemorates the Last Supper when Christ told his disciples to eat bread (His Body) and drink wine (His blood) in remembrance of Him. On the night before Jesus was crucified, he celebrated a meal with his twelve disciples. Having warned them of his imminent betrayal and death, he broke bread and drank wine with them. He explained that the bread represented His body that was going to be crucified on the cross and the wine His blood that was to be shed on the cross and asked them to continue sharing bread and wine together in memory of him. In fact, this religious practice is a commemoration and celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by every Christian. In communion the congregation is given a small piece of bread or wafer and a sip of wine from a goblet or chalice. The wine is a symbol of His shed blood and the bread tells of His body that was broken on the cross for the salvation of humanity.

Easter, which falls in March or April and marks the death and resurrection of Jesus, is the universal Christian festival. The day of Jesus' death is called *Good Friday* because Christians believe that submitting to His crucifixion was an act of supreme goodness for humankind. It is a Good Friday because Christians believe that, as Jesus died for humanity, everything will be right between them

and God. His love and sacrifice are remembered. There are often united services and processions and passion plays which depicts the Easter events. It is a day of fast, abstinence and penance in some Churches, but in others – notably the Free Churches – it has become a feast day. It is believed that the resurrection took place on the Sunday of that week. This is the most important festival in the Christian Church, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus. Special church services are held at Easter, and in Catholic and Orthodox countries processions take place in the week leading up to *Easter Sunday*. Traditionally it is the day when new members are baptized into the Christian community and comes at the end of lent, which is a period of preparation for the great event. Easter is often celebrated with a midnight mass, where the priest lights one large Easter candle from which the many smaller candles of the congregation take light and pass on the flame, while the people say or sing a hymn such as “Christ is risen” (Meredith 1995:37).

Warrier (2005: 65) indicates that the concept of *Sabbath* was inherited from Judaism. It was progressively applied to Sunday rather than the Jewish Saturday, because the Resurrection of Christ occurred on the first day of the week - Sunday. As Christianity spread and in many places became the established religion, three aspects of the Sabbath evolved, namely, religious observance, remission of secular duties and recreational activity. Religious observance acquired a public dimension and required attending a common place of worship, where the Eucharist, scriptural readings and prayers were offered.

In the pre-Reformation tradition, in the Roman Catholic and Byzantine traditions there are seven sacraments: *baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders (ordination) and marriage*. For some reformed churches, sacraments are limited to *baptism and the Eucharist* - the two sacraments clearly identified the Bible.

Barnes (1999:115) indicates that *Scriptural readings* are often part of wider spiritual activities, such as funerals, weddings, ordination of ministers, and worship services, which are during the week and on Sundays. In general there is a balance of readings between the Old and New Testament. All believers have to read and study the Bible for their understanding and spiritual growth. Prayers are also mandatory for believers – it is a form of communication with God. Prayers are uttered both in private and in public. Where prayer is formalized it normally contains recognition and worship of God, an element of thanks and a hope or a request for the future. The best known of all Christian

prayers is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him how they should pray. It is now called the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6: 9-13):

*Our Father in Heaven
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours,
Now and forever, Amen.*

At *Christmas*, the Christian joyfully celebrates the birth of Christ every year. People usually share in this excitement by giving gifts (Eerdmans 1982: 375). The reason for Christmas is explicit in John (3: 16): "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Christian marriage is a monogamous life-long union of a man and woman who are not close relatives. It is seen as a symbol of the union of Christ with his Church, and the marriage service is one of considerable solemnity. Before marriage the couple is offered an opportunity to discuss the implications of marriage and to prepare themselves for the ceremony. The banns are the announcement of the planned wedding and an open invitation for anyone in the community to object to the marriage if they have just cause for doing so. The banns are published in the church on three Sundays prior to the marriage and request anyone who knows any reason in law why the persons should not marry each other to "declare it now". A valid Christian marriage requires the full knowledge and full consent of both parties. When the bride and groom have arrived in church, the minister states the purpose and nature of marriage. Then the congregation is asked to consider if they know of any reason why the couple should not be married. The bride and groom are then asked if they know of any reason why they may not lawfully be married. The minister asks the groom:

Will you take this woman (by name) to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

The same questions are asked of the bride. The wedding vows are exchanged. The couple solemnly promises to be husband and wife in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth until parted by death. In traditional service, the bride promised to *love, honour, and obey* her husband. Although she may now omit the word *obey* from the promise if she so wishes. The bride and groom then place wedding rings on each other's third finger and the minister pronounces them husband and wife – followed by kissing of the bride. Prayers are then recited for the happiness and success of the wedding, and the ceremony may be followed by the *Eucharist*. The civil registers are completed immediately after the solemnization of the marriage. Two persons, normally the best man and bridesmaid, witness and sign the register (Warrier 2005: 70).

A dedication and christening service is held in the church for the newborn infants. The parents are to promise before the minister and congregation to bring up the child in the ways of the Lord – to teach train and nurture. They have to also be role models for the child. The child is named and dedicated to the Lord. The Minister prays for blessings, protection and parental guidance over the child (Rushton 1992: 22).

5.6.3 The Muslim Religion (Islam)

Islam emerged in the early seventh century 610 CE, at a time when Judaism, Christianity and polytheism existed alongside each other on the Arabian Peninsula. Many worshipped idols, so the Prophet Muhammad's revolutionary message of the 'One Creator God' was upsetting and people rejected it. And yet, within 30 years, Islam became a powerful religion and the basis of an influential Islamic empire. During the ten years between his arrival in Medina and his death in AD 632, Muhammad laid the foundation for the ideal Islamic state. A core of committed Muslims was established, and a community life was ordered according to the requirements of the new religion. In addition to general moral injunctions, the requirements of the religion came to include a number of institutions that continue to characterize Islamic religious practice today. Foremost among these were the five pillars of Islam, the essential religious duties required of every adult Muslim who is mentally able – profession of faith (*shahada*), prayer (*salat*), almsgiving (*zakat*), fasting (*sawn*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*). Although some of these practices had precedents in Jewish, Christians, and other Middle Eastern religious traditions, taken together they distinguished Islamic religious practices from those of other religions. The five pillars are thus the most central rituals of Islam and constitute the core practices of the Islamic faith (Meredith 1995: 38).

Unlike Christianity and Buddhism, however, Islam has maintained strong cultural roots in its Arabic origin even down to the language of its foundation. The Arabic culture was a “multi-culture”, as nomadic, tribal Arabs lived side by side with Jews, Greeks, Christians, and Persians.

Islam is an Arabic word. Literally translated, it means: peace, purity, obedience, and submission to the will of Allah (God), and is the monotheistic religion practiced by Muslims. In the true sense of the word, it means belief in the One God (*tawhid*), acceptance of his authority and commitment to His service (Cockerham 1995: 499).

Islam affirms the oneness of God and His indivisible sovereignty of the universe. The adherents of Islam are called Muslims, which means one who submits voluntarily to, or surrenders willingly to Allah (Cockerham 1995: 500). It is based on the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad, who is believed to have received the revealed word of Allah (God) some 1400 years ago, in what is now Saudi Arabia. The Muslim holy book (sacred) is called the Qur’an (perfect revelation of God), which is believed to contain a complete system of beliefs and practices binding on Muslims everywhere. There are instructions on how to pray, how to organize society and how to apply the law. It lists rules for the structure of family life, the duties of individuals to behave well, and penalties for sinners on Judgement Day. Above all, it stresses the ‘Oneness’ of Allah and the need to obey Him. Islam is a whole way of life with guidelines for the moral, legal, spiritual and political organization of society. Muslims are described as slaves to Allah and servants to their fellow human beings. Islam teaches that Allah the Merciful will judge all our actions when we die (Barnes 1999: 130).

According to Eerdmans (1982: 321), Islam understands itself fundamentally as being a ‘natural religion’, in that *every* created thing exists in dependence upon God, in obedience to his creative and sustaining power and with the purpose of expressing adoration to God. For the human, this should lead to a conscious commitment to a life of thankful and praise-giving obedience to God. The word *Muslim* means one who lives his life according to God’s will. As far as worship is concerned, the Qur’an views body and spirit as inseparably combined in the wholeness of human worship. Islam has no term for ‘spirituality’, for its religious devotion seeks to preserve equilibrium between the ‘outward’ and the ‘inward’ in worship. The believer’s external acts of worship depend on his internal intention, and the Qur’an is concerned that both should be ‘for the pleasure of God’.

The Qur'an forbids images of any kind to be made of Allah, Muhammad or the other prophets or of any person and animals. This is partly because the worship of images is forbidden in Islam, and partly because no artistic representation could possibly be good enough to reflect adequately the magnificence of Allah's creation. All male Muslims are expected to attend the mosque on Fridays for midday prayers. Muslims are also instructed to pray five times a day (Meredith 1995: 41).

5.6.3.1 *The Muslim Beliefs*

Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last of the prophets to bring Allah's final message to the world. They believe that if they have done what is good and lawful (*halal*), they will be rewarded with eternity in heaven; and if they have done what is not permitted (*haram*) they will go to hell. Therefore, Muslims take their faith very seriously (Barnes 1999: 130).

Abdur (1981: 12) indicated that Islam is strictly a monotheistic religion as they believe in the existence of only one God Allah, the Almighty. The belief is that Allah was never born and will never die. He is the creator of the whole universe. The word 'Allah' is such that it connotes all the attributes of perfection and beauty in their infinitude and denotes none but the one and unique God. The Islamic concept of Allah is not of wrath and anger but a God of mercy, love and beneficence. He sustains everyone irrespective of their behaviour. However, He being a just God His justice will be awarded on the day of judgement. It is said that Allah does not exist in time and space. As a result He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent.

According to the Qur'an, God created two apparently similar species – man and *jinn* – the former from clay and the latter from fire. Man is considered to be the noblest of all creation. His sole purpose is to serve and submit to God's will. According to Islamic theology, every created thing is endowed with a defined and limited nature. Human beings are full of pride and tend to ignore their limitations. They are frequently guilty of ascribing to themselves some of the attributes of God and of considering themselves to be in partnership with God, thereby denying the sovereignty and uniqueness of the divine presence (Warrier 2005: 81).

Warrier says that Muslims regard sin more as disobedience to God's command than as a transgression of some moral or ethical standard. God's will pervades all aspects of life. Consequently, Islam does not recognize any distinction between sacred and secular. Islam like Judaism rejects the Christian doctrine of original sin. Human beings, according to Islamic theology, are imperfect and therefore bound to commit acts of disobedience. They do not, however, carry the

burden of Adam's original sin and subsequent fall from paradise. According to the Prophet Muhammed, every human being is born pure and is personally responsible for subsequent acts of disobedience. Individuals are rewarded or punished by God according to their actions.

Islam believes in and confidently affirms the existence of immortal angels and only Allah has knowledge of the number he has created. They are the servants of God (act as God's messengers) and not partners or agents of God and exercise great influence on man and the universe. They exist in an angelic world but it cannot be seen by sense perception in our everyday life. They bear up God's throne, descend with His decrees and record man's actions. The angels act as intermediaries asking God to forgive the sins of true believers. At the time of death, the souls of human beings are received by angels who have kept a record of their deeds and will witness for or against them on the Day of Judgement (Barnes 1999: 144).

The Muslims also believe that there will come the last day (the day of judgement), where the good and bad will face judgement. If there is unbelief in the resurrection and judgement day, it will engender a sense of complacency or a feeling of impurity. Allah is just and is therefore going to carry out justice. This means that evil-doers will be punished and the righteous rewarded. No man knows the hour He will come, except God Himself. Muslims believe that God sent prophets or messengers to all people in all ages to proclaim the oneness of God and to warn humanity of the impending Day of Judgement. They believe that Adam was the first prophet and Muhammed the last after Jesus (Eerdmans 1982: 319).

The Muslims believe in life after death. The Qur'an indicates that everyone is going to die. Man's life on earth is a brief one, that each creature will be called to account when the world comes to an end and the day of judgement is inevitable. The belief in life after death serves as a deterrent and prevents people from entertaining any sense of complacency or a feeling of impurity. The Muslims believe that there is another life, which begins after death. Man is given firm and categorical promise of a blissful paradise if only he obeys and serves Allah while on earth. But those who are unbelievers, the covetous, the worshippers of deities and not Allah, shall be cast into the fire of hell, with no release from its torments (Meredith 1995: 40).

Abdur (1981: 22) indicates that Muslims believe in predestination. This is a belief that God controls everything that happens. In Islam, if a person commits a crime, it is not because God has destined

him to do so but rather his own free choice and not predestination. However, life and death are entirely in the hands of God – predestination.

Islam teaches that not all foods are permitted. In Islam all meat must be halal, which means it has to have been prepared in a certain way. Fish is regarded as halal and so are all fruits and vegetables. The name of Allah must be mentioned while the animal is slaughtered and the blood, which is considered unclean, must be allowed to drain away. Muslims do not eat pork or food, which contains animal fat because they believe that it is unclean. They are also forbidden from eating carnivorous animals. Alcohol is forbidden because drunkenness makes people forget that they have duties to Allah, such as prayer (Meredith 1995: 42).

Abdur (1981: 25) indicates that Muslims feel that women should dress decently. Their bodies should always be covered. Short skirts and tight fitting clothes are prohibited in Islam. Most women use garments that cover them to their feet. A scarf or veil, which is called a hijat is used to cover the head. However, Muslims hail from various cultural groups each with its distinctive style of dress. Some Muslims dress in a modern, western manner while others prefer traditional costume.

According to Cockerham (1995: 503), Muslims are not organized into insitutions such as churches. They believe that no formal organization should exist to intervene between the individual and God. However, there are Muslim clergy whose function is to interpret the Qur'an and serve as spiritual and community advisors. In addition, Islam does not separate the church and state. The state is considered to be God's and works for the success of the Muslim community in this world and the hereafter.

Muslims accept five books as Divine revelations. These are the Scrolls (*Suhuf*) – 10 scriptures revealed to the Prophet Abraham; the Torah (*Taurat*) – revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai; the Psalms (*Zabur*) – revealed to the Prophet David; the Gospels (*injil*) – revealed to Jesus; and the Qur'an – revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (Warrier 2005: 82).

5.5.3.2 Religious and Cultural Practices in Islam

Muslims do not recognize the concept of a “Church”, and Islamic theologians and religious scholars do not enjoy the status and privileges of priesthood. Each individual is expected to create a direct link to God, without the help of intermediaries. Conformity to the dictates of the *Shari'ah* and

observance of “the pillars of the faith” are the basic obligations of each individual towards Allah (Warrier 2005: 86).

Meredith (1995: 40) indicates how the five pillars of Islam show how Muslim belief should be put into action in daily life. The first pillar *Shahada* is the profession of faith, which is repeated several times a day: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger; I bear witness that Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah.”

This declaration is made many times a day, especially in the daily prayers. There are no formal restrictions on the times and places these words can be repeated. They are the first words whispered into a new-born infant’s ear and the last to be uttered by a dying person. They are a confirmation of Islam’s monotheistic beliefs and recognition of Mohammed as the last in the line of Prophets to whom God’s final and authoritative word, the Qur’an, was revealed. To be a true profession of faith that represents a relationship between speaker and God, the verbal utterance must express genuine knowledge of its meaning as well as sincere belief. A person’s deeds can be subjected to scrutiny by other Muslims, but a person’s utterance of the profession of faith is sufficient evidence of membership in the Muslim community and cannot be challenged by other members of this community.

The second pillar, *Salat* are the five daily prayers in Arabic. Every Muslim is obliged to perform the ritual of prayer. The daily *salat* may be performed in the company of other believers in a mosque under the leadership of an *Imam*. It may also be performed by individuals by themselves on any clean ground or prayer mat, facing the direction of the sacred *Kaaba* in Mecca. The prayers consist of text found in the Qur’an requesting Allah’s guidance and an offering of praise. The noon prayer on Friday is the principal congregational service of the week. It is distinguished by a formal address which is partly a sermon delivered in the local language and partly a recitation from the Qur’an in Arabic. Attending the Friday prayer is obligatory for all except during their menstrual periods. Women must cover their head for prayer. Muslims always face the holy city of Mecca when praying. The call to prayer is announced in Arabic by the *muezzin* from the minaret of a mosque. Before commencing the ritual of *salat*, the worshipper is required to cleanse the face, head, arms, feet, and ankles. The *salat* consists of one or more ritual cycles, which include several bodily movements accompanied by expressions of adoration and praise. The ritual cycle consists of recitations of passages from the Qur’an. This is followed by the bowing from the waist, hands on

knees, accompanied by words, “Praise be to God”. After briefly returning to the upright position, the worshipper then prostrates himself, touching the ground with his forehead, palms, knees and toes, while saying “God is great”. From this he changes to a position of sitting on his heels making another utterance and then to a second prostration in which he asks God’s mercy (Warrier 2005: 87).

The third pillar, *Zakat* is for privileged Muslim who are obliged to release 2.5 % of their wealth to charity every year. The act of prayer is closely linked with the practice of almsgiving. From its very early beginnings, Islam emphasized the moral obligation of sharing one’s wealth with the poorer and less fortunate sections of the community. Alms-giving is also regarded as a form of piety which cleansed the soul – devotion to God. *Zakat* paid out of wealth earned through unlawful means such as gambling, money lending or stealing is, however, unacceptable.

The fourth pillar, *Sawn* means fasting and takes place during the ninth month in the Islamic calendar (holy month) – in which the Qur’an was revealed to Muhammed. This month is called the holy month of Ramadan where the Muslims eat and drink nothing during the hours of daylight. Muslims awake before daybreak to eat a meal that will sustain them until sunset. This reminds them that the good things in life are to be enjoyed but not over-indulged in. Ramadan is a time for studying the Qur’an and for practicing self-discipline and charity. The fundamental intention of fasting is thanksgiving. Fasting commences when the new moon is sighted and concludes when the new moon of the following month is seen. If due to bad weather the moon cannot be seen the fast concludes after 30 days.

Menstruating women, travelers, and sick people are exempted from fasting but have to make up the days they miss at a later date. According to various traditional interpretations, the fast introduces physical and spiritual discipline, and serves to remind the rich of the misfortunes of the poor. Through this rigorous act of worship, a sense of solidarity and mutual care among Muslims of all social backgrounds are established. In Islam, *Id-ul-Fitr* is observed. It is a festival, which takes place at the end of the fast of Ramadan. People attend special prayers at the mosque and give food to the poor. They eat celebratory meals, visit friends and relations, and exchange presents and cards. This is a time of thankfulness for Allah’s many blessings and for his help during the fast.

The fifth pillar, *Hajj* means pilgrimage. Muslims who have the physical and financial ability should perform the pilgrimage to Mecca to visit the *Ka'bah*. This is a place of worship, which was believed to be built by Ibrahim and one of his sons. The pilgrimage was practiced by Arabs before the rise of Islam and continued since the early days of Islam. The *hajj* is distinct from other pilgrimages. It must take place during the 12th lunar month of the year, known as *Dhu al-Hijja*, and it involves a set and detailed sequence of rituals that are practiced over the span of several days. All of the pilgrimage rituals take place in the city of Mecca and its surroundings, and the primary focus of these rituals is a cubical structure called the *Kaaba* (sacred black stone). According to the Islamic tradition, the *Kaaba*, also referred to as the House of God, was built at God's command by the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham of the Hebrew and Christian Bible) and his son Ishmael. Once the pilgrims arrive in Mecca, ritual purification is performed. Many men shave their heads, and most men and women put on seamless white sheets. This simple and common dress symbolizes the equality of all Muslims before God, a status further reinforced by the prohibition of jewelry, perfumes, sexual intercourse, and the performance of several prayers and invocations. After these opening rituals, the hajj proper commences on the seventh day and continues for the next three days. Again, it starts with the performance of ritual purification followed by a prayer at the *Kaaba* mosque. The pilgrims then assemble at Mina, a hill outside Mecca, where they spend the night. The next morning they go to the nearby plain of Arafat, where they stand from noon to sunset and perform a series of prayers and rituals. The pilgrims then head to Muzdalifa, a location halfway between Arafat and Mina, to spend the night. The next morning, the pilgrims head back to Mina, on the way stopping at stone pillars symbolizing Satan, at which they throw seven pebbles. The final ritual is the slaughter of an animal (sheep, goat, cow, or camel). This is symbolic reenactment of God's command to Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ismail, which Ibrahim and Ismail duly accepted and when he was about to execute his son God allowed Ibrahim to slaughter a ram in place of his son. In the Hebrew and the Christian Bible, Abraham is called to sacrifice his son Isaac rather than Ishmael. The ritual sacrifice ends the *hajj* (Barnes 1999: 143).

In Islam, *Id Al-Adha*, a festival of sacrifice is also celebrated. It is a four-day festival, which is held world-wide, coinciding with the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is in following the tradition of Abraham, sacrifices of sheep or lambs are made and the meat is given to the poor (Eerdman 1982: 324). *Eid-ul-Adha (Bakra Eid)* a festival of sacrifice is celebrated with great solemnity and reverence everywhere. Preparations commence several days before the festival. The animals to be sacrificed are bought well before the *Eid* day by those who can afford to do so and are well looked

after. These animals should be free from all physical defects and should be fully grown. In the case of a sheep or goat, one animal suffices for one household, whereas a cow or camel can be shared by seven. The details of these events are mentioned in the Bible and in the Qur'an. It is narrated that Abraham saw a vision that he was slaying his only son Ishmael. Being thus convinced that God demanded the sacrifice of his son, who was bestowed to him in his old age, he began to make the necessary preparations. Then Abraham received the revelation that he had indeed fulfilled his covenant, and on God's command, the angels brought a ram instead and put it in place of Ishmael. Thus the animal was sacrificed, and this festival of sacrifices therefore urges all Muslims to follow the examples of Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael and show perfect submission to God's commands. Therefore, Muslims – especially adults who have performed their pilgrimage – make this sacrifice and some of the meat is kept for the family, and two third is distributed uncooked among the poor and sent as gifts to friends and relatives. Many families get together and cook exotic dishes, both savoury and sweets, and rejoice with relations and friends. They wear new clothes and attend prayers at the mosque.

According to Warriar (2005: 91) during the Prophet's time, women were free to participate in the religious services held at the mosque. According to the Hadith, even nursing mothers would attend prayers at the mosque and when the Prophet heard the cry of an infant he would shorten the service so that the mother could feed her child. It was around CE 656 that segregation of the sexes was instituted in place of worship. Women were required to sit in special places inside the mosque and, as the adoption of *purdah* or seclusion became more widespread, women's attendance at the mosque became less frequent. Since women in an "impure" state had necessarily to abstain from prayers, it gradually became more usual for women to worship in the privacy of their homes instead of participating in congregational prayers.

Barnes (1999: 141) indicates that Muslim law stipulates no specific religious ceremony to validate the contract that has been entered into by two parties for marriage. All that is required for the performance of a valid marriage is a proposal made by, or on behalf of, one of the parties and acceptance of it by, or on behalf of, the other party at one and the same meeting. No specific words have been laid down in the Qur'an for either making a proposal or for its acceptance. However, since marriage in Islam is a legal contract, the Shari'ah stipulates that the consent of both parties must be expressed unequivocally.

Muslim marriages are solemnized by a *quazi or mullah* who is conversant with the Islamic law. The term of marriage, such as the amount of dowry, the mode of its payment, matters relating to custody of children and other conditions that the parties concerned wish to stipulate, are embodied in a document called the *Kabin Namah*. Weddings are rarely solemnized in a mosque; neither is it essential for the bride to be present at the ceremony. Two persons, formally appointed for this purpose, act on behalf of the contracting parties with the required number of witnesses. Once the amount of dowry (*mahr*) has been settled, the religious ceremony proceeds with the bridegroom repeating after the *quazi* the following: the *Istighifar*: “I desire forgiveness from God.”; the four “Quls” – 4 chapters of the Qur’an starting with the word “Qul”; the *Kalimah or creed*: There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet; the *Sifwatu ’l-Iman*: A declaration of belief in God, the Angels, the Scriptures the Prophets, the Resurrection and the Absolute Decree of good and evil. The *quazi* then requests the bride’s guardian to take the hand of the bridegroom and to say: “Such as one’s daughter, by the agency of her attorney and by the testimony of two witnesses has, in your marriage with her, had such a dowry settled upon her. Do you consent to it?” To which the bridegroom is expected to reply: “With my whole heart and soul, to my marriage with this women, as well as to the dowry settled upon her, I consent, I consent, I consent.” The religious ceremony concludes with the recitation of a short prayer and a benediction by the *quazi* (Abdur 1981: 31).

Warrier (2005: 93) discusses the religious customs and festivities that precede the marriage ceremony (*Nikka*). The *Nikkah* is a joyous and festive occasion. Of the several long-established customs, the most important, in some parts of the Islamic world, is the gifts of *mehndi* or henna sent by the bride’s family to the bridegroom. The bride also applies *mehndi* on her hands and legs. Various presents in keeping with the means of the bride’s family would also accompany the trays of *mehndi*. These gifts often include clothes for the bridegroom, toiletries, confectionery, dried fruits, sugar candy and *paan* (betel leaves filled with a sweet spice mixture and decorated with edible silver foil). At the bridegroom’s house, the female friends and relatives of the bride who accompany the trays of *mehndi* and other gifts are entertained in the women’s quarters and the *henna* is applied to his hands and feet. The entire ritual takes place in a convivial atmosphere, throughout which the bridegroom is fed pieces of sugar candy and other confectionery. On the third day, the bride’s family prepares to receive the bridegroom’s party. The bridegroom traditionally arrives mounted on a horse), the legs, tail and mane of which are dyed with *henna* (in present day the means of transport has changed). The marriage ceremony is performed in presence of witnesses, although the bride is not seen by any of the males, not even by her husband-to-be, until

they have been lawfully united. After the consummation of the marriage, the bridegroom's family traditionally hosts a reception to publicize the lawful nature of the union.

The Prophet Mohammed taught that showing kindness and affection towards children was very much a part of being a good Muslim. The first words whispered into a new-born infant's ear are the Declaration of the Faith: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet." Parents are recommended to be selected in their choice of names, to treat their sons and daughters equally and to ensure a sound religious and secular education for their children. The Prophet recommended that the most beautiful names are those which offer servitude or praise to Allah. The names of Allah, however, are never used alone. They are usually preceded by Abdul or combined with another name in such a way that the final name is never a specific attribute of Allah. The naming of a new-born infant is always an occasion for joy, feasting and celebration. Male children are circumcised in keeping with the Qur'anic emphasis on personal hygiene, which is reflective of moral convictions and inner purity. The Prophet Muhammed recommended performing circumcision at an early age. This ritual is customarily performed on the seventh day after birth or thereafter until the age of seven, depending upon the health of the infant (Eerdmans 1982: 325).

Soon after a Muslim baby has been born its hair is shaved for the name-giving ceremony. It is the custom to give away the same amount of silver as the weight of hair. After the name-giving ceremony the family holds a feast. In Muslim countries, if the baby is a boy they kill two goats for the feast. For a girl they kill one. They invite friends and neighbours to share the meat, but one third of it should be given to the poor (Rushton 1992: 20).

5.6.4 The Hindu Religion

Hinduism is the world's oldest living religion, dating back to at least 2000 BCE. The beginnings of Hinduism have been traced back to an ancient civilization known as the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished between 3500 and 1500 BCE. Following the invasion of northern India by the Aryans (nomadic horsemen from Central Asia) 2500 BCE, the rich myths of the civilization were absorbed into Aryan rituals and religion, which now forms much of the tradition of the Hindu religion. The Aryan religion was a form of animism in which the forces of nature, which could not be understood or controlled, were invested with divinity. The principal deities were *Surya* (the sun of god), *Indra* (the god of war) and *Yama* (the god of death). The domestic hearth was dominated by *Agni*, the god of fire. The cosmos was also believed to be populated by a

variety of celestial beings. Hymns were composed in Sanskrit in honour of these various divinities and these are contained in the *Rig Veda*, the oldest and most sacred literature of the Hindus. The central feature of the Aryan religious practice was the conduct of large-scale sacrifices in order to sustain order in the universe. The collection of hymns from the Rig Veda were chanted at sacrifices and recited by the priests who officiated at these ceremonies – the prayers for achieving specific results such as victory in war or curing illness (Warrier 2005: 24).

In some of its forms, the Hindu religion is polytheistic, but has a concept of the supreme spirit, *Brahman*, above the many divine manifestations. These include the triad of chief gods (*Trimurti*): *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva* (creator, preserver, and destroyer). Hinduism has many thousands of gods (deities, which represent the forces of nature). Central to Hinduism are the beliefs in reincarnation and *karma*. Although the Hindu scriptures are called the *Vedas*, the *Bhagavad Gita* is often regarded as the ‘bible’ of Hinduism. The *Veda* collection of hymns, compiled by the Aryans, was followed by the philosophical *Upanishads*, centering on the doctrine of *Brahman*; and the epics, containing both Aryan and pre-Aryan material, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (which includes the *Bhagavad-Gita*). The *Puranas*, sacred historical texts dating from the 4th century AD, reflect the many cultural streams of India (<http://www.hindu.com/2006>).

According to Eerdmans (1994: 172), Hinduism has no founder and no prophet. It has no particular ecclesiastical or institutional structure, or set creed. The emphasis is on the way of living rather than on a way of thought. Radhakrishnan, a former president of India, once remarked: “Hinduism is more a culture than a creed.” Temple worship is almost universally observed and there are many festivals. Women are not regarded as equal to men but should be treated with kindness and respect.

Warrier (2005: 25) states that Hinduism is distinguished from the other major religions of the world in that, at no stage, has there developed any clear concept of a God who is the creator of the universe or is an essentially moral being who must be obeyed.

There are six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy which accept the *Vedas* as a revelation but offer different perspectives (*darshana*) on the understanding the world, the meaning of human existence and the means of acquiring true knowledge. The *Samkhya* schools recognize two final eternal realities, *purusha* (non-matter or pure spirit) and *prakriti*, an all-pervasive force which consists of three contrasting qualities or *gunas*. When *prakriti* which is always changing, is united

with *purusha*, the result is the creation of the full conscious human being. Samkhya denies the existence of divine being and sees the cosmos as being ruled by natural and moral law (*dharma*). The *yoga* school is closely allied to that of Samkhya. Its main ideas were set out in systematic form in the writings of Patanjali (1st century CE). Earthly existence is believed to be full of sorrow because of the separation of the individual soul from the Absolute Brahman. Patanjali set out eight steps for achieving self-control, concentration and deep meditation in order to reach an attachment-free state which leads to salvation. According to the *Nyaya* school, suffering is the result of ignorance. The means of acquiring true knowledge are fourfold, namely, perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*), comparison (*upama*) and verbal testimony from an authoritative source (*aptavakya*). Closely allied to *Nyaya*, is the *Vaisheshika* schools which also teach that the external world can be studied by the application of logic. According to this system, the world is constructed of nine atoms which include the four elements: earth, water, fire and air, three all pervasive entities, namely weather, time and space and the non-physical entities of *atman* (individual soul) and *manas* (mind). The *Vedanta* school gave a systematic form to the teachings of the Upanishads, concentrating mainly on the attainment of liberation through knowledge of the unity of the *Brahman* and *atman*. The theistic interpretations of its leading exponents greatly encouraged the development of *bhakti*, or devotion, as the means of achieving personal salvation. Finally, the Purva Mimamsa schools taught that the four Vedas are uncreated and eternal. Belief in the existence of a God is less important and that the correct ritualistic actions as laid down in the Vedas lead to liberation.

5.6.4.1 Beliefs in Hinduism

According to Barnes (1999: 36), Hindus believe in one god as the ultimate source of reality and existence. They describe their god as Brahman, the unseen, all-powerful force responsible for bringing all creation into being, and to which all creation will ultimately return.

In classical Hinduism, actions (karma) and duty (dharma) are the dominant concepts. Karma, as the accumulation of good and bad acts, would influence a person's destiny (Eerdmans 1994: 190). Traditional Hinduism refers to four aims in life: *dharma* is the performance of duties appropriate to one's position in life. It also involves living a good life by being kind to others, telling the truth, helping one's neighbour, loving humanity and being prepared to make sacrifices for other people; *artha* is the achievement of material prosperity or the pursuit of legitimate worldly success; *kama*

is the enjoyment of legitimate pleasure; and *moksha* is the ultimate release from attachment to the world (Meredith 1995: 16).

Hindus believe in *reincarnation*. Each individual is believed to have an eternal soul (Atman), which can be born millions of times into millions of forms or incarnations. The law of *karma* dictates how many times and how many forms. *Karma* is the moral law of the Universe, the cosmic principle by which the world and all living things operate. Good deeds done in this life ensure progress in the next. Life is an ongoing cycle of birth, death and rebirth (*samsara*). When people die, the soul leaves the body but is reborn into another body (human or animal). The precise nature of this new identity, or reincarnation, is determined by how well or badly a person has acted in previous lives. The concept of *karma* relates to the principle of causality. Every good thought, word and action is believed to produce a positive reaction, whereas every bad thought, word and deed results in a negative reaction. *Karma* has several different aspects. Hindus believe that while some things, such as the family in which one is born, are predetermined by the sum total of acts performed in a previous existence and therefore unchangeable, individual characteristics and aptitudes, also a product of karma, are more amenable to change. The course of the future can also be influenced by thoughts, words and deeds performed by someone in the present existence (Warrier 2005: 25).

This process of reincarnation ends only when Hindus have achieved release (*moksha*) from rebirth by freeing themselves from all attachments to worldly pleasure. Then the soul returns to the eternal stillness of the divine godhead (Barnes 1999: 45).

The Hindu tradition teaches that certain animals are holy and special and for that reason they should not be killed or eaten. Hindus cannot eat beef because it is the meat of a cow, which is a holy animal to the Hindus. They also respect all creatures. They believe that all living things have a soul, which will be reborn in another body (Burke 1992: 7).

Warrier (2005: 26) states that Hindus recognize the godhead in everything around them. Natural features such as mountains and hills, rivers and trees are all regarded as the abodes of gods and goddesses or may themselves be personified as deities. Animals are worshipped either as vehicles of gods or as their representatives. Harmony with natural phenomena is a pervasive element in classical Hindu belief and ritual observation, because the differences between human beings and

animals, between animate and inanimate nature, are interpreted as differences of degree rather than of kind. Hindus believe that the cows are sacred and worshipped as they are associated with deities.

5.6.4.2 Religious and Cultural Practices in Hinduism

Hinduism has a complex of rites and ceremonies performed within the framework of the jati, or caste system under Brahman priests and teachers. Hindus believe that their religion affects everything they do, so everything in their life is a form of worship. Particular forms of worship may include repeating the names of God, listening to or reading the holy books or making offerings. Festivals are largely linked with seasonal changes. These also incorporate the myths of the Ramayana and of Krishna's activities (Penny 1995: 16).

Hinduism, as pointed out earlier, is more a way of life than a religion. It is possible to be a devout Hindu without ever having visited a temple or read the sacred scriptures. Nor is it of great concern if a person believes in one god or several. What is of significance, however, is the need to uphold dharma, the natural law of the universe and the social and moral order which is maintained within the family and the community in which one lives (Warrier 2005: 32).

Eerdmans (1994: 195) indicates that the most common form of worship is *puja*. Puja involves making offerings to an image (murti) or picture of one of the gods or goddesses. A Hindu house always has a *shrine* (holy place) in the corner of any room of the house, and great care is taken to maintain it in a state of ritual purity. This is where the murti (image/idol) or pictures of favourite deities (symbolic representation) are kept. Worship at home takes place at least once a day. The murti in the shrine is washed, dried and touched with special coloured powders. Food, water, incense, fruit, milk or grain and flowers are offered and these are distributed as Prasad (blessings) to all family members. Fire and water are used for purification. While, they are making puja, Hindus repeat mantras from the *Rig Veda* (verses from the holy books) – greeting of the sun in the morning. “We meditate on the adorable glory of the radiant sun; may he inspire our intelligence.”

As dusk falls *Sandhya* prayers are recited and small oil lamps and incense sticks are lit in every traditional home. On important festival days, elaborate rituals are performed in which the entire family participates, including young children.

Warrier (2005: 32) indicated that, though women are subject to forms of “temporary pollution” such as menstruation, they nevertheless have an important role to play in the regular rituals and ceremonies performed in a Hindu household. The responsibility of getting the house cleaned and purified, securing the many diverse ingredients needed for the ritual, and preparing the elaborate meals that are served on auspicious days, is usually assumed by the female members of the family. Fasts are also observed on certain days in the week or the year to ensure the health and well-being of the family.

Ceremonial worship in a Hindu temple or home is an elaborate process consisting of a number of steps, which follow each other in precise detail. These represent the invocation, reception and the hospitality accorded to a god as a royal personage or an honoured guest in one’s home. The *puja* begins with an invocation to *Ganesh* to ensure its successful completion. This is followed by prayers to *Sarawati*. The *Kalasha puja* (sanctification of the water) is next, followed by the *Dravya puja*, the consecration of the materials to be offered to the deity. An *Atma Puja* is also done for purification of one’s self, when the person conducting the *puja* places a flower on their own head. After these preparatory rituals are performed, the *Sodasa Upachara* or sixteen steps of the *puja* commence. The deity is first welcomed with a prayer (*avahana*), offered a seat (*asana*) and water for washing and drinking. After this, the deity is bathed (*snana*) to the accompaniment of appropriate prayers, dressed in new garments, decked out with ornaments and anointed with sandalwood paste and red kumkum powder. Offerings of incense (*dhupa*), lights (*deepa*) and freshly cooked food (*naivedya*) are also made. The *puja* is concluded by *arati*, the waving of an oil lamp or burning camphor in a special receptacle in front of the deity. This is then passed among the other participants of the *puja* as an act of purification and sanctification. The food offered to the deity becomes *prasada* (blessings) and it is distributed among all the worshippers. As a final act of homage, devotees either bow to the deity or prostrate full length on the floor in a gesture of complete submission. Each person receives a spoonful of the sanctified water used in the *puja* and some kumkum or sandalwood paste, which is applied on the forehead (Jayaram 2007: 81).

Warrier (2005: 34) discusses the Hindu rites of passage. He indicates that the sacred scriptures stipulate forty sacraments (*samskaras*) which an orthodox Hindu should perform or have performed on his or her behalf at various stages of their life. No less than three rites are prescribed before conception takes place and during women’s pregnancy. These are *garbhadhana* to ensure that conception takes place; *pumsavana* which is performed in the third month of pregnancy to ensure

the birth of a son; and *simantonnayana*, a ceremony which takes place in the seventh month of pregnancy. The expectant mother returns to her parental home and a female relative who has given birth to a healthy male child pours rice into her lap. She may also stick a few rice grains on the pregnant woman's forehead with sandalwood paste. The mother to be receives gifts of clothes and jewelry from her parents, and gifts are also presented to close female relatives of her husband. After this ceremony, which is nowadays only performed on the occasion of the first pregnancy, the woman stays on at her parental home for her confinement.

Immediately after birth, a short ceremony, *janmajata*, is performed before the umbilical cord is cut. The act of giving birth renders the mother impure and the pollution extends to the new-born infant. It is only after a special ceremony, usually performed ten days later (*jata karma*), that the baby and the mother cease to be ritually impure. Teece (2003: 14) indicates that Hindus welcome a newborn baby into the world by putting a small amount of honey on its tongue. A prayer is also whispered into the baby's ear: "May God the creator of all things grant you firm wisdom as knowledge and wisdom are the source of power and long life."

About eleven days after birth, a naming ceremony is performed. The priest casts a horoscope for the child to decide the first letter of his or her name. Hindu children are traditionally given names that have meanings. The name is usually chosen with great care, to ensure longevity, happiness and prosperity, and may be that of a god or goddess or having some religious or spiritual significance. A special prayer and ceremony is performed before a little fire when the child's hair is shaved around its first birthday. In fact, a number of ceremonies (*samskaras*) are observed during the child's first year, even the baby's first sight of the rising sun and the first feeding with solid food (*annaprasana*) are usually ceremonially observed. The last ritual of shaving was only performed for boys, usually when they were three years old. Nowadays it is observed only in very traditional families.

The ear-piercing ceremony (*karna bheda*) was also performed for children of both sexes in orthodox Hindu families. Unlike the other rituals, which require the services of a Brahmin priest, *karna bheda* was usually performed by a goldsmith with a very fine gold wire (Jayaram 2007: 82).

Divali is referred to as the festival of lights. It takes place during the month of November and last for three days. Hindus decorate their homes with rows of lights (clay lamps) and prepare special

delicacies. They believe that Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune, visits every house, which is lit by a lamp. This celebration is in remembrance of the popular story from the Ramayana, which indicates how Rama won the battle against his enemies. The lamps were lit for Rama's victory procession. There are enormous fireworks displays (Meredith 1995: 17 and Teece 2003: 24).

Ramnavami is the birthday festival of the God Rama. Rama is a very popular god for Hindus, and he is often worshipped at the shrines in people's homes. Ramnavami is a day of fasting, where Hindus abstain from certain foods and meat (Penny 1995: 32).

Raksha Bandhan is a ritual that occurs during the full moon in the month of July or August. *Raksha* means 'protection' and *Bandhan* means 'to tie'. At *Raksha Bandhan*, a sister ties a coloured silk or cotton bracelet around her brother's wrist. She hopes that it will protect him, and it is a sign that he will protect her. This custom recalls the story of the god Indra, who was attacked by an evil demon. He was saved because his wife had tied a magic string around his wrist. This practice reinforces the idea of *dharma*. There are various family *dharma*s such as the duty of parents to love their children, and the duty of children to love and respect their parents and to look after them in old age. But *Raksha Bandhan* focuses on the brother's *dharma*, which is to behave in a caring and affectionate way towards his sister – and the sister to do the same in return (Teece 2003: 27).

When a suitable proposal has been accepted by both parties, a short engagement ceremony is performed where cash and other gifts are presented to the prospective groom and to members of his family. This is called *rokna* in Punjab and symbolizes the formal "reservation of the boy". Before the marriage is actually settled senior family members visit the groom's house to view the boy. In the past, formal engagements were entered into long before the marriage, and, in the intervening period, the girl's family was obliged to keep up a steady flow of gifts to the boy's family on important religious and ceremonial occasions. Nowadays, however, marriage usually follows shortly after the engagement (Warrier 2005: 38).

Hindu marriage is a sacrament and the sacred literature or the *Dharma-sastras* deal elaborately with the various rites and ceremonies that must be performed on this occasion. The main rites are *Kanyadaan*, *Panigrahan*, *Vivaha-homa*, and *Septapadi*. The rituals are usually performed by a Brahmin in the presence of the sacred fire and are accompanied by the chanting of the Vedic mantras. According to modern Hindu law, a marriage can be validated by performing the religious

rituals and ceremonies recognized by Hindu law and by observing the customary formalities that prevail in the caste, community or tribes to which one (or both) of the parties belong. Of the various rituals that have been prescribed, the performance of the *Saptapadi* before the sacred fire is obligatory, although the chanting of mantras is not.

Weddings are usually celebrated on an auspicious date chosen by an astrologer after the horoscopes of the boy and wedding coincide with the period when agricultural work finished for the season. Once the harvest has been gathered there are sufficient resources to defray the expenses of a wedding. Preparations for the wedding commence soon after the date has been fixed. The bride's trousseau is prepared, gifts for close kin of the bride and the groom are purchased, and a large store is laid in of rice, wheat flour, ghee and other food stuffs to feed the numerous relatives and friends who are expected to attend the ceremony. A few days before the wedding, the *pandal* (marquee) is erected outside the bride's house. An image of the Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, is installed there, and a puja (prayer service) is performed to ensure that the celebrations proceed without hindrance. The bride is rubbed with a mixture of flour, turmeric and oil (*maiyan*), which has purification and cosmetic effects. This ritual takes place in convivial atmosphere, and various female relatives take turns at applying this mixture and presenting her with gifts.

A similar ritual also takes place in the bridegroom's house. An important aspect of the pre-wedding preparations is the showing of the dowry. The contents are put on display in a room, and neighbours, friends and relatives come to inspect, admire and compare. Later they are displayed and inspected at the groom's house, where his relatives and friends pass judgement about its value. The status of the bride's family and her own future happiness often rest upon the value of the dowry she has received. On arrival at the bride's house, the groom and his party are treated to lavish hospitality. It is customary for a young male, a relative of the bride to wash the feet of the groom. The welcoming party would also include women, bearing small silver trays on which are placed a small lamp, flowers, little pots of *kumkum* (red powder which is applied to the forehead), sandalwood paste and rose water, which is sprinkled on all the guests.

Then the bride enters with a group of females dressed traditionally in either a gold-embroidered silk sari or *shalwarkameez* (a long tunic wore over trousers). The end of the sari may be draped over her head, partially concealing her face. She will be adorned with gold jewelry, which includes items such as earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings and ornaments for the hair. The wedding

ceremony commences with an invocation to Ganesha. Prayers are also offered in the presence of the sacred fire to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and the other gods in the Hindu pantheon as well as the nine planets. Once the fire has been lit, care is taken to ensure that it does not go out until the ceremony is completed; otherwise it would be considered an ill omen.

Then follows the important ceremony of *Kanya daan* (renunciation of parental authority over daughter) - the gift of the virgin. The tying of the *tali* symbolizes the bridegroom's acceptance of the gift. This is a gold ornament that all married Hindu women wear around their necks. It is strung on a cord consisting of 108 strands of fine cotton, tightly twisted together and dyed yellow with saffron or turmeric powder. The bridegroom places it around the bride's neck while reciting *Vedic slokas* (prayers) and one of her friends secure it with three knots. The bridegroom then takes hold of his bride's hand and together they perform various rituals such as offering grains (fertility rites) to the fire and chants of *Vedic slokas*. The *saptapadi* (seven steps) is one of the essential features of the Hindu marriage ceremony as the couple makes solemn promises as they walk around the fire. After the ceremony, the marriage custom requires the bride move out of her parental home to join the household of her husband (Warrier 2005: 40).

5.7 INCULTURATION AND RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

In order to understand religion, one should also have an understanding of culture. The personal history of people plays a vital role in the meaning of conversion from one religion and culture to the observance of another tradition. Primitive culture is defined by Pinto (1985: 2) as: "That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Therefore, in order to understand religious conversion, man's culture and traditions must be clearly understood.

5.7.1 Concept of Culture in Religious Conversion

New converts always struggle with the adaptation to a new religion and culture or when they move from one tradition or faith to another. Society plays a role in the accumulation of culture. According to Pinto (1985: 2), "... Beliefs, customs, artistic norms, food, habits, and crafts ... come to man not by his own creative activity but as a legacy from the past, conveyed by formal or informal education." Cultural meaning is also acquired from symbols, concepts and from symbolic

expressions which people use in communication and to increase their understanding and attitude towards life and cause their existence to be meaningful.

Pinto continues to say that culture in general is “a whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It not only includes the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and belief.” Religion and culture moves people to conduct introspection and self-reflection, and as a result bring out man’s humanness and dependency on God thus ensuring a moral commitment and traditional religious lifestyle. Thus, he admits his shortfalls and incompleteness and moves towards spirituality and new meaning, sometimes through conversion to another religion or culture.

Every culture is different and exists in a particular socio-historical context within space and time. It has a value system with limitations. Communication and cultural relationships in society are inevitable as people are continually participating in common activities and exposed to integration (Pinto 1985: 6). Since people co-exist, inculturation, even religiously, is inevitable. Religious gatherings and worship centers are filled with diverse cultures. In some parts of the world, especially Asia, the Churches have discussed the issues concerning the cultural identity of new converts as they were exposed to a Western model of inculturation. For example, “... the Latin model of Incarnation in a non-Christian culture; the Greek model of assimilation of a non-Christian philosophy; the north European model of accommodation to a non-Christian religiosity; and the monastic model of participation in a non-Christian spirituality” (Southard 1992: 116).

Inculturation is, “The dynamic relation between the Christian message and diverse cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal, critical interpretation, and the assimilation between them” (Pinto 1985: 13). The young people of this modern society, even in South Africa openly argue the relevance of culture to this life and choose ways that are meaningful to them. They even freely engage in inter-religious relationships which results in inter-religious marriages.

5.7.2 Religious Conversion

All people are God conscious, except for the atheist. They seek God and foster their ways of living

in line with the teachings about God. In this sense, religious conversion is inevitably attached to an identity change or experience. The Jewish, Christian and Muslims refer to change in one's religious beliefs and behaviour as "conversion" (Southard 1992: 9).

In the Bible John (3: 5), conversion is referred to as to be "born again" and in other texts as "born from above", "a new creation", "newness of life", etc. It also means "turning the course of action or to be restored" (Isaiah 60: 5). However, in Christianity it mainly refers to a "radical change in one's personal religious beliefs and behaviour. According to Gillespie (1991: 25-26), "in a broader sense, however, it refers to both personal and communal changes and change in community affiliation. A change of mind has connotations of conversion including a change of mind after reflection; a going beyond the present attitude, status or outlook; or repentance." This "conversion" may occur instantaneously or gradually as people experience it.

However, Hinduism understands such "conversion" not only to be religious change but also as a change in social order, especially referring to the caste system – "conversion" to Hindus is a process of change. Southard (1992: 10) states that Hinduism does not have a "fixed set of beliefs or a doctrinal creed", but "dogmas ranging from materialistic atheism, pantheism, and polytheism, to monotheism and abstract monism." Their spiritual journey is to reach *Moksha* (salvation, enlightenment) – realization of perfection. The change in religious beliefs is a process that guides one to self-realization and has many routes to achieving *Moksha* that transcends history and life on earth.

Moksha has three paths in *Karma Marga*, *Bhakti Marga* and *Jnana Marga*:

- *Karma Marga* (paths of duty) – conversion compels one to observe the Hindu rituals to prepare one's status in society and stage in life.
- *Bhakti Marga* (paths of devotion) – conversion forces one to worship the God of one's caste one belongs to – in the many choices they have the right to choose one personal God.
- *Jnana Marga* (way of Wisdom) – a metaphysical path and conversion is to engage in the discipline of Yoga, a physical and mental practice - deep meditation (Southard 1992: 10-11).

The most life changing form of change is in religious conversion which is a most fundamental feeling and an ongoing creative process of transformation. The transformation to be described as genuine change depends on the intentions and motives for accepting religious change – transformation will take place if the change is sincere. Gillespie (1991: 14) indicates that, “Someone leaves one major religious tradition for another ... these changes are typified as change in worldview rather than personal orientation and self-transcendent experience. Such transitions are painful and yield some form of syncretism.”

In the meeting of Western Christianity with Hinduism, some Churches were quick to disciple new Indian converts into the Christian traditions. They willingly subjected themselves to inculturation as they experienced an inferior complex that they acquired from the caste system from the previous religion (Schreiter 1999: 30).

Southard (1992: 117) indicates that racial, ethnic, religious and cultural background influences people's identity and become evident in their social life and behaviour. However, sometimes circumstances dictate to people in making a decision to change religion and take on a new identity through religious conversion or inter-religious marriages. If religious conversion has the potential to induce identity confusion in new converts or a struggle in adapting to a new tradition or culture, how much more intricate issues would couples of inter-religious marriages face. The psychodynamic theory speaks about identity crisis where people lose sense of self and historical continuity – Freud also discusses issues on self identity. This issue of identity crisis is prevalent in people's lives. Therefore, intervention is required through counselling. Hence, the researcher after considering the religious traditions, customs, belief systems, culture and doctrinal issues enveloped with all its complexities, focuses on developing a counselling model for inter-religious marriages.

5.7.3 Counselling Couples of Conversion

Religious differences of inter-religious marriages cannot be ignored. Relationship counselling encourages the couples to discuss and address their challenges. All marriages experience obstacles that stifle the growth in the relationship but these obstacles may be more sustained and complicated in an inter-religious marriage relationship. This is the case, especially where the couple chooses to ignore religious differences and religious requirements. They believe that their love would assist them in coping. They depend on the compromise of one partner to convert and conclude that it is

enough to alleviate the problems. They think that the obstacles would disappear even though they ignore family concerns and counselling for inter-religious marriages. Such couples may live in bitterness, tension and experience poor understandings of their religious differences (<http://www.bryanwood.co.za/2012>).

In order to get support from families and to cope with raising children, agreement must be reached on religious and cultural issues (<http://psychcentral.com/2011>). According to Crohn (1995: 47) counsellors should guide inter-religious couples to address their challenges. The cultural requirements and identities should be clearly understood by the couple, including the religious identity of the children. The couple should be encouraged to accept therapy and to improve their skills in coping with religious issues. It is said that inter-religious marriages' chance of failure is three times greater than marriages of people from the same religion. The couple should make compromises for instance on the raising of children, religious holidays, and family roles. The counsellor should guide the couple to discuss differences and to make a commitment to ensure that the solutions work. The religious beliefs should be respected by both partners (<http://psychcentral.com/2011>).

The therapist or counsellor should understand the religious practices and their impact on the inter-religious marriage. Hence, the counsellor should be sensitive to the views of the couple before listing possible solutions to ensure no resistance from the couple. Counsellors should consider the previous painful experiences of the couple that may hinder the growth of the relationship or marriage, especially unresolved psychological trauma; grief, repressed guilt feelings and shame; anxiety, inferiority complex and negative self-concept; and conflicts, even issues that relate to spirituality (Abi-Hashem 2008: 165; Carolan, et al 2000: 67).

5.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it has been declared that a theory is a set of interconnected ideas that frames the world in a certain way and guides how we observe and explain phenomena. Family theories provide perspectives on how we think about families, what we observe, how we interpret this knowledge, and how we use the information in programmes and policies that affect family life.

The social exchange approach proposes that interpersonal relationships are formed largely for the purpose of meeting each partner's needs, emphasizing that the individuals desire the maximum positive outcomes or rewards in relationships along with the least amount of costs or trade-offs. In summary, symbolic interactionism focuses on the individual and the development of his or her identity through social interactions, particularly in the family. The Social Conflict approach seeks to expose how disequilibrium, disharmony and conflict are inevitable features of human interaction. Consequently, the emphasis in this approach is on conflict management and other ways to reduce disharmony. The Structural-Functional approach views society as a complex system of interrelated parts. The emphasis is on how a society can operate in harmony and equilibrium because of its interdependent parts.

It has been clearly explained that systems theory focuses primarily on system processes rather than on the parts of the system – all that form part of the family or system is an active participant. According to general systems theory, a system is a set of elements (the elements being the parts of the system) standing in interaction among themselves and with the environment. Role theory considers the family as a system of roles fulfilled by different members. The question of how it is that, in a family, each member comes to be responsible for certain roles and tasks whilst others are not, arises. These roles, sociologists believe, are specific to each society and vary from one culture to another.

The common type of nuclear family consists of at least one responsible adult male and one female living commonly in a marriage arrangement with their children. The extended family is a corporate economic and political unit, as well as a kinship-based group. The members of this type of family work for the mutual benefit and welfare of all individuals and nuclear families that are recognized to be part of the unit. The *joint family* has many of the elements of the extended family in that it is made up of any number of separate nuclear families and is an economic, geographical and political entity as well as a kinship-based group. The marital breakdown (especially caused by divorce, separation, death and desertion) and children born out of wedlock have contributed to single parent families.

The family traditions, beliefs and customs impact enormously on the way the family functioned during ancient times. There was great diversity of family life and of moral codes. Gradually, however, a fairly homogeneous doctrine developed for marriage, sex, and family life. However,

the Christian standards of monogamy, non-marital chastity, and marital fidelity strengthened the nuclear family. The nuclear family forms the basis of the Christian family. Muslim family exists at the heart of Islamic society and culture. Islam holds that the basic unit of social life is the family. Family life is very important for Hindus.

According to Crohn (1995: 47) counselling inter-religious couples should confront the issues, deal with them and decide on solutions to overcome the obstacles also involving families. Discussions and compromise are necessary for the inter-religious marriage to work.

In the next chapter, the researcher examines and discusses the dynamics of religious marriages and the theories underpinning marriages. An understanding of the theories and the dynamic of marriages would assist in inter-religious marriage counselling.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Nothing more fully characterizes contemporary marriage and family life than the transitions couples must face when moving from one way of life, their home families, to another, their new, own married families. In the transition from one cultural and religious life to another or the experience of a dual culture, couples confront even more unique challenges in marriage (Jovanovich 1988: v).

During ancient times marriages were mostly endogamous and polygyny was allowed. However, the ancient Greeks and the Romans were inclined to monogamous marriages. The early church took a stand against inter-faith marriages and propagated monogamous and single faith (Christian) marriages. There existed recurrent trends of marriages throughout the ages: marriage was strongly encouraged, individuals married quite young, patriarchy reigned, gender roles were distinct and families economically self sufficient.

There are multiple reasons to marry. Some may be less and others more acceptable. However, most individuals find their mates through residential propinquity. Mate selection theories place the emphasis on factors such as social roles, values, and need gratifications. According to the psychoanalytic view, parental image (especially of the opposite sex) influences the choice of a partner.

In most societies, religious norms and values play an important role in legitimating marriages. Marriages are often solemnized through religious rituals and practices. The taboos and restrictions imposed on marriages throughout history have been many and complex. Exogamy requires the person to select a partner from outside their group and prohibits certain sex relationships with close kin. On the other hand, an Endogamous marriage seeks to restrict marriage within the same caste or class, which is encouraged through arranged marriages.

This chapter deals with the history and dynamics of marriages. The most important aspects of the

topic are: definitions, an historical overview of marriage, recurrent trends in marriage through the ages, the question why people get married, propinquity and mate selection, the ritual and cultural practices related to marriage and religious observance, types of marriage and restrictions to marriage.

6.2 DEFINITIONS

According to Christensen and Johnsen (1985: 19), marriage is an institutional act that unites a man and a woman. Marriage is intended to be a stable, enduring relationship and involves a legal agreement between husband and wife. This legal agreement exists in the form of a marriage contract, which stipulates reciprocal rights and obligations between spouses. These rights and obligations are expected to continue unless the marriage is dissolved by further legal action.

The institutional act ensures that two persons of the opposite sex are married according to the laws, customs and cultural requirements of the society to which they belong. An early definition of the ideal marriage was perceived as a “voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others; that is, it is regarded as voluntary, permanent and as strictly monogamous. It is the ideal the law attempts to implement” (Farmer 1970: 12).

Gupta (1974: 1) defined marriage as a relation of one or more men to one or more women, which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties, both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it. This definition is a comprehensive one, which covers almost all marriages.

Schulz (1971: 64) attempts to provide a more expanded definition of marriage. He indicates that marriage is the established institution for starting a family. It involves an exchange of economic goods and is a legal, physical and moral union between a man and a woman continuing through the raising of their children. Marriage helps to regulate relations between the sexes and establishes the child’s relation to the community. Generally, it is associated with a ceremony, magical, religious, social or civil, which formalizes the group’s approval. The children produced are usually seen as the legitimate offspring of the married couple.

More recently, Bird and Melville (1994: 175) defined marriage as a sexual union, which is socially recognized through public announcement or ceremony, based on an explicit contract undertaken with intentions for permanence. Moreover, the act of marriage provides the social legitimization for bearing children and is limited by social constraints to unions between two heterosexual partners.

A comparison of the earlier and more recent definitions of marriage illustrates that societal values placed on the institution of marriage have not changed as we enter into the twenty first century. Finch and Morgan (1991: 56) in their study of marriage in the nineteen eighties, noted that there has been no change in the adherence to conventional family values. In fact, they confirm that despite disparate sociological studies being published in the nineteen eighties, evidence points to continuities with the past rather than a dramatic change in the value attached to the institution of marriage and family.

The definitions of marriage highlight four basic components, which are common in order to create a marital relationship, namely: social legitimization, public acknowledgement, an assumption of permanence and reciprocal rights and obligations. Marriage is a sum total of social, physical, psychological, sexual and economic factors to be found in both the individual's personality and also social structure.

6.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MARRIAGE

Mesopotamia was a region in which people settled before 3500 BC in the area spanning from Iraq to Egypt. The people who settled it probably came from the highlands of present-day Turkey or Iran. The culture as a whole included the Sumerians, Persians, Assyrians and Babylonians. The Sumerians practiced monogamy and marriages were arranged by the elders of the families. The Egyptian civilization rose to power over 5000 years ago and existed for nearly 2500 years. Egyptian men and women married early. Polygyny was allowed. A husband could take more than one wife. Marriages between brother and sister were acceptable. Marriages were mostly endogamous.

The ancient Hebrew nation was a nomadic desert people led by Abraham in 1900 BC. The Hebrew marriage was patriarchal in scope. Polygynous and endogamous marriages were recognized by the

Hebrew Law. The Hebrew family customs and religious traditions have endured for centuries, including the Passover meal, subsequent to the Israelites leaving Egypt.

The ancient Greeks of over 2000 years ago were united by a common culture, religion and language. Many of the marriages were arranged by the fathers with little regard for the inclinations of the parties involved. Marriages were monogamous and consistent with other civilizations. As with earlier civilizations, romance often had little to do with the Roman approach to marriage.

Roman fathers chose wives for their sons, and the marriage was viewed as a private arrangement made between families. Marriages were monogamous. While the Romans persecuted the Christians for many years, Christianity spread rapidly due to the work of Saint Paul and other apostles. In AD 313, Emperor Constantine granted Christians the freedom of religion. The Church would come to affect many facets of life, including marriage and family functioning. The Church took a stand against inter-faith marriages and propagated monogamous marriages (Hareven 1984: 36).

It would be impossible to explore all of the marriage customs throughout all of Europe during the middle Ages. In medieval England, for example, the household was still regarded as an important economic unit and marriages were therefore encouraged. Monogamous marriages were arranged by parents, typically the father. During the Renaissance and the Reformation period (14th – 17th century), the institution of marriage remained an economic necessity. The prearranged monogamous nature of marriage continued to dominate (Herlihy 1983: 116-130).

The colonists who voyaged to America in search of a better life brought a number of European marriage and family customs to the New World. For example, early marriages were encouraged. Throughout colonial history, bachelors were viewed with suspicion and fear. Unlike customs in the Old World, most marriages in colonial America were not prearranged. Marriages were also monogamous (Albin 1981: 43).

In contemporary society, as in other historical periods, marriage continues to be the choice for a truly significant portion of the population. An estimated 95 percent of people will opt to get married at one point or another in their lifetime. Marriages in the 21st century mostly followed the trend of one-man-one wife. Marital disharmony and collapse did occur in the past, but it was not widespread as compared to current statistics. Divorce rates hit an all-time peak in 1946 and then declined

steadily until the late 1950's. During the 1970s, the United States has the highest divorce rate (Scanzoni 1983: 149). According to anecdotal evidence and the media, the divorce rate in South Africa has increased drastically over the last ten years.

6.4 MARRIAGES THROUGH THE AGES: RECURRENT TRENDS

One of the more interesting and obvious features about marriage and family life as it existed in the past is that certain trends and practices appear to be recurrent. This is so because marriage and family life is, at least in part, a practical extension of society's beliefs, customs and viewpoints (Jovanovich 1988: 30):

- *Marriage Was Strongly Encouraged*

Marriage was strongly encouraged by most civilizations. In many instances, the marriages were also prearranged by the parents, more often than not, by the fathers. Remaining single earned disdain from society and unmarried adults were, often, viewed with suspicion and fear.

- *Individuals Entered the Institution of Marriage at Early Ages*

Throughout much of history, people married at surprising early ages. While much of this was due to a shorter life expectancy, prompting for early marriages by one's parents also took place.

- *Marriages Were Patriarchal in Scope*

The husband typically controlled the household and wives occupied a subordinate position. Husbands were responsible for family decision making and factors affecting the family's welfare and operation.

- *Household Activities Reflected Sex-role Stereotyping*

Domestic chores usually depicted clear-cut sex-role stereotyping; that is, chores were assigned on the basis of one's sex rather than on individual ability. While there were exceptions, household responsibilities followed a fairly predictable pattern. Husbands saw to the farming or other financial

enterprise. Wives handled such domestic chores as cooking, weaving and child rearing. While women were relegated to a subordinate position in the home, it should be added that throughout much of history, they were respected for the work they did.

- *Families Were Self-sufficient Economic Units*

The agrarian family of the past, complete with its sex-typed division of labor, was a self-sufficient economic unit. It produced and consumed as a unit. This was a trend that persisted from the earliest of times to the Industrial Revolution.

6.5 WHY PEOPLE MARRY

While the motives for entering married life are multiple and diverse, it is possible to identify some of the more popular reasons. Jovanovich (1988: 192) engages in the following discourse.

He says that *love* and shared responsibilities by partners is often the driving reason for getting married. Couples desire to share themselves in an enduring and intimate relationship, one that they feel is best represented within the institution of marriage. Couples are pressured into *conformity*, thinking that marriage is a natural progression. After courting and the engagement period, getting married is viewed as the final stage of the mate selection process. Contributing to this motive are the social pressures, both subtle and direct, from family, friends, and others prompting the couple to marry. The prospect of a regular *companionship* also tends to generate emotional and psychological well-being, which in turn breeds feelings of security and comfort. Companionship provides couples with the opportunity to share, be it the routines attached to domestic life or recreational and leisurely pursuits. Marriage *legitimizes sex and children*. Although many large proportions of men and women engage in non-marital intercourse, married status still provides social approval for many with respect to sexual behaviour. Children born into a marital relationship have a legitimate identity. Some segments of society strongly feel that a child born out of wedlock is immoral. We should acknowledge, also, that many couples would never consider getting married unless they wanted to have a child. Many couples report that a decision to marry occurred when they felt a *sense of readiness*. The couple had done the things they wanted to accomplish before marrying.

Berkley (1981: 33) indicated that there are numerous 'wrong' reasons for getting married. That is, some people may choose to marry for selfish reasons – for instance, to acquire a sexual partner or to obtain economic or emotional security. Some marry to escape the loneliness of a solitary existence or because they want to get away from an unhappy home situation. While the above reasons may be important to an individual, they are not sound reasons when they represent the major motivation for marriage.

6.6 PROPINQUITY AND MATE SELECTION

According to Bossard (1932: 222) propinquity refers to nearness in place, or proximity, and for almost 50 years one of the truths in sociology has been that young people tend to marry those who live nearby. Bossard, in his study of propinquity, studied street addresses from 5000 consecutive issues of marriage licenses in Philadelphia. He discovered that one-sixth of the applicant-pairs lived within a block of each other, one-third lived within five blocks and more than half lived within twenty blocks of each other. To substantiate his findings, he carried out this study in other parts of the state, countries and even continents. These findings indicate that people mostly find their mates through or because of residential propinquity - nearness.

Bell (1967: 140) believed that there is more to marriage than just stating that people marry those who live near them. In most cases, close residency is a reflection of other, more important endogamous factors. He asserts that residential areas in and around cities tend to be homogeneous. The people that live in such areas are often alike in race, religion, ethnic background and general socioeconomic status. Bell argues that it is possible that if neighbourhoods were more heterogeneous, high rates of residential propinquity in mate selection would be greatly reduced.

Occupational propinquity refers to the tendency of people working in the same occupational areas to marry one another, as they are very apt to meet each other. But occupational propinquity is also influenced by other important social variables, particularly education. The higher the social class is, the greater the degree of occupational propinquity. This is linked to educational similarity or related occupational field in the higher social class.

In its broadest sense, propinquity means that individuals and families need to have continual contact if the relationship is to endure (Jovanovich 1988: 72).

6.6.1 Basic Theories of Mate Selection

It must be admitted, 'who marries whom', has proved to be an exasperating question to answer. Some earlier scholars believed that for each man there was a particular woman and that a kind of 'instinct' guided them to one another. For example, Jung felt that every man carried an image of a particular female and when the right female came along he was 'seized'. The psychoanalytic view assumed that people were guided in their choice of a mate by a 'parental image', i.e., an image of the parent of the opposite sex. Boys would thus be unconsciously drawn toward someone who resembled their mother, and girls to someone who resembled their father. However, research has failed to substantiate these views. Mate selection theories that followed placed the emphasis on factors such as social roles, values, need gratifications and sequences (Kephart 1981: 242).

6.6.1.1 Role Theory

One of the most commonly used terms in sociology, 'role', refers to what is expected of anyone in a particular position. The roles of marriage partners should be understood prior to marriage. If a man who believed that a woman's place is in the home surely would not marry a career woman. Nor would it be likely for a woman who thinks men should be active in community affairs to marry a laissez-faire man. A compatible couple would be one in which both spouses play the expected or agreed-upon roles.

6.6.1.2 Values

Values refer to ideals, customs, or behaviour patterns about which people have such strong emotional feelings that they think of them as good, bad, right or wrong. Coombs (1966: 166) believed that values are so important to those who hold them that they are accepted without question. He feels that mates tend to be chosen on the basis of similarity of values wherein lays emotional security. He indicates that endogamous factors such as race, religion and social class operate largely as a function of values. For example, a person may wish to marry someone of the same religion, not only because marrying a member of the same religion may be an important value in itself, but because individuals with similar backgrounds will probably develop similar value systems thus setting the stage for mate selection.

6.6.1.3 Exchange Theory

This theory conceives all social behaviour as a kind of exchange. Huston (1974: 20) assumed, not only human actions are goal-oriented, but also that social transactions are regulated by the interactants' desire to derive maximum pleasure and minimum pain from others. He adds that the exchange theory suggests that individuals are most attracted to persons who provide the highest ratio of rewards to costs. Edwards (1969: 518) stated that each party tends to maximize his or her gains and minimize costs:

- Within any collectivity of potential mates, a person will seek out that individual who is perceived as maximizing his rewards.
- Individuals with equivalent resources are most likely to maximize each other's rewards.
- Pairs with equivalent resources are most likely to possess homogamous characteristics.
- Mate selection, therefore, will be homogamous with respect to a given set of characteristics.

6.6.1.4 Complementary Needs

According to Winch (1958: 97) an individual chooses for a mate someone who provides him/her with maximum need-gratification. However, maximum gratification occurs when the specific need-patterns of the man and woman are complementary rather than similar.

6.6.1.5 The Filter Theory

In an attempt to integrate some of the above approaches to mate selection, Kerckhoff and Davis (1962: 295) hypothesized that certain social attributes and personality relationship operate differently, depending on the particular stage of courtship. Kerckhoff and Davis points to filtering factors that operate in the mate selection process. Initially, endogamous factors such as religion and social class narrow the field of eligibles. Subsequent courtship among eligibles is not likely to progress very far, or very satisfactorily, unless agreement on values is reached. In the final stages, the presence or absence of need-complementarity determines whether a permanent mating will result. The mate-selection sequence thus appears to be one of endogamy, homogamy and heterogamy.

6.6.1.6 Process Approach

Most of the foregoing theories assume that mate selection hinges on certain personal or social attributes of the two individuals involved. However, Bolton (1961: 235) looked at mate selection from the view of the developmental process itself. While the process approach does not ignore endogamous or homogamous-heterogamous elements, the implication is that interpersonal transactions have their own course of events and that one interactive phase shapes another.

6.6.1.7 Stimulus-Value-Role Theory

Murstein's (1976: 107) *Stimulus-Value-Role theory* believed that in a relatively free-choice situation most couples go through three stages prior to marriage. In the first stage, one individual is drawn to another because of his or her perception of the other's physical and social attributes, as well as his or her perception of own qualities that might be attractive to the other person. Murstein pointed out that as a result of their previous experiences, people build up an image of their attractiveness to the opposite sex. The second stage is value comparison where the attracted couples sit down and talk about interests, attitudes, beliefs and needs. The primary focus of the value comparison stage, in short, is information gathering by verbal interaction with each other. There is much public and private information that each learns about the other, such as religious orientation, political beliefs, attitudes toward people, interest in sports, etc. Whether or not the couples progress to the role stage usually depends on their similarity of values, though not always. A beautiful woman may be desirable even if her values differ somewhat from those of a man. Conversely, if similarly held values are satisfying, it may be offset by a negative physical appearance.

Murstein continued to state that in some cases, a couple may decide to marry on the basis of the first two stages – stimulus attraction and value congruence – but for most people it is also necessary to function in compatible roles.

6.7 THE MARRIAGE: Rituals, Cultural Practices and Religious Observance

In most societies, the observance of religious norms and values cause the marriage to be valid. Marriage customs are sacred, which means they carry hidden religious messages. Marriages are often solemnized through religious rituals and practices. For people who have a religious ceremony

these customs are made sacred because they believe that their God is present to bless the marriage. An understanding of this part of the marriage ceremony is very significant to inter-religious marriages as the implications and impacts – positive or negative – need to be examined.

6.7.1 The Christian Marriage Ceremony

Christian marriage ceremonies are in principle simple. In many Christian weddings the bride and groom promise to love each other ‘for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health’ until they are parted by death. They each take turns to say these words in the presence of the pastor or priest and loudly enough for the wedding guests to hear.

They also make their marriage vows when they exchange the rings. After the rings are blessed by the priest the bride and groom exchange rings. Each says:

*“I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage;
With my body I honour you;
All that I am I give to you;
All that I have I share with you;
Within the love of God.”*
(Compton 1992: 13)

Compton (1992: 22) also stated that it is the custom of Christian brides to wear a white or cream wedding dress and a veil. White is a symbol of purity.

Barnes (1999: 33) stated that the Roman Catholic priest gives communion under both species, bread and wine to the married couple to partake. They drink from the same cup, which shows that they will share their life, joys and sad times together.

6.7.2 The Muslim Marriage Ceremony

The Qur’an, the Muslim holy book, gives guidance on family life. It requires that a contract is made between the couple who are marrying. Muslims agree to live according to the teachings of Islam found in the Qur’an. Nikka is when the marriage contract is signed. The contract is taken by the imam to the groom, who signs it in the presence of four witnesses, two from each family. Once the groom has signed, the contract is taken to the bride to sign. The bride has to say three times in front of witnesses that she agrees to the marriage (Barnes 1999: 32).

The Muslim brides wear special clothes called *shalwar* and *kameez*, with a long scarf called a *dupatta*. A *kameez* is a long, elegant and beautifully embroidered tunic, worn over loose or baggy trousers called *shalwar* (Compton 1992: 23).

Just like the Hindu brides, the Muslim brides decorate their hands and soles of their feet with beautiful painted patterns, which is a social and not a religious custom. The patterns are painted with a powder made from the crushed leaves of the *mehndi* tree, which turns the skin into a warm red colour.

3.7.2 The Hindu Marriage Ceremony

Promises in a Hindu marriage are made before God, who is believed to be present in the form of a special fire. The wedding ceremony is led by a priest or Brahmin. The bride and groom make their vows in the form of a custom called *Satapadi*, which means *seven steps*. These are taken as they walk around the sacred fire pot four times. These steps help the bride and groom to see that in their marriage they will walk together and carry out seven duties. After the seventh step the bride and groom place their right hand on their partner's heart. They do not sign anything. They believe their signatures are written by their feet and with invisible ink on their hearts. The bride and groom agree that they will: Earn a living to provide food; work for power and strength so that they can keep healthy and be strong for each other; care for the welfare of each other so that their marriage can grow and prosper; and be concerned about each other's happiness and pleasure (Compton 1992:12).

Hindu brides usually get married in red or a deep pink-coloured silk, embroidered with gold threads. Red is considered to be a happy, bright colour, appropriate for the wedding, which is an occasion of excitement and joy. Hindu brides wear a sari, and a long scarf to cover the head called a *chunni*. The men sometimes wear a special hat called a *tupi*, or a turban made to look like a crown, decorated with a feather, sequins or jewels.

Compton (1992: 27) stated that the custom of painting the hairline or parting red, in Hindu weddings, are often done by the groom after the couple have taken the Seven Steps. It is a sign that the woman is married and that she belongs to her husband and his family. The Tamil speaking Hindu bride usually wears a *thali*, (a yellow string with sacred symbolic jewelries), around her neck and also a red dot on her forehead.

6.8 TYPES OF MARRIAGES

There are only two basic forms of marriages, polygamy and monogamy. The former refers to plural marriages and the latter refers to the union of one man and one woman. Polygamy is further divided into polyandry, that is, the marriage of one woman to two or more men and polygyny, the marriage of one man to two or more wives. The discussions of polyandrous, polygynous and monogamous types of marriages become necessary for a better understanding of the institution of marriage in different cultural and religious contexts.

6.8.1 Polyandry

Queen (1985: 19) indicates that polyandry is not found in more developed civilizations, and it is an extremely rare occurrence throughout history. It has been recorded over 300 years ago, and probably existed centuries before. Chatterjee (1972: 46) states that polyandry or rather fraternal polyandry was a common feature of the early Aryan social organization of India. This has also been practised amongst certain Buddhist Tibetans, some ethnic groups in Nigeria, and the Toda in Southern India (Turner 1988: 9). Two types of polyandry are identified in the discussion that follows.

The fraternal type of polyandry is more common and it is usually a modification of monogamy. The younger brothers share the eldest brother's wife, all of them are husbands of the woman, but the eldest retains primary control. Paternity in such a system is socially rather than biologically determined (Queen 1985: 19). Among the Todas of Southern India, fatherhood was established through a *baw* ceremony, which established legal fatherhood. Prior to the mother performing the *baw* ceremony, all children born from a relationship with another man or a husband of a previous marriage, were known to belong to that man or husband. The custom was so highly formalized, that a child born years after a ceremonial father had died, still considered him to be his father, provided that the child's mother had failed in the meantime to change his social father by means of the *baw* ceremony (Green 1972: 275).

According to Queen (1985: 24), until recently, the Todas commonly practiced female infanticide. This custom cannot be said to have been the cause of polyandry, even though female infanticide did create a severe numerical imbalance between the sexes. At the same time, once given a surplus

of males over females, polyandry becomes a cultural innovation to ensure heterosexual unions for all or nearly all-male members of the tribe. Levine (1988) stated that amongst the Nyinba people of Nepal polyandry was rooted in the economic conditions prevalent in ancient civilization (see also Stewart 1997: <http://personal.psu.edu/1997>). The Nyinba people placed strong emphasis on kinship ties by keeping the brothers intact through fraternally polyandrous marriages for the rest of their lives. This linkage of brothers ensured that family property is inherited and maintained in the family.

Earlier recordings had shown that the Egyptian pharaohs married their sisters, so did the Hawaiian and Inca rulers in pursuit of preserving the sacrosanct character of the royal family. The Azande of Africa allowed father and daughter marriage for high chiefs. Old Greek and Iranian writings also suggest that brother-sister as well as father-daughter incest was common in ancient Iran (Das 1991: 18).

Early research has undoubtedly proven that polyandry was prevalent in the ancient world in one form or another and its traces still exist in the life and literatures of many civilizations. It is not difficult to discover proof of this in the inscriptions, architectures, the paintings and the drawings of ancient civilizations; and in the writings of archaeological discoveries by scientists in the form of religious practices, traditions and folklores.

6.8.2 Polygyny

The custom of a man taking two or more wives is much more common than polyandry. Whether the human male has a natural tendency to collect as many females as he can is a point of debate. Anthropologists have shown that the tendency is widespread. This is verified by the classic study of 565 societies undertaken by the anthropologist George Murdock (1957), which revealed that monogamous patterns of marriage was prevalent only amongst one-fourth of the population he studied as compared to over 70%, which followed polygynous forms of marriages (Coleman & Cressey 1990: 125). In instances where the man failed to take more than one wife, he is most likely hedged in mainly by personal circumstances or group rules. Nadvi (1987: 56) asserted that polygyny was an established institution in human society since time immemorial. The kings may have had literally hundreds of wives, Chiefs dozens, and commoners two or three. The practice of polygynous marriages through the history of the Arab nation; the Jewish nation; the Christian

religion; and also the Talmudic Prophets was disclosed overtly. Nadvi (1987) stated that, all ancient civilizations like the Medas, Babylonians, Abbysinnians, Persians, and Greeks recognised polygynous marriages. It was also practiced amongst the tribes of Africa, Australia and the Mormons of America. Many of the Israelite patriarchs were polygamous and some had more than one wife. According to the Bible Solomon is said to have had seven hundred wives in addition to three hundred concubines (1Kings 11: 3). It should be noted that polygynous societies practiced strong taboos against sex relations, especially during a women's pregnancy, menstrual or weaning periods. It is understood that such taboos heightened the male's drive to sex variety in many polygynous societies (Green 1972:275). Western scholars first supposed that the sex drive was the root of the practice of having plural wives (Smith 1995: 120).

Moore (1996: 130) indicated that among polygynous families, a man's worth is partly measured by the number of his wives. Religious and social attitudes stress the desirability of many children. It is believed that children in Africa increase the prestige, status and wealth of the family. Green (1972: 276) stated that plural wives, however do not usually feel degraded. It has been observed amongst certain Black communities in Africa that women often urge their husbands to take another wife in order to lighten their burden of labour in the household and the field. A childless wife may encourage her husband to marry, especially where he has the right to divorce a barren wife if he so chooses.

More recently Gage-Brandon (1992: 285) postulated that polygyny tends to be more common in societies where the female labour force participation is high. In this case, women in polygynous unions contribute substantially to the economic well-being of the household unit. Polygynous unions are more common in rural areas. Due to the high cost of living, urban centers tend not to attract polygynous households in view of low salaries, large families and unemployment (Moore 1996:130). Polygynous unions may tend to be more prevalent in more affluent groups allowing polygamy. Upper class males, because of their economic power, have either been permitted access to more than one woman or clandestinely seek them more frequently than males lacking such power. Saxton (1990: 231) asserted that although 75% of the world's societies prefer polygynous forms of marriages, it is usually the most powerful and wealthy men who actually have more than one wife.

Among the Muslims, monogamy is the rule while polygamy is an exception (Lemu 1995: 12). After the great battle of *Uhud* (3rd A.H.) in Mecca, many women were widowed together with large numbers of fatherless children. It is during this period that the Qur'anic verse was revealed:

If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry the women of your choice, two, or three or four. But if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with all, then only one (Qur'an 4: 3)

Polygamy was permitted for Muslims within a particular social and historical context so widows and fatherless children were accorded legitimate status (Badawi 1995: 17). The Qur'an not only limits the unlimited polygamy practiced by the Arabs before the advent of Islam, but it also lays down conditions for it, i.e. justice and equality with the wives. Muslim jurists therefore conclude that a Muslim man, who does not have the financial means and the capacity to support more than one wife, must restrict himself to only one wife. This measure was also used to curb immorality in the Arab world resulting from the existence of a large number of young widows. In addition, polygamy was seen as one method of preventing prostitution and any promiscuous and indecent behaviour (Nadvi 1987: 58).

6.8.3 Monogamy

Monogamy is the most frequent form of marriage practiced in all societies. According to Goldberg (1985: 243) monogamy is based on the expectation and hope that each spouse will be able to meet the other's needs as partner, friend and lover, with a commitment to fidelity. This does not mean that the extremely strict monogamous relation is a universal rule. Where monogamy is found, most matings are with single partners owing to custom, poverty or unavailability of members of the opposite sex.

Green (1972: 276) indicated that throughout the world, the shift in modern times has been to monogamy where tradition has sanctioned other forms of marriage. Monogamy is known to strengthen the paternal relationship and to narrow the range of property inheritance in advanced civilizations.

Creation commenced with a true example of a monogamous marriage in Adam and Eve, which reflected God's original plan for mankind – one man to one woman for life (Genesis 2: 21-22). It has been recorded in the book of Genesis in the Bible that Abraham initially only had one wife,

Sarah, and since she was found barren, he took her slave-girl, Hagar (Genesis 16: 1-2). However, the most common form of marriage in the Israelite society was monogamy. Except for Samuel's father, there is no other record of bigamy among the commoners in the books of Samuel and Kings. Also there has been no discussion on polygamy in the wisdom books.

6.9 RESTRICTIONS ON MARRIAGES

The taboos and restrictions imposed on marriages throughout history have been many and complex. All societies prohibit marriages between individuals sharing certain blood relationships. There are also universal pressures to marry within the tribe, the race or the social class. The first set of rules is known as *exogamy*, and the second, *endogamy*. The rules are universal, but the range of variation is wide. However, anthropologists have found that tribal societies tend to be more restrictive than Western societies (Gotlieb 1993: 56).

6.9.1 Exogamy

Exogamy, in the social sciences, is the term used to denote the body of laws and prohibiting marriage between members of the same village, ethnic group, clan, or family. According to Ermakoff (1997: 410), every society has its rules and regulations customary or otherwise to regulate the conditions under which a valid marriage takes place. The choice of marital partners in all societies is regulated and people cannot get married to whomever they wish. Among some groups, customs actively prescribe marriage outside the social unit. Exogamy, or marriage outside a specific group, can involve the separation of a society into two groups, within which inter-marriage is not allowed.

According to many a scholar, the aversion to marry a near kin expressed itself in the form of exogamy, as a rule, at a certain stage of development of human society (Chatterjee 1972: 61). Exogamy is closely linked to the incest taboo. In the 10th Century, the Church motivated strategies for exogamous marriages in fear of incest. Exogamy requires the person to select a partner from outside certain groups and prohibits certain sex relationships with close kin (Zandin 1991:368). The marriage of parents with their own children is, without any exception, taboo. Almost universally banned is the marriage of brother to sister (Green 1972: 277).

Green asserted that one possible reason, which can be attributed to this type of marriage, is the desire to maintain property within the family folds, since daughters as well as sons usually inherited family property. Close blood relations and first cousins are prohibited to marry in almost all societies. The Roman Catholic Church prohibits the marriage of a widower with his sister-in-law. The Eastern Orthodox Church prohibits the marriage of two brothers to two sisters. In some pre-literate societies marriage between persons belonging to the same village or territorial group was discouraged.

In Chatterjee's (1972: 62) discussion, the Hindu exogamy is of two kinds: the gotra exogamy and the sapinda exogamy. The gotra or the sept exogamy aims at prohibiting marriage within the same clan. The sapinda exogamy, on the other hand, prohibits marriage with agnatic and cognatic relations up to a certain degree, to avoid blood relationships.

There has been much speculation as to the origin of exogamy. Some have claimed that early humans observed and then sought to prevent the adverse hereditary effects of inbreeding. On the contrary, if the hereditary stocks contain no recessive defects, inbreeding perpetuates sound qualities (Green 1972: 278). Chatterjee (1972: 61) indicated that the concept of exogamy seems to have originated at a time when paternity had been accepted as a recognized social institution. It tries to avoid near blood relations whether real or fictitious and aims at the betterment of progeny. As a result, it not only prevented sexual relations between kindreds, but at the same time it brought new blood into the family or the clan and helped maintain its vigour.

6.9.2 Endogamy

Das (1991: 47) states that endogamy essentially refers to marriages within one's own social class, a particular tribe, race, religion, community, nationality and social class. In Western societies, an important aspect of endogamy is *homogamy* that is a force impelling a person to date someone from the same background (Saxton 1990: 189). When marriage brings two persons from different backgrounds together, it is called *inter-marriage*.

Sociologists contend that endogamous pressures, such as approval or disapproval, often encourage persons to marry within their own social group (Turner 1988: 74). Although there are no such rules, Broderick (1993: 164) asserted that: "... strong social pressures and personal preference still result in most marriages occurring within and not across social, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic

class lines.” Endogamous marriages occur in order to preserve family property and to ensure that dynastic blood is passed on to the next generation (Ermakoff 1997: 408; and Gotlieb 1993: 57).

Where there is little social contact between members of different groups, marriage outside the group seldom takes place. Group isolation generally ensures that marriage does not take place outside the group, but contact with different groups, due to mutual interest, makes out-group marriages inevitable. The South Africa apartheid laws made it illegal for South Africans to marry outside the race group. Bird and Melville (1994: 91) indicated that racial homogamy is the strongest of all cultural norms that limit the field of marriageable partners.

In modern society, religion and racial factors are still very strong, thereby fostering endogamous marriages. According to Nock (1992: 82), in the USA 90 percent of the marriages amongst Protestants, Catholics and Jews are homogamous. However, within these religious groups variations have also been noted. Catholics are more likely to marry non-Catholics, than Protestants or Jews to marry those of different faiths. Nock also states that those who marry others of different religious persuasion often convert to the spouse’s religion.

Hindu endogamy is based upon the concept of caste. It seeks to restrict marriage within the same caste. To the Hindus, marriage within the same caste was a ‘point of social honour’. Each caste was supposed to have inherited the uniform tradition of the same cultural integrity. They believed that the nature of the progeny depended on the nature of its parents. The qualities of the parents were supposed to be faithfully transmitted to their children (Chatterjee 1972: 154).

Endogamy is encouraged by way of arranged marriages. Arranged marriages don’t merely join a couple together, but they bring also two kin groups together. In this type of marriage, spouses are chosen because the union is either economically advantageous, to foster everlasting friendship, or due to kinship obligations. However, in most societies, endogamous attitudes have relaxed and changed. Geographical mobility of people is known to have broken down inter-group barriers. Inter-group marriages in modern societies have become commonplace. They may take the form of inter-faith, inter-racial or inter-ethnic marriages (Tepperman & Wilson 1993: 65-67).

6.10 CONCLUSION

Marriage is an institutional act that unites a man and a woman. Marriage, as voluntary union is

intended to be a stable, enduring relationship and involves a legal agreement between husband and wife. This legal agreement exists in the form of a marriage contract, which stipulates reciprocal rights and obligations between spouses. These rights and obligations are expected to continue unless the marriage is dissolved by further legal action.

According to the Hebrew law, Polygynous and endogamous marriage were recognized. However, the early Church affected many facets of life, including marriage and family functioning. The Church took a stand against inter-faith marriages and propagated monogamous marriages. Recurrent trends of marriage through the ages disclosed that marriage was encouraged; individuals entered the institution of marriage at an early age; marriages were Patriarchal in scope; household activities reflected sex-role stereotyping; and families were self-sufficient economic units.

Although the motives for entering married life are multiple and diverse, some popular reasons were identified such as love, conformity, companionship, sex and children, and a sense of readiness. Some scholars believe that there is more to it than just stating that people marry those who live near them. In most cases, close residency is a reflection of other, more important endogamous factors. Residential areas in and around cities tend to be homogeneous. The people that live in such areas are often alike in race, religion, ethnic background and general socioeconomic status. Bell argues that it is possible that if neighbourhoods were more heterogeneous, high rates of residential propinquity in mate selection would be greatly reduced.

Mate selection theories placed the emphasis on factors such as social roles, values, need gratifications and sequences. Role theory as applied to mate selection shows that persons would tend to choose partners on the basis of courtship and marital role agreement. Mates tend to be chosen on the basis of similarity of values wherein lays emotional security. Endogamous factors such as race, religion and social class operate largely as a function of values. The exchange theory suggests that individuals are most attracted to persons who provide the highest ratio of rewards to costs. Gratification occurs when the specific need-patterns of the man and woman are complementary rather than similar.

In most societies, the observance of religious norms and values is necessary for the marriage to be valid. Marriage customs are sacred, which means they carry hidden religious messages. Marriages are often solemnized through religious rituals and practices. Promises in the Christian

marriage is straight forward with rings exchanged as symbols of commitment to one another. Nikka to a Muslim is when the marriage contract is signed. Marriage vows are made before a pastor or priest and rings are exchanged in a Hindu marriage. The divine is believed to be present in the form of a special fire. The bride and groom make their vows in the form of a custom called *Satapadi*, which means *seven steps*.

Polygamy and monogamy are two basic types of marriage. The former refers to plural partners in marriage and the latter refers to the union of one man and one woman. However, there are also restrictions on marriages in exogamy and endogamy. In the next chapter, inter-religious marriages will be defined and conceptualized. A Christian, Biblical, perspective on marriage will also be developed.

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCEPTUALIZATION OF INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of democratic, non-racial political structures and the cry for religious and cultural tolerance in South Africa was the beginning of enormous changes, especially to reshape and alter the identities of many South Africans who chose to engage in inter-faith and mixed marriages. Inter-religious (inter-faith) and mixed marriages are still however unusual to some extent not only in South Africa but also on all continents of the world. However, mixed relationships are steadily growing and increasing. Although there are various types of marriage relationships as indicated above, the priority will be given in this chapter to the main focus of the research, which is inter-religious marriage. However, to a degree discourses will inevitably interlink with the other types of marriages. The terms inter-faith and inter-religious would be used interchangeably throughout this research and especially in this chapter.

Inter-religious marriage has been a matter of concern to religious leaders seemingly since the origin of religions. The time is at hand for placing inter-religious marriage in a conceptual framework and for developing greater precision in terminology and for the sake of clarity. Inter-religious refers to marriages where the partners are of different religions – couples are exposed to diverse cultures including customs, ceremonies, beliefs, practices, symbols and behaviour.

Homogamous pressures encourage the selection of a partner having a similar background, including that of religion and race. While most persons choose to stay within these parameters the researcher would like to examine the marriages of those who do not. Inter-faith marriages are much more common than inter-racial marriages.

Although interpersonal relationships between different religious groups has generally been positive, most express disapproval of inter-religious marriages. Christians and Muslims strongly disapprove of inter-religious marriages. All forms of marriage relationships are faced with difficulties and challenges. Religious restrictions can cause immense pressure to mate selection. Therefore the issues relating to traditions and religious beliefs of an inter-religious marriage have to be first examined, discussed and understood prior to employing or designing a relevant

counselling model – as such the psychological and spiritual needs may be discovered from the issues that the couple faces.

Biblical doctrines have an impact on Christian inter-religious relationships. Although Christians believe that they have a freedom to choose a life partner, in general, inter-religious marriages are not encouraged.

Although Christians are freed from the law of the Old Testament, the culture of the Old Testament still found its way in the life of the New Testament Christians. In order to understand the impact and influence of Christianity on Christian relationships, the doctrine of marriage of ancient Israel need to be first understood.

In ancient Israel, inter-religious marriage was forbidden and God's institution of marriage was strictly monogamous. According to the Bible God ordained marriage. In the Biblical model of marriage, God made woman to complement man – one man for one woman and one woman for one man. The husband and wife are commanded to leave parents and cleave to each other. In this model there was no room for divorce.

In the early Christian era, marriage to an unbeliever was also in principle not accepted. However, there were, both in the Old and New Testament times, many cases of mixed marriages. The Christian system involved the adoption of monogamy and the prohibition of polygamy and bigamy. Paul indicates in Galatians 3: 28 that we are “one in Christ” and there is no race, creed or culture, that may cause separation or division. As such religion is the only concern to marriage relationships.

God made woman compliment man in the beginning of creation and as such it is an institution ordained by God for the propagation of humanity. God did not institute divorce. However, a marriage may be declared dissolved due to partners being unable to live together anymore. In Christian ceremonies, a covenant is taken to love each other no matter what happens. Furthermore, the husbands are instructed in the Bible to love their wives but the wives should submit to the husband Ephesians 5: 22. They should also submit to one another. Man and women are to complement each other (Corinthians 11: 11).

Christians believe that everyone have the freedom to choose a partner for life. However, in general, inter-faith or inter-religious marriages are not positively endorsed. God's blueprint for marriage is that of one man for one woman and partners should leave parents and cleave to each other and become "one flesh" (Matthew 19: 5-6).

The researcher will examine inter-religious marriages in this chapter. Also in this chapter the theories, religious views and Biblical doctrine pertaining to inter-religious marriages will be reviewed. An understanding of these fundamental areas of religion is necessary as it forms a foundation to develop a Psycho-Spiritual marriage counselling model.

7.2 DEFINITION

According to the *Webster's Dictionary* (1992), religion is defined as:

- The service and worship of God or the Supernatural.
- Commitment of religious faith or observance.
- A personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs and practices.

Berghe indicated that Religion is a driving force in most people's lives. In fact, according to Berghe (1997: 13) statistics revealed, with few exceptions, that about 80% of populations throughout the world have some sort of belief in God. Since religion is such a major player in most people's lives, it is not surprising to discover that religion also plays a large part in partner selection. When it comes to marriage, the religion of one's spouse is important and negotiable (as in the case of converts). Just as it is true of inter-racial and inter-cultural marriages, inter-religious marriages also take place and are prevalent in South Africa.

Inter-religious marriage speaks of marriage partners of different religion (Berghe 1997: 15). The people experience different cultures, customs, beliefs and attitudes in religion.

7.3 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Although inter-religious marriage are increasing most people still continue to marry within their own faith. The extent of inter-religious marriages in the United States depends to a greater extent on the particular religion or denomination being considered. Among the older Amish, mate

selection outside the group is virtually nonexistent. Inter-marriage among the various Protestant denominations seems to be quite common – usually one party often ‘converts’ after marriage (Kephart 1981: 236).

It should not be forgotten that Jews and Catholics represent minority religions in the United States, so that young people of both faiths are overexposed, statistically speaking, to the larger Protestant group. In certain areas the proportion of Catholics or Jews are so small that the forces of religious exogamy (marrying outside the group) have been almost irresistible. On the basis of available evidence, during the 1970s, Rosenthal estimated that in the United States approximately 30% of Jewish marriages are mixed and more than a third of Catholic marriages are mixed (Rosenthal 1979: 3).

According to more recent studies in the United States by Glen (1982: 61), 15% to 20% of all marriages are of inter-faith variety. About 18% of all Catholics marry non-Catholics, 11% of all Jews marry non-Jews and 7% of all Protestants marry non-Protestants.

7.4 RELIGIOUS VIEWS ON INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

The major religions of the world hold different views concerning exogamy. Generally, the Hindu religion and Islam do not prohibit inter-religious marriages. The case of Islam is different in some fundamental respects according to ‘Abd al ‘Ati. The general rule in Islam is that religious homogamy takes preference as the first choice, but it is not an absolute condition that mates belong to the same religion. However, Muslim woman is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man. According to the Talmudic law and the Rabbinic code, inter-religious marriage with all Gentiles, including Christians, was forbidden for the Jews. These marriages could not be solemnized by the religious rites of Judaism (‘Abd al ‘Ati 1977:137). The Holy Bible indicates that under no circumstances did Judaism permit inter-religious marriages. However, in the New Testament of the Bible, the Jewish Christians were exhorted by Peter to accept the Gentile Christians (Acts 10-11). Also in 11 Corinthians (6:14), Paul exhorted the Christians on marriage relationships: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”. However, the reality is that Christians do engage in inter-religious marriage unions. Adam (1977: 57) states that, today, there are many unhappy, unfulfilled marriages not only among non-Christians, but also among Christians.

Religion is considered as a complementary trait for marital stability. It is known to enhance marital companionship as individual spirituality can be shared, but is inhibited when couples have to look outside of the marriage for religious intimacy. Religion influences how children are educated and socialized, the formation of social relationships, formation of business and professional networks and even the choice of residence. As a consequence, households in which spouses differ in their preferences may enjoy reduced efficiency and may be characterized by greater conflict (Lehrer & Chiswick 1993: 386).

Despite the importance of religion in enhancing marital relationships, Moore (1996: 135) stated that the importance and influence of religion on marriage has been on the decline, throughout the twentieth century. Traditionally marriage was viewed as a holy institution and the bonds of matrimony sacred. The decline in religious influence means that people do not see marriage as a life-long commitment ordained by God. Hence, the stigma attached to marital breakdown has been considerably weakened.

Due to similar impacts during the twentieth century, Laswell (1991: 405) argued that it is not conclusive that marriages of different faith experience more failures than that of same religion marriages. Lehrer and Chiswick (1993: 399) in their study of 3060 marriages in the United States found no significant differences in the stability of naturally homogamous and conversionary marriages. The union involving a convert was significantly more stable than those who shared the same faith before marriage. The results suggest that differences between the spouses' religious background do not affect marital stability adversely if one of the partners convert in order to achieve homogamy. The emphasis is not on similarity in religious background that influenced stability but the religious compatibility between partners at the time of marriage and thereafter.

7.5 BIBLICAL DOCTRINES AND INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

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marriage, He made woman to complement man – one man for one woman and one woman for one man. The husband and wife are commanded to leave parents and cleave to each other. In this model there was no room for divorce.

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Christians believe that everyone have the freedom to choose a partner for life. However, in general, inter-religious marriages are forbidden. God’s blueprint for marriage is that of one man for one woman and partners should leave parents and cleave to each other and become “one flesh” (Matthew 19: 5-6).

7.5.1 The Biblical Doctrine of Mixed Marriages

The Israelites in the Old Testament had frequently been urged not to inter-marry with ‘heathen’ nations, especially with the Canaanites (Numbers 25: 6ff; Deuteronomy 7: 3). Inter-religious marriages were one of the great troubles of Ezra and Nehemiah after exiled Israel was restored (Ezra 9: 1ff; Nehemiah 13: 23ff). The strict Jew would, like Peter, think it unlawful to be mingled or have a relationship with someone from another nation (Acts 10: 28). Yet there are both in the Old and New Testament times, many cases of mixed marriages. The marriage of Timothy’s Greek father and Jewish mother is one such example mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 16: 1). Due to the Jewish culture, compliance to the culture and overt observance of the culture was necessary

for Timothy. Especially, since the Jews in those parts were aware that Timothy's father was a Greek, Paul ensured that Timothy was circumcised to gain acceptance and avoid any obstacles for propagating Christ to the Jews (16: 3). Dornbluth (2003: 2) conceded that according to Deuteronomy (7: 4) the non-Jewish father will wean the child away from their God and therefore it was concluded that the offspring of a Jewish mother be considered a Jew.

Marriage between a believer and an unbeliever is however forbidden: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6: 14). This verse is not only related to Marriage. In dealing with Christian marriage, Paul tolerates the union of Christians with heathen only when it has been entered into before conversion. In such a case, the parties should continue to live together if the unbelieving partner is willing to do so, unless the unbelieving mate makes it intolerable for them to serve God (1 Corinthians 7: 12-16). The reason given is not only the well-being of the non-Christian spouse, but also that of the children. Paul is suggesting that the ideal condition is that a Christian should marry another Christian in order to avoid any complications. There are many problems which may result in a mixed marriage (Christian and non-Christian). A mixed marriage seeks to join together two people who can never really belong to each other religiously speaking. For the Christian loves and serves God while the unbelieving mate does not. If the Christian continues to serve God, they will always live in two different worlds. Jesus said when you marry "the two shall become one flesh" (Matthew 19: 5). How can this be in a mixed marriage when the Christian serves the Lord and his or her unbelieving mate does not? The children in a mixed marriage may get hurt in one way or other. The children may be forced to choose sides between the two people who are dearest to them. Often the children are left to decide which religion (father's or the mother's) they may follow. In many cases, the non-Christian mate insists the children go to his or her church. A Christian parent is commanded to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" - trained in ways of the Lord (Ephesians 6: 4 and <http://www.truthmag.seekyeyelist.net/1971>).

Dively (1971: 7) disclosed that it is best if Christians do not marry those who are not Christians. Christians are to be sanctified from other people, holy unto God. Paul continued in 11 Corinthians (6: 15) to state: "For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness? Or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" In the early days of Christianity there was but "one faith" (Ephesians 4: 5) spoken of in the New Testament as the

common salvation (Jude 3). All those who refused to embrace the “one faith” were called “unbelievers”, and the Lord forbade Christians to marry them.

However, Christians are not prohibited to marry into another culture or race provided that the partner is a Christian – the opposite scenario may expose couples to religious and cultural challenges that may require great tolerance and compromise for the relationship and marriage to endure (Barkley 2008: 3). According to the Bible Paul states that every believer in Christ is equal and one:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3: 28).

7.5.2 The Biblical Model of Marriage

7.5.2.1 Deterioration of the Original “Marriage” Union

Scripture teaches that marriage is not a mere human institution, but something God established from the foundation of the world. According to the Bible God ordained marriage. He made woman complement man – one man for one woman and one woman for one man. Man and woman were created for each other (Barkley 2008: 2). In Genesis 2: 24 it is absolutely clear: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Jesus confirmed in Matthew (19: 5) this Old Testament verse and stated it to be His concept of marriage: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh”.

This is marriage as God originally instituted it and as Christ affirmed it. According to the stories in the Old Testament many kings took to themselves many wives, without the consent of God and in spite of His prohibition in Deuteronomy (17:17) which states: “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away . . .”

According to Dively (1971: 4) some Christians have moved away from the original doctrine of marriage union and engaged in mixed marriages. In mixed marriages there is always a danger of the Christian forsaking Christ and His Church. Statistics have proven that the majority of Christians in a mixed marriage leave the Church. In the mixed marriage where the Christian does not leave the church, great harm may result.

In the Mosaic age God also forbade His people from marrying those who were not among the chosen (Deuteronomy 7: 14), “Because they will turn them away from following God”.

7.5.2.2 Why Did God Institute Marriage?

First, marriage was God’s means for the propagation of humanity as He created them male and female. God blessed them and informed them to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1: 27-28).

Zodhiates (1992: 42) stated that the relationship between husband and wife is the only way, God intended for children to be born into this world, not one man with several women, but one man with one woman. Sexual union alone does not constitute marriage, but the union of a male and a female with God’s blessing is the only divinely approved context of the exercise of sex.

The function of marriage as instituted by God is to help each other. This is clear in Genesis (2: 18):

“And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet for him.”

This companionship is for life, while the companionship of a child-parent relationship is temporary (Genesis 2: 24).

An additional duty is bound upon believers to marry only in the Lord. Paul in 1 Corinthians (7:39) disclosed that a Christian widowed woman is at liberty to be married to whom she will but only in the Lord. Paul also states that: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness (11 Corinthians 6: 14)?”

In the New Testament Christians are new creations in Christ, healed of sin and its effects. Marriage is also recreated and made new in Christ. Jesus tells us that in the Kingdom of God the permanent union of husband and wife that God originally intended can once more be realized (Matthew 19: 6-11). By the grace of the Holy Spirit, husbands and wives can now truly love and honour one another. Paul tells us in (Ephesians 5: 25-26) that marriage bears witness to the

indissoluble love of Christ for His Church. Thus, husbands should love their wives, “even as Christ loved the church and handed Himself over to the Church to sanctify Her”. Wives are also called to love their husbands as the Church loves Christ (Ephesians 5: 22-23). The Old Testament also shows how God taught His people to revere once more the institution of marriage. The prophets helped the people see that God had not intended husband and wife to be separated (Hosea 1: 3). The song of Solomon shows how the love of a man and a woman mirrors God’s love for His people (<http://www.forvourmarriage.org/interior>).

7.5.2.3 Biblical Perspective on Divorce

A basic reason for the current misunderstanding of the Biblical teaching of divorce is the change of the terminology used. The word ‘divorce’ as used today did not exist in olden times. Today divorce means the official declaration by a judge that a marriage performed either by a practitioner of religion or an empowered authority of the government has become legally dissolved. When a judge grants a divorce, there may be total freedom of one from the other, or the judge may impose certain conditions. He may adjure that properties commonly held be divided according to a certain percentage. He may demand that alimony be paid by the husband to support the wife and any existing children (Zodhiates 1992: 45).

Chinitz (2001:121) stated that with the heathen, divorce was the easiest possible thing; it was open to a husband or to a wife to terminate the marriage at will. It was not much better for the Jews, although there was a difference of opinion among the Rabbis. Some held that a man could put away his wife for every cause, interpreting the unseemly thing of Deuteronomy (24:1) as anything for which a husband may dislike his wife. Others held that the husband could give his wife a bill of divorcement only if she were guilty of adultery, interpreting “the unseemly thing” in a strict sense.

It was usually the husband who dismissed the wife in Biblical times. It was not a matter to be adjured by a judge of a state. The reason for this was that marriage as such was not a matter of civil authorization, but the recognition of the families or tribes or the society concerned. When a husband wanted to dismiss his wife for any reason, no one could hinder him from doing it; he simply sent her away. This sending away in the New Testament is expressed by the words: “to put away” and “to send away” (Zodhiates 1992: 46).

Zohiates continued to state that in Biblical times, if a person was said to be divorced or had a bill of divorcement in her hands, which meant she was innocent and free to marry. If she was merely dismissed without a certificate of divorce, then she could belong to one of two categories. First, she could be guilty of unfaithfulness to her husband in which case her husband did not have to give her divorce papers, or she could be innocent but because her husband did not give her divorce papers, she was considered guilty. The only thing that such an innocent wife could do in the latter case was to exercise the freedom to remarry denied to her by her guilty and unscrupulous husband, but inherently provided to her by a just God.

7.5.2.4 Marriage in Christianity

The Biblical doctrines are applicable and may be observed for all types of marriages in Christianity: hence, observance of the doctrines can make marriage relationships fruitful, healthy and successful.

Compton (1992: 219) stated that Christianity began a new epoch in the history of marriage. The changes, which it introduced, were due partly to the express enactment by Christ and His apostles and partly to the obvious implications of fundamental Christian principles. The Christian system involved the adoption of monogamy and the prohibition of polygamy and bigamy (Matthew 19: 4 – 5).

Duties of the married state were also revised in the spirit of Christianity. Under this spirit of Christianity, the husband is instructed to love his wife as himself (Zodhiates 1992: 27). Paul says in Ephesians (5:28): “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”

The husband’s love for his wife is further likened to the love of Christ for His Church (Ephesians 5: 25). In Colossians 3:19 Paul admonishes: “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”

Chinitz (2001: 124) indicated that the duties of a wife, in spite of the improvement of the status of women, which Christianity brought about, continued to be developed from the presupposition of her subordination and were summed up, not in love, but in obedience. But this obedience is in response to the husband’s love. Her subordination is not blind submission but rather the

recognition that she is physically the weaker vessel who finds protection and fulfillment under the care of the stronger spouse, her husband. Thus in Ephesians (5:22) it states: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”

In verse 25 he continues “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” The husband must not take advantage of the wife’s physically weaker position but be willing to give himself in protecting her. This Biblical doctrine also is applicable not only to normal marriages but also inter-religious marriages and even inter-cultural marriages.

In 1 Peter (3: 6) the Apostle Peter made reference to the wives submitting to their own husbands even if any of them are disobedient to the ‘word’ (Biblical doctrines), in other words according to the Christian terms, they are ‘unsaved’. Peter indicates that the behaviour of their wives may win the unsaved husband to Christ or lose them to remain as they are. He further emphasizes that the behaviour of the wife must portray Christ. If the husband is unsaved, it’s no use ‘bashing him on the head’ with the Gospel. Once they’ve heard the truth, it’s time for the wife to keep quiet about it and win him over with her behaviour and love. When wives find themselves faced with this challenge, it is often observed that the wives will be nagging and bashing the husbands over the head with Scriptures and hence provoking and offending them with the Gospel ([http://www.researchmaterial/Christian submission.htm/2005](http://www.researchmaterial/Christian%20submission.htm)).

Christianity included various elements which tended to elevate and indeed revolutionize the woman’s position in contrast to the attitude of the previous ages, especially the fact that in the spiritual sphere she was on the same platform as the man, being redeemed by the same Saviour, saved by the same faith, and destined to the same everlasting inheritance (Zodhiates 1992: 31).

Compton (1992: 124) stated that Paul does not imply that a man and a woman were created equal or are to be treated equally as far as their bodies and their physical endurance are concerned. God made them different, each filling a special role in life and work. Even in the marriage union they are not to be regarded as equal partners. The one complements the other simply because they are unequal. God made all things and people different. I Corinthians (4: 7) assert this point: “For who maketh thee to differ from another? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”

The man and woman are created to fully complement each other. This is made clear in 1 Corinthians (11: 11): “Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”

On the above backdrop on the status of a husband and wife and how they should function in a marriage, inter-faith marriages in the Bible are discouraged due to the added challenges that are introduced through inter-religious marriages. However, there are a number of marriages between an Israelite and a non-Israelite. The marriages of the patriarchs cannot be considered inter-religious, as there were not yet any ‘Jewish’ women to marry. It is true that even for the first Hebrews it was considered to marry members of the same nation and the Bible disapproves of Esau and Judah, who married Canaanites instead. Joseph is recorded as marrying an Egyptian woman, but the adoption of his sons by his father ensured their place among the Hebrews (<http://www.halfjewish.org/biblicalintermarriage/2005>).

Kornbluth (2003: 7) stated that Boaz the son of Naomi married Ruth the Moabite and Ruth converted to Judaism as she stated to Naomi in Ruth (1: 16): “Your God will be my God.” King Solomon had 700 wives who were non-Hebrew and also influenced Solomon in their pagan practices. This led to the destruction of Solomon’s Kingdom, especially under Solomon’s son Rehobah.

Shemtov (2006: 35) disclosed that some liberal Christians believe that they have the freedom to choose any partner to marry. They use 1 Corinthians (7: 12-14) for their freedom to marry, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband.”

However, based on 2 Corinthians (6: 14) and Deuteronomy (7:3) as indicated earlier, in general Christians are not supposed to marry an unbeliever or convert not only for losing their salvation but also due to the religious concerns. In Catholicism, a catholic may marry another, if this person becomes catholic. They must however agree to raise the children in a Catholic way. The Marriages between a Catholic and an unbaptized person is not allowed without permission from the Church. (<http://www.intermarriages.htm/2007>).

Hater (2008: 1) indicated that over 40 percent of couples married in the Catholic Church are of “mixed” religions. Until recent decades, the idea of a Catholic marrying outside the faith was

practically unheard of, if not taboo. Such weddings took place in private ceremonies in the parish rectory, not in a church sanctuary in presence of hundreds of friends and family. These days, an increasing number of people marry across religious lines. He goes on to say that because of the challenges that arise when a Catholic marries someone of a different religion, the church doesn't encourage the practice, but it does try to support inter-religious couples and help them prepare to meet those challenges with a spirit of holiness. "To regard inter-religious marriages negatively does them a disservice."

7.5.2.5 *God's Rules for a Successful Marriage*

The first rule is the recognition of monogamy – a marriage relationship between one man and one woman. According to the Bible God created Adam and Eve with their special and complementary characteristics for procreation and mutual care and satisfaction. The second rule is God's blueprint for marriage (Adams 1977: 37). God's blueprint will become more explicit in the following discussions: The discussion that follows is applicable to all marriages: inter-religious and inter-cultural marriages.

- *God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to leave their fathers and mothers:* "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife" (Matthew 19: 5).

According to Zodhiates (1992: 45), the above text does not mean abandon or utterly forsake and does not necessitate a great geographical change. It is possible, although perhaps more difficult, to leave father and mother and still live next door. Likewise it is possible to live a thousand miles away from parents and not leave them. In fact, one may not have left one's parents even though they are dead.

Adams (1977: 58) indicated that to leave parents means that the relationship to parents must be radically changed:

- It means that one must be more concerned about one's mate's ideas, opinions, and practices than the parents'.
- It means that one must not be slavishly dependent on one's parents for affection, approval, assistance, and counsel.

- It means that one must eliminate any bad attitudes towards one's parents, or else one will be emotionally tied to them regardless of how far one move from them.
- It means that one must stop trying to change one's mate simply because one's parents don't like him or her, the way he or she is.
- It means that the husband and wife relationship is the priority human relationship.

In Compton's discussion (1992: 132) he stated that all members of a family should be concerned about being a good son/daughter or mother/father, but more concerned about being a good husband/wife than about being a good son/daughter or father/mother. Children do not need indulgent parents who continually neglect each other. They need parents who will demonstrate how to face and solve problems. A parent's goal should be to prepare children to leave, not to stay. The parent's life must not rotate or be wrapped around their children as this may cause children to become emotional cripples.

Compton (1992: 133) continued to emphasize that parents should be preparing themselves for the day their children leave by cultivating common interests, learning to do things together, and deepening the friendship with each other. However, when the children have married, the parents must not try to run their lives. The husbands must not be hindered from performing their duty as head of the house. In decision-making the husband must look to his wife as his primary responsibility and helper. Parents must encourage their daughter to depend upon her husband, and not them, for guidance, help, companionship, and affection.

- *God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to cleave to one another.*

When they get married the couple vow to be faithful until death. Some have suggested that they should have to renew their marriage license every year even as the automobile license. For them, marriage is a matter of convenience, of chance, and may be very temporary. But, this is not the way God planned it. God planned for a permanent relationship where the husband and wife cleave to one another. A Christian has to follow the way God planned it. A marriage is not a matter of chance, but choice. It is not merely a matter of convenience, but obedience. It is a matter of how much the partners are willing and determined to work at their marriage (Adams 1977: 58).

Zodhiates (1992: 218) said that a good marriage is based more on commitment than feeling or

physical attraction. According to Malachi 2:14 and Proverbs 2:17, marriage is an irrevocable covenant or contract to which, partners are bound. Therefore, when two people get married they promise that they will be faithful to each other regardless of what happens.

Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full responsibility; in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise. In many ways getting married is like becoming a Christian. When a person becomes a Christian he or she leaves his or her former way of life, his self-righteousness, his or her own efforts to save himself or herself and turns to Christ, who died in the place and instead of sinners. In this act of turning to Christ, the individual commits himself or herself to Christ. The very essence of saving faith is a personal commitment to Christ in which a person promises to trust Christ faithfully and completely and to serve Christ faithfully and diligently of how he or she feels or what problems arise. Just so, God's kind of marriage involves a total and irrevocable commitment of two people to each other. God's kind of marriage involves cleaving to one another in sickness and health, poverty and wealth, pleasure and pain, good times and bad times, agreements and disagreements. God's kind of marriage means that people know that they must face problems, discuss them, seek God's help in them, resolve them rather than run from them, because there is no way out. They are committed to one another for life (Adams 1977: 60).

- *God's blueprint for marriage involves becoming one flesh.* In the Bible, Matthew (19:6) states: "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh ..."

Two human beings were originally created from one. God first created Adam, a male and then took one of his ribs and created a wife for him. She was flesh of his flesh (Genesis 2: 21-25). As two emerged out of one, so in marriage through God's creative power, two human beings, a man and a woman, become "one flesh" (Zodhiates 1992: 238).

According to Adams' (1977: 60) discussion becoming one flesh involves more than the sexual act. Indeed, the marriage act is the symbol or culmination of a more complete oneness. The marriage act is a symbol of a total oneness, of a total giving of oneself to another person. Consequently, if the more complete oneness is not a reality, sexual relations lose their meaning.

Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death. God's intention is that when two people get married they share everything – their bodies,

their possessions, their insights, their ideas, their abilities, their problems, their successes, their sufferings, their failures, etc. (Graham 1984: 72). A husband and wife are a team and whatever either of them does must be for the sake of the other person or at least it must not be to the detriment of the other person. Each must be as concerned about the other person's needs as he or she is about their own (Adams 1977: 61).

7.6 MATE SELECTION AND DATING

Most South Africans select mates of the same religious background. The belief in the norm of marrying within one's religion is reflected in the dating patterns of young people, for the evidence indicates that dating within the religion is the preferred pattern of behaviour (Bell 1967: 142). Bell continued to state that a similarity of religious background means a similarity in many beliefs and patterns of life. Therefore, to say that people come from the same religious background implies more than a similarity of religious beliefs. Yet, even though the religious affiliation is the same, the religious involvement of individuals can vary greatly. Wide differences in intensity of religion may indicate an area of conflict for the two individuals.

According to Barnett (1963: 626), concerns over mate selection across racial lines is often provoked by attitudes of prejudice and discrimination, rather than by the actual frequency of the event. While feelings of racial prejudice probably account for a majority of individuals not marrying outside the racial group, other factors also operate. When individuals cross the lines of race in mate selection, they often encounter extreme difficulties in developing a satisfactory marriage relationship. Many times the individuals find themselves rejected by relatives and friends on both sides. Even though the problems are great in an inter-racial marriage, it may be that an increasing number of persons who enter such marriages are entering them with the motivations and abilities to make a success of the marriage.

Inter-faith mate selection and dating differ from inter-racial marriage in that it is much more common, and social criticism of it is much less severe. Religious prejudice often enters into the shaping of attitudes towards other religions, particularly when it is related to the intimate relationship of marriage (Bell 1967: 150). Probably, only a limited number of individuals who enter mixed religious marriages do so deliberately from the start. In most cases, what begins as a

relationship of a nonromantic nature, move over into romance and mate selection. Mayers (1961: 83) makes the following comments, which are applicable to many inter-religious marriages:

The emotional vulnerability of the individual to others is not constant and will vary with different situations. At a particular time, a person may be in need of affection and support and, if someone offers him this he may be strongly drawn to the donor. When the donor has a different religion, the relationship that develops may be stronger than the negative force of the religious difference. In many relationships, as the emotional attachment intensifies, the two individuals spend more and more time with each other. As a result, they are increasingly cut off from other influences, which may lead them to become more and more dependent upon each other.

7.7 WHY INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES?

7.7.1 Search for Completion

In one of his meditations on love in *The Symposium*, Plato, the Greek philosopher, wrote about the myth that in the beginning we were never alone because we were each whole unto ourselves. Our ancestors were not human, as we know them, but were beings that incorporated both male and female. Then the cataclysm occurred. The gods split each into two and created man and woman. We have been condemned to wander the world, searching for our lost halves to complete ourselves, ever since (cited in Crohn 1995: 43).

Many psychologists have used this story as a metaphor to describe the hunger for fusion with another person and the preoccupation with the idea of a single unique soul mate. One potential mate after another is rejected when a relationship reveals, as it always does, a flaw. Some form of this search is crucial to our development. Each person is incomplete, and all can grow from intimacy with another who has traits and abilities that complement our own. From another perspective, love results not from the unlikely luck of finding the right one but from working hard to create a real love with another imperfect being (Brown & Montague 1992: 44).

Frame, Williams and Green (1999: 182) indicated that many of their subjects in inter-marriage were very aware of their attraction to others from distinctly different cultures before they met their partners. Some had very specific cultural preferences, while others were attracted to a group of cultures. But they rarely felt that their choice of a cross-cultural spouse was an accident. For a variety of reasons people from other cultures seemed to offer something missing in their own. Choosing a partner from another culture can represent a search for completion and wholeness.

Crohn (1995) stated that, while some people use inter-religious marriage to improve their social or economic standing, the motives that lead most people who choose a partner from another cultural group are far more complex and less materialistic. One religious group, Baha’I, a universalistic religion founded in the late nineteenth century by Baha’ a’ llah, an Iranian, actually encourages racial and cultural inter-marriage to further their goals of creative and life-enhancing genetic, cultural and spiritual cross-fertilization.

7.7.2 Range of Motives

There is seldom a single motive as to why people find partners from outside their religion and culture. Some of the following motives may have attracted partners.

7.7.2.1 The Power of Positive Stereotypes

Brown and Montague (1992: 48) indicated that positive images of men or women in some cultural groups sometimes lead to the creation of mixed marriages and relationships.

- “Black men are studs.”
- “Jewish and Asian men are good providers and loyal husbands.”

While these alluring images, some based on partial truths, others on wishful fantasy, are part of what motivates some marriages, they often do not fit with the reality of peoples’ actual experiences. Even when people more or less fit into a positive stereotype of their group, they can feel constricted and limited by it. Even the most positive and exciting stereotypes, when rigidly applied, become burdensome and limiting over time.

7.7.2.2 A Struggle with Identity

According to Crohn (1995: 50) *ambivalent identification* is when a strong preference for partners from outside of one’s group is combined with an intense dislike of the opposite-sex members of one’s own cultural or racial group. They project the dominant culture’s negative stereotypes about their cultural group onto the opposite-sex members of their own group. The minority-group member is unconsciously saying:

The negative stereotypes about us are true – but they are only true of the opposite-sex members of my group. I don't like them for the same reasons you don't. But my half of the group is okay. Accept us (Crohn 1995: 51).

Brown and Montague (1992: 33) state the following.

The kind of struggle with identity could result from the tendency alternately to hate one's persecutors and to identify with them. Throughout the world people who have come to adapt western European and American images of beauty and power as their own, feel that their connection to their racial or cultural group somehow diminishes them. They have spent great amounts of time, energy, and money to change the contour of their faces, the colour of their skin, the sound of their names, and the rhythms of their speech. Blacks still spend millions of dollars a year straightening their hair, Jews continue to get nose jobs, and surgery to shape eyes to look more Caucasian is a growth industry in Japan and even in Communist China. And for some, marriage to an outsider represents the ultimate strategy in trying to erase the stigma of a minority identity.

7.7.2.3 Separation from Family

Some family theorists have focused on how inter-marriage is motivated by attempts to separate emotionally from dysfunctional families of origin. Jewish partners may be motivated to marry out in an attempt to separate and individuate from Jewish parents they saw as intrusive and controlling. The children who are stuck in propping up their parents' marriages use inter-marriage as a way to escape. Some people, by choosing a partner from another race or religion unacceptable to their parents, use their relationships as a way to distance themselves, emotionally or literally, from complicated and painful family situations (Berghe 1997: 73).

7.7.2.4 Balancing Individuals and Communal Styles

Crohn (1995: 54) indicated that one of the most commonly cited reasons for attraction across religious-ethnic-racial lines is the fascination between people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Individualistic cultures stress autonomy, self-realization, and personal initiative and decision-making. Collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, stress loyalty to the group and place a high value on the interconnectedness of family, community, and society. Many Americans of northern and western European descent, who were raised with individualistic cultural values, found them drawn to partners from more collective, communal cultures. They feel attracted to what seemed to be the warmth and caring of their partners' more interdependent personal and family

styles. Conversely many of the people from Latin American, southern and eastern European, African-American, and Asian backgrounds are drawn to the sense of autonomy and freedom that their cross-cultural partners seem to embody.

7.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the term religion has been defined as the service and worship of God or the Supernatural; commitment of religious faith or observance; and a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs and practices. Inter-religious marriage consists of partners of different religion and cultural practices.

The major religions of the world hold different views concerning exogamy. According to the Talmudic law and the Rabbinic code, inter-marriage with all Gentiles, including Christians, was forbidden for the Jews. However, the Biblical doctrines for marriage relationships are clearly stated in the Bible. In the New Testament of the Bible, the Jewish Christians were exhorted by Peter to accept the Gentile Christians. Paul exhorted the Christians on marriage relationships: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”. However, the reality is that Christians do engage in inter-religious marriage unions.

According to the Bible God created Adam and Eve with their special and complementary characteristics for the propagation of humanity and mutual care and satisfaction. God demonstrated a monogamous relationship and did not consider the term divorce. According to the Old Testament times a man could separate from his wife for any cause, especially adultery.

Christianity recognizes monogamy – a marriage relationship between one man and one woman. Polygamy and bigamy are strictly prohibited. God’s blueprint indicates that husbands and wives must leave parents and cleave to each other and they both become one flesh. In a Christian marriage the husband is instructed to love his wife and the wife to be in submission to the husband. They must also submit to one another.

A Christian has to follow the way God planned it. A marriage is not a matter of chance, but choice. It is not merely a matter of convenience, but obedience. It is a matter of how much the partners are willing and determined to work at their marriage. Marriage is an irrevocable covenant or contract to which partners are bound. Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full responsibility; in which they commit themselves to each

other regardless of what problems arise. Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.

Most South Africans choose partners of the same religion. The belief in the norm of marrying within one's religion is reflected in the dating patterns of young people, for the evidence indicates that dating within the religion is the preferred pattern of behaviour. When individuals cross the lines of religion or race in mate selection, they may encounter difficulties in developing a satisfactory marriage relationship.

Many psychologists describe mate selection as the hunger for fusion with another person (need for completion) and the preoccupation with the idea of a single unique soul mate. Each of us is incomplete, and we all can grow from intimacy with another who has traits and abilities that complement our own. For a variety of reasons people from other cultures seemed to offer something missing in their own. Choosing a partner from another culture can represent a search for completion and wholeness. There are many motives as to why people choose to marry across cultural and religious barriers.

It was discovered that according to the Old Testament of the Bible, the Jewish nation was forbidden from inter-marrying with 'heathen' nations and also during the early Christian era marriage to an unbeliever was strictly forbidden. Yet there was, both in the Old and New Testament times, many cases of mixed marriages. However, Christians are not prohibited to marry into another culture or race provided that the partner is a Christian. According to the Bible Paul states that, every believer in Christ is equal and one.

A Christian has to follow the way God planned it. A marriage is not a matter of chance, but choice. It is not merely a matter of convenience, but obedience. It is a matter of how much the partners are willing and determined to work at their marriage. Marriage is an irrevocable covenant or contract to which partners are bound. Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full responsibility; in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise. Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.

Against this background the next chapter will focus on the empirical research and challenges that inter-religious relationships bring to the inter-religious marriage.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Marriage and inter-religious marriages may bring together Christians, Muslims, and Hindus in an inter-faith marriage relationship. Such unions need to be examined with regard to the challenges and potential rewards of practicing two faiths in one household and the raising of children in such households.

If there are already great challenges that couples from the same religion face, one can imagine the experiences one has to confront in an inter-religious marriage relationship – a double dose of differences to deal with, especially in religion and culture.

Crohn (1995: 3) indicates that culture guides and shapes how we interpret actions and feelings. Even subtle cultural contrasts between two people can lead each to see the same event in very different ways.

Love never remains a secluded island for long, and the outside world inevitably has a powerful impact on the private inner world of love. Negative family reactions can short-circuit passion, and prejudice and social intolerance can strain the best of relationships. Couples have to overcome their religious differences with their diverse beliefs, rituals and ceremonious activities. The absence of shared rituals and traditions can add additional stresses and strains to the already stresses and strains of modern marriages. Also the birth of children exposes whatever religious or cultural loyalties have been minimized for the sake of new love. The identity crisis of children that may arise in such inter-religious families also has to be resolved (Sungs 1990: 349).

Inter-religious marriage is the ultimate challenge to religious continuity, and partners from different backgrounds can feel torn by the conflicting demands of love and tradition. Inter-religious married couples have to deal with their religious identities and religious traditions. The practice of religion is inseparable from the life of a community. Family loyalty, cultural identity and religious belief are intertwined as each reinforces the other, and gives a person a clear sense of belonging and identity (Crohn 1995: 9).

In the research that will be discussed in this chapter, some light will be shed on the challenges inter-religious couples face as well as how couples and families have found ways to build bridges across their religious differences and culturally-based contrasts. Also from the successful inter-religious marriage, we shall get some tools and skills. These will be mentioned to show how couples dealt with their conflicts. Some answers to the following questions will be provided:

- How do inter-married couples reconcile emotionally charged loyalties to different religious identities and religious traditions which may include ethnic differences?
- How do partners in a mixed religious marriage match and negotiate their cultural and religious differences?
- Which holidays do they decide to celebrate?
- How do they instill a sense of identity in their children?
- Which religion do they practice?

The empirical research will focus on interviews to draw answers to the key questions of this research and to ensure that the objectives are achieved. The questions have been designed to understand the intricacies of inter-religious marriages and to examine the counselling necessary for couples to deal constructively with their challenges.

8.2 INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES AND TRADITIONS

Inter-religious marriage is no more a taboo though it is still one of the great spiritual challenges to the religionists. For example, although inter-religious marriages between Christian-Hindu, Christian-Muslim and Muslim-Hindu or Jewish-Hindu take place, there are some hitches presented in certain quarters who claim that their religion is the only truth and that the other's is in darkness. Religious leaders may discourage inter-faith lovers from marrying each other and are often very cynical when inter-marriage fails (Tan 2001-2002).

In the past, in general, due to the difficulties of practicing two religions in one household, couples chose to observe neither religion, but today many find that it is interesting to practice two faiths in one family which is worth the pain and struggle. In such situations, the couples participate in both traditions (Comfort 1996: 1).

Inter-religious mate selection and dating require strong religious tolerance. Actor Shahrukh Khan showed that love has no religious bounds. The writer in the *Sunday Times* (1 August 2004: 7) states that Khan (Muslim religion) and his wife Gauri (Hindu religion) practice Islam and Hinduism equally in their home.

In Chinitz's (2001: 723) discussion on inter-religious marriages, he indicates that in some instances in the past couples tended to choose to raise their children in one faith. One spouse have been more involved in his or her faith than the other; one spouse may have converted to the other's religion; in some rare instances, the two chose as a family to participate in a third, neutral tradition. Often the family chose the easiest path: observing no religion at all. This is changing in that inter-religious couples may insist on retaining some of his or her faith traditions and passing them on to their children. Now, however, couples are seeking out new options that allow them to share two faith traditions in one household and immerse their children in both traditions.

It is now time to report on the empirical research on inter-religious marriages, especially in the South African context during the transformation process into the new South Africa.

8.3 DATA GATHERING

This discourse is included at this juncture of the research, primarily to disclose as to the procedures adapted to gather data.

A descriptive qualitative research design was utilized as information was not available previously. While descriptive research is essentially concerned with conditions as they are, it involves much more than fact gathering. It has been used to discover the cause and the effect to relationships together with the interpretation of the data. The participants selected are from inter-religious and in some cases inter-cultural marriages. However, whether inter-cultural or inter-religious the cultural aspect is inevitable in both instances as the cultural issues are intertwined with the religious.

A convenient research sample was chosen of inter-religious marriages. The interviews and completion of the designed questionnaires have targeted a selective sample of 27 individuals who were identified and live in South Africa. These respondents were referred to me by colleagues and they willingly volunteered to participate. The researcher wish to state that, if these respondents

were not referred by colleagues, then it would have been quite difficult to find suitable respondents who would willingly agree to be interviewed, since they would have to divulge personal and private information. Also, normal marriage counselling in itself is of a very sensitive nature. Interviews and counselling of inter-religious marriages would be even more so.

Some of the interviewees live in the North West Province and others are from KwaZulu-Natal. Since the focus of this dissertation is on the Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths, most of the marriages are from these Religions. However, some of the individuals were from inter-cultural marriages, especially marriages and relationships between White and Coloured and also between African and Coloured. Initially some of the individuals were reluctant to co-operate but through much persuasion and promise of confidentiality, they consented to be interviewed or complete the questionnaire. They were also promised that this interview was anonymous and that their names would not be mentioned in this research or in any other format. Therefore, in order to avoid repercussions, fictitious names have been used in the feedback and analysis of this empirical research. Initially, the respondents were approached at their homes or at a suitable venue and briefed with details pertaining to this research. Meetings were arranged with each consenting individual at their earliest convenient time. Some of the respondents refused an interview but consented to complete forms in their convenient time but deliberately excluded their personal details.

The interviews were of an informal nature. The questions were structured into four categories, namely, demographics and background; experience of inter-religious and inter-cultural marriage; experience of challenges; and experience of coping. Different types of questions, for example, direct, open ended and leading questions were used as the focus was to obtain answers that will enable the researcher to clear all doubts about the challenges that are inevitable in inter-religious marriages. The main purposes of this empirical research was to gain empirical data that could feed into the developing of a relevant psycho-spiritual marriage counselling model for these kinds of marriages. The researcher starts off with an interview with a community counsellor, which is significant in its own right.

8.3.1 Interview with Community Counsellor

The interviewee (White European female), a university graduate, completed a masters degree in Religion and is married to a Muslim Indian. The main objective of this interview was to firstly

understand and gain clarity of the relevant issues, experiences and challenges surrounding the interviewee, a Christian who married a Muslim and converted to Islam. Secondly in understanding how she overcame her challenges would contribute to the development of a counselling model for inter-religious marriage and that would assist counselors, not only in South Africa but in all religious communities. The discourse with the interviewee also drove me in the direction of developing a Psycho-Spiritual counselling model.

The interview with the community counsellor was prompted by the fact that she has completed a Masters research degree in a related area in Religion. The fact that she is a lecturer within the Muslim women's organization called 'Islamic Guidance', which provides education in the Qur'an and Hadith for Muslim women, especially to new Muslim converts, has also motivated this interview. Due to its educational focus, Muslim women find it very beneficial, especially women from other religions marrying Muslim men. The interview proceeded with the following questions and answers.

Question one: What is the main purpose of 'Islamic Guidance'?

She indicated that 'Islamic Guidance' assists women to become more informed about Islam. The group also provides support for women with regard to how they function within Islam and how they function as the wife and mother in a Muslim household. The group is also multi-racial, multi-cultural and includes women from inter-religious relationships.

For many Muslim women, the 'Islamic Guidance group' only becomes important when they have born children. When the children arrive, the mother normally realizes that since she is the primary care taker, she is also the one mainly responsible for the religious and moral cultivation of the children. It is only if she can serve as example that she can take up the task of teaching her son and daughter. For instance, it is not easy to pray five times a day – it takes time – but one cannot expect it of your son, if you yourself do not practice it. One has to also assist the son in his performance at Madressa, etc. If this support is not there, it can be very detrimental to the son.

It is important for women to join a group such as the 'Muslim Guidance group' both for education and support. In addition, women and men should be encouraged to learn as much as they can from the spouse's background, culture and religion. An ardent reader can make an important contribution

to the union at this level. One should not only gain knowledge through reading, through the group, but also through talking to and discussing matters with one's husband (and vice versa). One's partner should be one's 'good friend' and one should often use him (or her) 'to bounce things off' one another and not hold back or suppress matters. The group is good and fulfills an important need, because women do not have any place to go to for counselling on such matters. None of the Muslim organizations provide counselling services, e.g. IPCA, and Batel Nur. Some individual Muslim leaders are also very conservative and do not deal with the matter of inter-religious marriage. The problem with Imams is also that they are not well trained in this area, if at all.

Question two: Briefly disclose the fundamental truth that you observed from the women's group relative to inter-religious marriage.

The community counsellor stated that when a woman from a different religion marries a Muslim man, problems normally arise, as it is she who has to adapt to the *culture* of the Muslim husband. This normally causes some tensions with the family of the husband. In principle, it is the woman who has to change and adapt because of the fact that '*she is a woman*'. What is significant is that the tensions in this relationship are mainly derived from cultural and not religious differences. For instance, if a Durban African Muslim man marries a Malawian African woman, there is not much cultural tension, since both intuitively practice and subscribe to what can be broadly labeled as 'African culture'. However, if a white, westernized woman marries an Indian Muslim man, it is expected of her to become part of and practice Indian culture – i.e. in addition to becoming Muslim. And it is on this level rather than religion that most of the tensions (and conflicts) arise – also issues of racial difference. However, gender difference also plays a role, because it is expected of the woman to change and adapt and not the man.

On the level of *religion*, tensions may also arise because of the gender issue, namely that the woman has to convert to Islam – 'because *she is a woman*'. If Muslim women marry a Christian or Hindu man, it is not normally expected of her to convert. It is also the case that Middle-Eastern Muslim women who marry Americans, are not expected to convert. Even if this is the case, and even if women keep their own faith and religion, it is important to convert or at least practice as a Muslim, especially for the sake of children born out of the union. An additional gender issue facing non-Indian women marrying Muslim men is that they might marry more than one wife, or at least would not be prevented from doing so according to Islam. This would generate additional tension.

Question three: Does the generation gap between parents and children have any influence on inter-religious marriage?

Her understanding is that in terms of the generation gap between children and parents, it has been a prevalent common occurrence in that, as children are growing up, they revolt against parents because of these cultural and religious tensions. They would not consider the possibilities of future conflict that these two areas of potential conflict hold in their cross-cultural and religious relationships which is evident in both the Church and Mosque. In this situation, however, a general observation is that 'Islam has stood its ground' and maintained its stance on inter-religious marriage.

Question four: Describe some challenges (issues) related to rituals and cultural practices in inter-religious marriages.

According to the community counsellor there is not much tension in these areas in Islam, because the requirements are fairly explicitly spelled out and the same is required by all, irrespective of whether one has grown up as a Muslim or not. Under these issues, for the newly converted Muslim wife, one may identify *the learning of cleanliness* (purity issues); prayers; and the related 14 Arabic verses from the Qur'an as the basic and easy part. The *Ramadaan* fast is very difficult not only for new converts but also for Muslims by birth – hunger and thirst during the day and the lack of sleep at night. One experiences how the energy seeps out of one and after thirty days, one is totally exhausted and depleted. The basic step to become a Muslim convert and faithfully practice and fulfill these requirements, are easy ... the difficult part is the transformation and long-term commitment – which takes one's whole life.

In respect to the nature of cultural conflict and tensions in distinction to religious conflict in inter-cultural marriages, the community counsellor disclosed that once one has converted to Islam, one finds that it is not adherence to religious requirements and spirituality, but cultural requirements and expectations which cause the most stresses and strains. The challenge was that the expectation was not about being a good Muslim wife, but a good Indian wife – it is very stressful if one does not come from Indian culture with regard to:

- Fashion (clothing/ dress); and

- Cuisine (food and beverages).

For example, does one make a good Indian biryani and wear a *Punjabi* and a *black kabaai* at some significant occasions at least? This is difficult in Western context where in North Africa and Australia amongst other cultures, women wear clothing with bright colours. This is all difficult for a woman brought up in a European family and Western culture, with Western food and clothing. After five years the Community Counsellor found out that: firstly, she did not have to do all these things because it was not observed strictly in Islamic cultures elsewhere; and that many requirements and expectations are culture specific and not specific to Islam.

Against the above backdrop, Islam's strong doctrines – which all come from the Qur'an and Hadith – are all to be applied, but they are subject to interpretations which lead to differences of the interpretation of the basic rules, different forms of legitimization, as well as in the end different Islamic-based practices and local cultural distinctions. In principle, people distinguish between the modernists; the conservatives; the traditionalists; and the feminists. The question is not that different people deviate from the Qur'an and Hadith, but how they interpret the scriptures and how to support their views from the Qur'an and Hadith.

One important distinction is that for the conservatives, women only read at home, whereas modernists also read at the Mosque. In addition, concerning different interpretations, different people use different texts and focus only on those texts that support their views. Another alternative is that every saying also belongs to a particular context and to a specific time – which may bring about different interpretations of seemingly conflicting sayings. In this latter case, this is also a strategy which may be used to challenge interpretations that are too strict in following rules, but are not informed enough concerning differences of interpretation derived from place and time. For example, in some areas, when a woman menstruates, it is required that she even washes where she walked expecting 'clean' footsteps – which is not required by the Qur'an or the Hadith.

Question five: How do Muslim Husbands react to family celebrations of significant annual ceremonies and rituals in the spouse's religion?

Her response was that in general, Muslim men allow for this, especially for children born out of a union with a Westernized, Christian woman – e.g. the celebration of Christmas and Easter with the

wife's parents and family. Some men, however, do not allow this, not even contact with the wife's family but much of this is on cultural and not religious level. There are nevertheless always tensions with regard to family visits in this regard on the cultural level.

Question six: How does inter-religious marriage impact on children?

She disclosed that this is a big issue in multi-religious marriages and families. A Muslim household is in general very strict and rigid. So, in any relationship, one needs to assess how rigid a husband is, because it will impact on the quality and nature of the marriage (and extended family) relations, and by default on the children. Children experience secular relations at school and are exposed to the fact that other children engage in activities that Muslim children may not. Hence, this draws a vivid line between them and others in the class or age group. Girls are not permitted to 'sleep over' at friends houses for instance. However, some leeway may be allowed at a friend's house where there are no boys in the other family.

Question seven: What were your observations on women marrying Muslim men and converting to Islam?

The community counsellor indicated that most Christian women converting to Islam come from Catholic backgrounds. On the one hand, they may be more open to marriage of someone from a different religion. On the other hand, many of the rituals and other requirements are similar in practice across the Catholic faith and Islam, e.g. prayer beads, the rigid following of liturgies, etc. On the level of family visits, however, Muslim men often prevents visits by the Christian family to the Muslim household on the basis that they consume alcohol, and eat pork.

Most women change their names to a Muslim name after conversion. Women need to be alerted to the fact that they do not really have to change their name. However, they may choose to change their name if her current name does not have a nice meaning. If she retains her name she will die with her father's surname and not that of the husband's.

Question eight: Your comments on Hindu-Muslim relations compared to Christian- Muslim relations.

Hindu-Muslim relations follow patterns similar to the ones explained above with regard to Christian-Muslim relations. Comparatively however, it appears as if there is greater accommodation of Christianity in Islamic culture than Hinduism. In comparative perspective, Christians and Jews are regarded as ‘people of the book’ and as such respected – which is not the same for Hindus and African cultural spouses. It needs to be noted that Christians (and Jews) were still called ‘people of the book’ at the time the Prophet was still alive, and need to be respected as such. At this time, Christians have already strayed from the New Testament in Muslim perspective.

When Hindu women convert to Islam, the women take an oath – the Kalmia or Shahadat. At this occasion, one does not have to bathe in cacao milk and also does not need to have to be bathed by others. This is part of Indian culture and not Islamic requirements. As such, it forms part of Lokalkolorit. Muslims believe Hindu women are very much engrossed in “superstitions” which are embedded in their traditional cultural beliefs and practices.

Question nine: What are your views on the caste system?

The community counsellor indicated that one needs to be conscientized about the caste systems that are operational in South African society, including the vestiges of caste systems characterized by older Indian languages, such as Tamil and Telugu, etc. However, the caste system does not have the same impact in the South African context. In Indian context it is still very strong though.

Also, in general, coloured girls are taken as ‘easy girls’ by young Muslim men, but not to marry, but only ‘to play around with’. When they do then marry a Muslim man, just because of this general perception, coloured women and wives are seen as of a lower social standing. They then have to ‘work hard’ to ‘find a place’, be accepted and respected in the Muslim community.

Question ten: Is gossip prevalent and does it have any significance?

The community counsellor stated that apart from its significant information carrying functions, gossip can also be detrimental to the healthy relationships between spouses but also couples of the same extended family. “Did you know ...?”; “She did this ...!” etc. Significant is that it is mainly women that gossip, and that it is they who need to be alerted and conscientized about both the good that it does, but also its detrimental effects – not least on oneself, and one’s family.

8.3.2 Analysis of the Interview with the Community Counsellor

It is evident that the Islamic society had made provision for wives of other religions, who have converted to Islam. The 'Islamic Guidance' endeavours to educate these new converts in becoming more informed about Islam and being a good wife. Hence, the Muslim religion has a support system for converts to understand and overcome the cultural challenges.

When a woman marries into a Muslim family, she has no say in the choice of religion or in observing her own religion. A woman has to convert and become part of the culture. Even if a woman is from another race, she has to conform and become part of the Indian culture if the Muslim man is from Indian extraction. This is the primary cause of tension and conflict that arise in the family, especially between husband and wife. Racial issues and gender roles are also strongly present as gender roles disadvantage a woman as she has to always adapt.

Conflict is always present when children grow up and become aware of the racial difference and culture. Due to religious and cultural confusion they may revolt against parents as the children may experience an identity crisis.

Islam has maintained its standards and those who practice it, even converts, experience not much tension as the rules and religious practices are explicit. There are no compromises even with the one month fast. The biggest challenge is not adherence to religious requirements and spirituality but cultural requirements and expectations which cause the most stresses and strains – the challenge was to become a good Indian wife, especially with regard to dressing and the preparation of Indian food and also conforming and adapting to this. However, it has become clear that these are more Indian cultural practices in general and not specific to Islam. It also depends on how one interprets the scriptures found in the Qur'an and Hadith.

Some Muslim men are flexible and allow for children born out of marriages with westernized Christian women to celebrate Christmas and Easter with their Christian families. However, there is always tension present with regards to family visits, especially on the cultural level.

In rigid Muslim families, the children of inter-cultural marriages are affected with regards to freedom of doing as they please as compared to a White flexible and less rigid society. The Muslim

children have to attend *Madressa* without any choice and cannot stay over at a friend’s home – especially if there are boys in this family.

In conclusion, it is explicit that inter-religious marriages are not without their challenges, as is evident from this report.

8.3.3 Results of Empirical Research from Questionnaires

8.3.3.1 Personal Data

The personal data of the interviewees gathered is as follows.

Theme 1: Gender of Respondents

Theme 2: Age of Respondents

Theme 3: Age Respondents met their Partners, and Partner’s Age

Theme 4: Age Respondents Married, and Partner’s Age

Theme 5: Current Marital Status of Respondents

Theme 6: Ethnic Group of Respondents

Theme 7: Religion of Respondents and Respondents’ Partners

The above themes are covered in Questions 1 to 7 and the data is as follows.

General Personal Details:

Table 8.1: (x – indicates participant’s name; y – indicates partner; A – Asian; B – Black; C – Coloured; I – Indian; W – White; O – Other; Religion: C – Christianity; Is – Islam; H – Hindu; and A – Another; marital status: M – married; D – divorced; S – single; and Se – separated; and Co – co-habitation)

Name	Gender	Age		Age met		Age married		Current marital status	Ethnic group	Religion of birth	
		x	y	x	y	x	y			x	y
Desra	F	38	38	22	22	25	25	D	I	C	H
Jay	F	35	35	24	24	29	29	M	I	H *	C

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Dovan	M	46	33	30	20	33	23	M	I	C	C
Adrian	M	30	31	22	23	n/a	n/a	D	I	C	H
Nath	M	34	32	24	22	29	27	M	I	C	H *
Macia	F	32	42	23	34	25	36	F	W	C	C
Sandra	F	28	29	24	22	27	25	D	I	H	C
Thumba	M	48	46	22	20	24	22	M	I	C	H *
Peter	M	45	34	32	21	33	22	M	W	C	C
Mohammed	M	40	46	18	26	19	27	M	I	Is *	C **
John	M	37	31	26	20	30	24	M	I	C	H *
Mary	F	30	34	21	24	23	27	M	I	H *	C
Glen	M	54	52	22	20	23	21	M	I	Is *	C
Ruth	F	48	40	27	19	28	20	M	I	C **	Is
Afzal	M	39	39	17	17	17	17	M	I	Is #	H **#
Patricia	F	31	31	23	23	24	24	M	I	H *	C
Esther	F	42	44	21	24	22	25	M	W	C *	Is
Gorima	F	50	52	20	21	25	26	M	I	H *	Is
Basil	M	54	54	18	18	22	22	M	I	H #	Is **#
Sharon	F	42	44	20	22	24	26	M	I	C **	H
Jeniffer	F	32	35	20	23	21	24	M	I	C *	H
Viola	F	34	36	30	32	33	35	D	I	C	C
Charm	F	40	38	25	23	26	24	M	I	C	Is *
Marc	M	21	19	18	17	20	18	Se	I	C	H
Lalla	F	50	52	30	32	31	33	M	I	C	H *
Mabote	M	25	25	22	22	23	23	Co	B	C	C
Bertha	F	30	37	16	23	17	24	Se	C	C	C

*** Converted ** Reverted # Converted to neutral religion **# Converted and then, converted to a neutral religion**

8.3.3.1.1 Data Analysis

The above table consists of the personal information of the respondents and Themes 1 to 7 was designed to retrieve this information.

In this inter-religious marriage survey conducted, 27 respondents participated. The findings in Table 8.1 above depicts that 6 respondents met at the same age and only 2 below 21 years. 13 of the respondents were of close age. 7 of the males were older than the females and only 3 females were older than the males. 7 (5 males) of the couples were above 5 years together and only 2 were over 10 years (males). The lowest age that females married was 17 years and the highest 29 and their average age of marriage was between 21 and 27. On the other hand, the lowest age that males married was 17 and the highest 36 and their average age of marriage was between 23 and 26. A total of 17 converted to another religion, which comprised of 9 Hindus; 5 Islam; and 5 Christians. Only the Christians (3) who converted reverted back to Christianity. 2 others who converted eventually chose a neutral religion, Christianity, and not each other's religion. 2 chose to practice another religion, Christianity, prior to their marriage. 14 females and 4 males converted (66 %). There were only 4 (15 %) no conversions and it was between Hindu and Christian marriage. There were 5 inter-cultural relationships: 1 white female converted to Islam; 2 whites married Christian Indians; 1 black married a coloured; and 1 white married a coloured and separated. There were 3 marriages that ended in divorce, 2 between Christian and Hindu; 1 between a White and an Indian; and 2 separated, 1 between a White and a Coloured, and the other between a Christian and Hindu.

8.3.3.1.2 Interpretation of Findings: Questions 1 to 7

It is clearly evident from the findings that a higher number of couples (93 %) are over 21 years and the males are generally older when they meet or marry and only 33 % are of the same age. 45% of couples are of close age difference. However, males are generally older than females in the relationships – the general consensus is that males generally choose partners of the same age or younger. The age difference over 5 years was 26 % and mostly the males were older in this category. It is clear mainly for this research that the females, although a small difference from males married at a younger age than the male respondents. The Hindus easily converted and there were more conversions from Hindu respondents to another religion than from Christians or Muslims – Hindus who believe that “all Gods are one and the same” and that the religions have a common goal and purpose (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). It may be concluded that Hindus who converted were not established in their faith and possessed a shallow understanding of their faith – or for that matter they are more tolerant and accommodatory in their faith. Even so, it seems that

the love for the partner transcends the religious belief system. Hence, stability of the marriage is more important than achieving meaning to life through religious practices in distinction to that of the partner.

In comparison, the Muslims were adamant about conversion. Research conducted in America in 2007 indicated that 45% of Muslims in America marry outside their religion but don't convert due to religious obligations (<http://marriage.about.com.htm/2007>) and in a 2008 Pew Forum survey it is indicated that 38 % of Hindus marry outside their faith in America (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). In our study, only the Christian female who have converted, reverted back to Christianity. The Muslim men were adamant about conversion from Islam to another religion and most of the time it was the females who were coerced to convert to Islam or to another religion. The Muslim men are also threatened and pressurized by family not to convert. In general, Muslim men are committed to their faith and Allah. Mostly females succumbed to conversion to the partner's religion – again love for partner overruled religious beliefs. Most of the time, it was the inter-cultural marriages that ended in divorce or separation due to failure to adapt to a different culture, suppression, being home bound and lack of freedom – the women struggled to conform to the strict religious life and living conditions of Islam.

A small percentage of inter-religious couples who could not compromise chose a neutral religion due to pressure from families and most of the time it was to Christianity and others chose to practice their own religion in the same house. A low percentage of couples believed that they should remain connected to their religious, ethnic and family backgrounds – they never impose conversion on their partner. Many of the latter arrangements ended in divorce or separation. The practicing of different religions in a household is a challenge and contributes to tension in the relationship – no harmony or for that matter peace of mind. Thus, a turbulent family system is due to social conflict and produces disharmony amongst family members, mainly husband and wife (Cheal 1991: 31). Bowen (1978: 381) indicated that in an emotional system the role player's attitudes and beliefs about relationships play a vital role in ensuring family emotional stability. If couples don't work together but choose to practice their own religion without compromise, this may result in family conflict as each partner may want to gain control in the relationship. The negative forces (disagreements and dissatisfaction) in the emotional system may also contribute to intense anxiety in the inter-religious marriage relationship. One partner may pressure the other to convert to what is believed to be the correct way – enforcing one's own beliefs onto the other. At least one of the

partners may experience emotional conflict – signs of a dysfunctional family. Hence, this may stifle the suppressed partner from achieving growth and self-actualization or even meaning to life.

It is clear that the requirements, especially for an inter-faith marriage, play a vital role in the converting to another religion. A Hindu who marries a Roman Catholic must sign a pre-nuptial agreement, agreeing to be baptized and converted to Christianity. A “Letter of Dispensation” is issued by the Bishop to the Priest disclosing such expectation. Some Christian denominations hold on to 11 Corinthians 6: 14 forbidding believers to be “unequally yoked with unbelievers”. On the other hand some use 1 Corinthians 7: 12 – 14 that says that the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believing spouse. The Qur’an states: “You shall not marry Mushrik women (ascribe God’s attributes to other Gods other than Allah) unless they embrace the Faith.” Non-Muslims must acknowledge Allah to be the only God and must convert to Islam before Nikaah (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). This may produce guilt feelings towards one’s own religion that are repressed in partners who are pressured in doing so and these feelings may manifest in ways that affect the relationship.

The young women due to being mainly young may be easily moved and due to the strong connection to the relationship may not resist the pressure to convert or may be weak to stand their ground or put forward their own conviction of faith. Most females try to please others in making the right decision – the wish to keep the peace with family, friends and relationships. Such behaviour may be detrimental to the self-esteem of the converting partner.

Research done by Dhruvarajan (1993) on ethnic cultural retention of Asian Indians indicates that most women in India also face restrictions by parents especially related to inter-caste, inter-racial, and inter-religious relationships (cf. Brown 1992: 12). A Hindu woman who stands on her convictions, decides not to convert and refuse to observe the Islamic Nikaah in a marriage to a Muslim partner, will be making her own choice. Inter-religious marriages have a 50% worse survival rate than the marriages of couples coming from the same religion (<http://www.marriage.about.com.htm/2007>). The Americans for reform also agree with their estimation that 50% of inter-faith marriage don’t last – couples separate and marriage later end in divorce (<http://www.divorcereform.org/2009>). In Hakensack’s research (1999) inter-faith marriages have a 75% failure rate (<http://www.bergen.com/1999>). Inter-religious marriages definitely have a higher risk for failure with higher divorce rates than couples who come from the

same religion and culture (cf. Fu et al., 2001; Gaines & Liu, 2000; Gaines & Agnew, 2003; Markoff, 1977).

8.2.3.2 Theme 8: The Influence of the New Transformed South Africa on inter-religious marriages

8.3.3.2.1 Data Analysis

20 (74 %) participants indicated that the dismantling of the apartheid system did not really have any influence on their inter-religious relations and the remaining 26 % indicated that it exposed them to relations and freedom from racism and prejudice. The lower percentage mentioned that they were also exposed to inter-cultural relationships.

8.3.3.2.2 Interpretation

According to this survey, the transformation process and the dismantling of apartheid had not a great effect on inter-religious relationships. This is for the sample focused on couples from mainly the three main religions (Hinduism, Islam and Christianity). It appears that it was easier for Indians to change their religions. This may be true for this sample and may not be true in the broader South African context as the Indians are very traditional and preserve their culture and as such are restricted and choose to marry within the Indian community. In general, though, research has shown that inter-religious marriages are on the increase in post apartheid South Africa (<http://www.iol.co.za/2012>). Most South Africans select mates from the same religious background as is reflected in the dating patterns. The Group Areas Act of 1966 (cf. Shaw 2001: 22), contributed to the segregation of race groups. As such, people were restricted to socialize within their own racial groups and not with others – hence relationships outside the own culture was restricted. In the whole of the South African context, it is clear and inevitable that all races and all people of diverse religions were certainly exposed to inter-cultural and inter-religious relationships since 1994. In the western world, according to Hope and Young (1981: 39 – 70), after World War 11, due to the integration of economies and the increase of the inter-mingling of different race groups in the cities, inter-religious marriages also increased. Furthermore, in 1977, laws pertaining to segregation of sports was relaxed which allowed a greater variety of race groups to participate in sports on an equal basis. These all impacted on the increase in inter-religious marriages. In South Africa, the move to a more integrated education system also meant that schools became more plural

and multi-racial (Shaw 2001: 22). The dismantling of apartheid inevitably promoted greater freedom of movement, socialization and interaction between all ethnic groups at work, schools and places of entertainment. For society to adapt to these new realities is not always rapid or easy (Shaw 2004: 100). Even so, there are no statistics available on the actual growth of inter-religious relationships or marriages in South Africa.

In the United Kingdom religious organizations, especially Imams and clergymen have come together to discuss how to give young people advice and counselling on inter-religious marriages. In the Christian-Muslim forum, religious leaders were urged to accept inter-faith marriages and that no-one should be compelled to convert. The religious leaders in South Africa disclosed tacit, cautious acceptance and approval for training, preparation, and dialogue on issues pertaining to inter-faith marriages – tolerance was also emphasized as inter-religious couples faced challenges that may damage their relationship (<http://www.iol.co.za/2012>).

8.3.3.3 Theme 9: Opinions on whether Age Plays a Role in the Relationship

8.3.3.3.1 Data Analysis

20 % indicated that age does play a role due to the fact that when a person is young he or she is “blinded by love” and gives no attention to reason or discretion, hence fails to foresee the challenges that lie ahead, especially in an inter-marriage relationship. 80% believed that the older a person is in most instances the more mature he or she is to cope with the challenges and to make responsible decisions. However, all agreed that the age gap does not matter.

8.3.3.3.2 Interpretation

It has been unanimously clear that age difference is of no concern but maturity of a person makes all the difference, especially when being confronted with and dealing with the challenges, conflicts and risks of cultural differences of an inter-religious relationship. A young person will grasp the opportunity of freedom to explore other cultures. The younger the person is, discretion does not always play an important role in decision making where love is concerned. The maturity level of young people is of utmost importance as a responsible decision concerning inter-religious

relationships would be needed since it will certainly affect their lives and families. Young women who do not take responsible decisions may be easily moved into such relationships. They would not stand on their convictions.

According to an internet cite, a female responded to a question of taking a stand for what one believes and she also indicated the love for her family and religion caused her to break up her relationship with a Muslim man (<http://www.pinkvilla.com/2006>). Several individuals on the internet requested answers as to what they must do, especially women, when their boyfriend asks them to convert as they feel he would definitely request them to convert (<http://inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). The challenges are only realized at the family meetings. Jovanovich (1988: 30) indicated in his study that parents pressured their children to marry at an early age even to the extent of pre-arranged marriage. The average age for males and females to marry are 25 and 23 respectively. Mental maturity and stability comes with age. Inter-religious couples or even couples of marriages from the same religion, who marry at a very young age, are often immature and not able to deal with issues and problems deriving from inter-faith unions. They are exposed to these problems that seem to be more complex and difficult to overcome than what it would be for more mature couples. In general, marriages from the same religion need nurturing. Much more work is required for inter-religious marriages, especially as this pertains to issues related to beliefs, traditions and cultural differences – a mammoth task for young couples to be exposed to.

8.3.3.4 Theme 10: Couples' Considerations of Family and Culture

8.3.3.4.1 Data Analysis

80% of participants indicated that the relationship happened without even taking into consideration family, culture, beliefs and traditions and its possible conflicts. However, 20% considered it but decided to take a risk due to changing times – they were aware of the repercussions that their relationship would have in the family but indicated that they decided to deal with the inter-religious issues as and when they were confronted with it.

8.3.3.4.2 Interpretation

It is clear that most couples engage in inter-religious relationships without taking any consideration

or even questioning the consequences of religious differences as to how it would affect the marriage and family life. It is clear that given the opportunity and freedom to integrate and explore other cultures, people will definitely not let it go. It seems that love blinds and causes them to be gullible and hence, they forget about their faith, religion and future. Some are so consumed with love that they even ignore the realities of a good education and good employment of the partner. One individual female indicated that she considered her ethnicity which was different from her Muslim boyfriend and then, for the love and respect for her parents, she stood her ground and broke up the relationship – “it was not worth the hassle” (<http://www.pinkville.com/2006>). Since the Hindu interviewees hold that all Gods and religions are the same they were blind to religion and culture or even the challenges that come with the inter-faith relationships. Some just did not consider religion and culture because they were not forced to convert but were tolerant towards the partner. In one study, a Christian wife indicated that she wished her spouse converted but did not verbalize it (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). This indicates that many people do not speak about this very important matter. People, who focus on independence, being autonomous human beings and do not have a strong conscious religious identity, may feel freer to develop relationships or fall in love with people of other religious backgrounds (<http://www.SuaraAnum.com.htm/2001>).

8.3.3.5 Theme 11: Opinions on whether Ethnic Background Plays a Role in the Relationship

8.3.3.5.1 Data Analysis

All respondents indicated that ethnic background does play a role in inter-cultural relations or marriages. The cultural differences have a great impact on the relationship as two cultures have to fuse, hence, the challenges to adapt to cultural diversity is quite immense and it takes a great deal of learning, understanding, tolerance and compromise to deal with the innate hostility present in such relationships in society in general. Generally, the differences that contribute to stress in the relationship pertain to religious practices; cultural expectations; communication; gender roles; cultural expressions and pressures from extended families. All respondents indicated that their ethnicity cannot be ignored as it was responsible for their development and who they are, where they came from – their identity. White and Black partners have encountered discrimination and racial hostility.

8.3.3.5.2 Interpretation

The ethnic backgrounds play a vital role, especially towards the identity formation of the

individuals and families and cannot be ignored. Most Asian women are not allowed to engage in inter-caste and inter-racial marriages, especially so that they can retain their ethnic identity (cf. Inman et al., 2007) – thus it has been indicated that ethnicity should be seriously considered. According to Biever et al. (1998), relationships of different ethnicity may sometimes be exposed to the same conflicts as experienced by intra-cultural couples mainly of the same cultural group. Researches have shown that these couples face unique challenges and situations that need extra counselling and consideration (cf. Bonacci, Moon, & Ratliff, 1978). Romano (1988) listed some challenges of inter-religious marriages also related to ethnicity that are not backed by research: values, food and drink, sex, gender roles, place of residence, politics, friends, finances, in-laws, social class, religion, raising of children, language, communication and symbols. Racial prejudice is also linked to ethnicity and is responsible for relationships not occurring often outside one's own race group (Barnett 1963: 626) – this implies that ethnicity is considered when linked to racial issues. However, Crohn (1995: 50) indicated otherwise, some prefer partners from other than one's own racial group as they have a strong dislike for those of one's own group. If these issues are not appropriately confronted, then the innate cultural-racial hostility would remain present in the relationship and lead to racial oppression and/ or inferiority complexes. According to Sung (1990: 347) again, there are indications that in the presence of the challenges, some couples of different cultures have stronger commitments to the marriage and are prepared to make changes and adapt – even adapt to the partner's traditions to change. They become flexible, resourceful and resilient in finding solutions because they are more aware of possible conflicts.

8.3.3.6 Theme 12: Opinions on whether Religion Plays a Role in the Relationship and Theme 13: Views on the Nature of the Role of Religion in Marriage

8.3.3.6.1 Data Analysis (Themes 12 and 13 combined)

All indicated that religion has a vital role to play in their relationship and marriage. They said that religion causes them to be God-conscious and in doing so understand God, hence, understand themselves more deeply. They depend on God for their strength and sustenance as he is their creator who has given life to them. It also gives them meaning to life and purpose for living. In marriage, religion is practiced and gives them a sense of identity and belonging. Religion forms a link between them and God. Due to their weaknesses and failures, they can always come to God for guidance and forgiveness and be at peace again. Religion nurtures moral living in their family and

brings peace and tranquility into their marriage. Religion brings self control, tolerance, patience, and love to the relationship and marriage, including self awareness. It is a means to form a relationship with God by serving and worshipping him via observance of the religious practices.

8.3.3.6.2 *Interpretation* (Themes 12 and 13 included)

It is clear that all the couples even of different cultural backgrounds are aware of the fact that there is a greater power (Supernatural) that they rely on for their spiritual life and especially existence. Religion adds meaning to life, marriage and relationships – it provides a sense of purpose. According to Brown (1992: 22), religion provides a source of comfort, explanation and meaning in crisis situations and disasters. It also gives believers a sense of identity, security and explanation for the meaning of life. As couples get some understanding of God (be God-conscious), they understand and have insight into their lives. God is needed for worship and protection. God and religion are necessary to receive forgiveness for mistakes and to be freed from guilt feelings – hence it is instrumental in sustaining unity in the marriage and relationship. All people search for identity and as such a link with God for peace of mind and rest is important – religion has provided a form of identity although it has been cascaded by family, culture and traditions. Religion establishes stability, harmony and maintains cultural traditions in the marriage or relationships (cf. Smart, 1973: 50; Brown 1992: 210). Religion cannot be excluded from the equation of the inter-cultural marriage and relationships as it makes one conscious of God and morality. Hence, coping with challenges and experiencing peace of mind becomes easier as a commitment to having a relationship with God instill in the marriage love, tolerance, respect and patience among others. Durkheim (1969: 31) stated that religion integrates people of society (diverse cultures) together causing them to accept social values – worship solidifies social groups. Religion makes people to maintain cultural identity and traditions. In one study, reports from 84 families who enrolled in an introductory marriage course indicated that religion, faith and tradition are linked somehow and gives families strength, identity, and generational continuity (Schvaneveldt, 1983: 137 – 143).

8.3.3.7 *Theme 14: Couples' Consideration of Different Religious Background at the Time of Marriage*

8.3.3.7.1 *Data Analysis*

15 (55%) interviewees indicated “NO” to religious consideration as they had no problem converting

to their husband's religion; 4 (15%) who were of the same religion indicated not applicable as it was of no concern on their relationship; and 8 (30%) indicated "YES" as there were religious concerns since the husband and wife were from different religious affiliation. 14 (52%) of females converted to their partner's religion as they felt that they had to follow their husband's religion. The ones that indicated that religion was a concern either refused to convert (they were prepared to practice their own religion or both) or chose a neutral religion to avoid conflict or religious challenges that may eventually occur, especially when children were born. Some respondents who said "NO" expressed that love was all that mattered and that problems only come when the children are born. The primary reason that motivated these types of couples to marry is their mutual love for each other.

8.3.3.7.2 Interpretation

It was clear from this research that religious background is of no concern to most inter-religious relationships when they are initiated – in most of these marriages, the females converted to the husband's religion. However, in order for stability and harmony, in most relationships, one religion was chosen. In India, the Special Marriage Act of 1954, allowed couples of inter-religious relations to marry without either partner converting (<http://www.indianhomemaker.wordpress.com/2013>). However, the families who practiced one religion proved to be more stable, harmonious and peaceful and there was less chance of separation or divorce. Research conducted with five couples by Giladi-McKensie (1986), revealed that they were intrigued by their differences in religion and culture and were prepared to learn and make the marriage work. Sung (1990), in his research indicated that those who intermarry and deliberately ignore religious background are unconventional and rebellious and are willing to change and have the ability to deal with the differences – however, these results of sample chosen are inconclusive of all people who marry inter-culturally. The families that had a single religious identity achieved more success as compared to inter-marriages. Those who considered religious differences had to reach a compromise and make decisions. However, the couples who chose to practice their own religion in the same household wished that their partners converted. Love is always used as an excuse to ignore religious background. In the context of liberal Christianity, believers believe that everyone has the freedom to choose his or her life partner (<http://www.talkingaboutintermarriage.com/2004>) – they hide behind the text of 11 Corinthians 7: 12 – 14 which states that the believing husband is made holy by the spouse.

8.3.3.8 Theme 15: Family and Friends' Considerations of Different Religious Backgrounds at the time of Marriage

8.3.3.8.1 Data Analysis

16 (59%) of the respondents' family and friends covertly expressed intense objection to the marriage and especially converting to another religion. They requested for reasons and were concerned about different cultures, challenges and the identity of children. They even raised the question, "Is human feelings more important than religion and what others will think?" Some were requested to move out of their parent's home and were disowned, ostracized, and treated as outcasts. The strongest resistance came from Muslim families. Some were threatened to be killed, especially from their Muslim family and friends. Some in Muslim context expressed disgust and were totally against the inter-religious relationships – they disowned their children. The Christians also objected to the inter-religious marriage or even the conversion to another religion as they believed that their child's salvation was lost. But the Hindus were constrained and their objections were not forceful and eventually expressed acceptance as they failed to persuade their child's decision and consented. Many objections were primarily based on the fact that the children were abandoning their cultural and religious roots. In view of the objections, some chose to practice a neutral religion. On the other hand, 7 (26%) of the respondents' family and friends expressed acceptance and no objection. They bestowed their blessings and support for the couple and expressed that all they wished that the couple be happy. 4 (15%) were of the same religion. Some couples due to family pressure decided just to get registered without a formal religious wedding.

8.3.3.8.2 Interpretation

It is a reality that most families and friends always express objection in the beginning. In the sample, almost all families and friends expressed disappointment, disapproval of the inter-religious marriage for many reasons. Some reasons are mainly, for relinquishing their religious faith completely; caste issues; cultural issues; family/children's identity; and even wealth issues – sometimes linked to social issues as to what people will think. Dhruvarajan (1993) agreed in his findings that most Asian women also face restrictions as parents refuse inter-caste, inter-racial and inter-religious marriages among couples, especially to preserve ethnic identity (Crohn 1995: 9). Desra's family did not give the blessings for her to marry a Hindu as they were strict on Biblical

principles and the Hindu family requested a Hindu wedding (what relatives and society would say?). Well, the couple eventually decided to just get registered. Some families even went to the extent of disowning their children and some threatened the couple to use violence and even murder – especially the ones who chose to convert from the Muslim religion. Glen’s family disowned him and threatened to kill him. However, some families were very supportive and allowed the couples to choose their own faith. It is clear that those who stood their ground were eventually given the blessing to continue the relationship, especially the Hindu parents but the Muslims and Christian parents were unmoved in the majority. An Hindu girl felt it is not worth the hassle to marry her Muslim boyfriend as the family members indicated that she would not fit in with that society and the grand parents would be upset (<http://www.pinkvilla.com/2006>). Research done by Ata and Furlong (2005: 200-209) with 160 people from 20 countries discovered that families and relatives responded with strong rejection but some viewed religious differences to strengthen relationships. The main focus was, especially for Muslim/ Christian marriages, the identity issue of the children as to which faith they will take on. Both faith practices may cause confusion to children (cf. Brown 1992: 12; <http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). The lack of support from family and friends can lead to on-going trust issues. Therefore, prior to making the family aware of the relationship the couple should understand each other properly and ensure that they are committed to the inter-religious relationship – in order to get more of the family support. Furthermore, in order to gain the family and friends’ support, the couple should gain their trust. The couple should show their commitment and respect to each other’s traditions and religious practices.

8.3.3.9 Theme 16: Family and Friends’ Influence on the Marriage, Especially Religiously

8.3.3.9.1 Data Analysis

74% of respondents disclosed that their families influenced and interfered in their decisions and relationships religiously and culturally. In view of the pressure from family and friends 4% of the respondents therefore did not convert and 2% chose a neutral religion but some married against their family’s approval with the resulting unresolved family repercussions. 4% of respondents’ families expressed cultural discomfort, intolerance and objections. This pressure from families and challenges resulted in some instances in separation and divorce and also confusion in their children’s identities. However, the other 26% were free to make their own choices without any influence or pressure from the families and friends. Some couples expressed the view that they

respect their spouse's need to remain connected to his or her religious, ethnic, and family backgrounds. These couples disclosed that they would never impose conversion on their partner.

8.3.3.9.2 Interpretation

In South Africa, couples face resistance, pressure and hostility not only from families but also religious leaders and organizations to convert to avoid fallouts and ostracism and to keep the faith in marriages. Some go to the extent of violent acts to break up the relationship (cf. <http://www.iol.co.za/2012>). Families nearly always interfere before and also after marriage and must have a say in the inter-religious relationship. Before marriage the parents would attempt in various ways to remind the child of their faith and cultural practices and not to abandon the faith. Christian parents would inform the child if he or she denounces their faith then salvation would be lost. After marriage the parents would still interfere, especially when children are born to find out what faith the children would follow and this pressure would contribute to conflict with the parents and the couples and also between the husband and wife. Sometimes these marriages end in divorce due to the tension experienced in the family and the religious intolerance and objection from the external forces. There may be instances of forced conversion by one of the families, especially Hindu and Christian women converting to Islam or to Christianity. Families are also contributors to the couples' choosing a neutral religion or no faith at all. In general, society openly express prejudice and families express non-acceptance of the inter-faith relationship, mainly due to the differences in habits, beliefs, values, customs, traditions, ethnicity and religious differences (cf. Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Joanides et al., 2002). Abe Ata and Mark Furlong (2005: 202) from the Christian Catholic University disclosed from research done that identity issues related to a faith community is a sensitive issue. In one study, a Muslim girl, before conversion to Hinduism before marriage, was influenced by the boy's mother by being taught all about the Hindu God "Shiva" as being the only God (<http://www.pinkvilla.com/2006>). This caused much distress.

8.3.3.10 Theme 17: Couples' Agreements with Regard to their Different Religious Backgrounds

8.3.3.10.1 Data Analysis

Only 15% of respondents, where the couple chose to observe their own religion initially, had to reach a compromise at some point, especially with regards to religious practices and their impact

on the children. In the marriages between Christians and Hindus, certain religious practices were observed by the whole family, especially *Easter celebration, Christmas, Diwali, Raksha Bandan ritual*, and to have a *Shrine* in the house. When children arrived, the challenge was greater and a choice had to be made as to which religion the children would follow to avoid confusion in identity. There are rare cases where children were forced to observe religious practices of both religions. In the marriages between Christians and Muslims the celebrations of *Easter, Christmas, and the festival of Eid Mubarak* were mostly observed as a family. In the marriages between Muslim and Hindus the celebrations of *Eid Mubarak, Diwali and Raksha Bandan* were observed as a family.

In respect of conversion, it was the individuals' own free choice and the influence of love for the partner who refuse to convert in most instances. The other factor that influenced conversion is the lack of commitment to one's faith or an acceptance and tolerance of all religions and practices. In this research sample there is only one relationship between a Black and Coloured and *Lobola* was not considered as they practiced the Christian religion and ignored any cultural observations.

8.3.3.10.2 Interpretation

A high conversion rate is unavoidable among inter-religious couples and marriages. Conversion is mainly due to strong love, lack of commitment to one's faith or religious tolerance. To overcome religious challenges and keep the peace, some couples reached compromises to practice selected religious practices together, especially those couples who did not convert. It is always the children who have to pay the price and face the consequences of being caught in the middle and are forced to practice both religions and sometimes for the sake of the children's identity a compromise has to be reached for the children to practice one of the religions. Agreements should be reached before the children are born so that when the children reach an age of understanding they are allowed to choose the religion they wish to observe – most of the time the children followed the mother's faith. Couples are willing to accept change to makes the marriage work. Sung (1990) who conducted interviews with 50 Chinese who married outside their culture discovered that they were flexible, and resourceful in finding solutions to differences. They freely accepted the non-traditional and were willing to change. Change normally takes place to avoid religious and cultural identity confusion and to ensure stability of faith, not only in the family but especially for the children. The couples may convert for ensuring: co-operation, abstain from religious talk, practices both religions, merging of the faiths (cf. Ata & Furlong, 2005: 200 – 209). Many discussions or questions

by young people on internet reveals that conversion to another faith is high due to requirements before marriage (especially in Christianity and Islam). The love factor, tolerance of the partners' faith and culture, lack of commitment or misunderstanding of one's own faith, commitment to peace and harmony, religious pluralistic concepts, stability and the identity issue of belonging all play a role. Also some couples may be confused and others may openly confess to wishing to explore a new faith (cf. <http://www.pinkville.com/2006>; <http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>; <http://aimee-larson-stoddard.suite101.com/2009>; <http://www.marriage.about.com/htm/2007>; <http://www.SuaraAnum.com.htm/2001>).

8.3.3.12 Theme 18: Changing of Views on Religion since Marriage

8.3.3.12.1 Data Analysis

The partners of couples that converted to Christianity indicated that the practices were simple and not costly and they experienced inner peace and a difference was clearly evident. However, they felt that the religious standard of the Bible and to please God by living a God-fearing holy life was not as easy as they thought. But the truths in the Bible make real sense. The new way of life is full of hope and promises that assist couples to overcome their religious challenges and there are a lot of support from Christian friends. On the contrary those who converted to Islam felt that they couldn't cope with going to the Mosque every Friday and praying five times a day. They were frustrated with the one month *Ramandan* fast. Those who converted to Hinduism felt that there were too many rituals and cost involved as compared to their religion of birth. The religion practices were observed to please the Gods and hence to pacify themselves – that they have been redeemed from all their wrong doings. But after these prayers and rituals life continues the same again.

8.3.3.12.2 Interpretation

There will always be personal opinions and comparisons of religious practices and rituals between the previous religion and the current religion by those who convert. From all the Religions Christianity appeared to be the most simple but the standards of pleasing God was not easy. Failure to cope with certain religious observances by converts could lead to frustration (especially in Islam). Religious practices are sometimes very costly and too many (especially in Hinduism). Support systems in any religion are necessary to cope with the challenges that the religious practices

bring into the inter-religious marriages. Browne (1987) says that those who are aware of the possible conflicts may have higher norms in common areas of interest or be more personally compatible in order to deal with the cultural and religious issues. Not all converts will adapt to change and at some stage give up and become disinterested. Although, not overtly, religious traditions and cultural upbringing have an influence on how the converts respond to the new religion. Some may respond positively and others negatively. The negative impact may be responsible as to how long the relationship will last and how much conflict the couple will be exposed to, and have to tolerate and endure for the marriage to work or break up. Research reveals that cultural and religious value conflicts produce negative impact, especially guilt, anxiety and shame (Inman, et. al., 2007). Research done by Ata and Furlong (2005) indicated that children of mixed-faith families were able to cope with religious identity without significant problems. In most instances, the children are affected and confused, as for example, when they visit the temple, the priest tells them to accept all religions (universal religion), whereas at the Mosque it commanded that they have to serve Allah only and the Church it is the worship of Christ only. Thus, it affects the moral development and spiritual well-being of the child. Hence, conversion is no simple matter or for that matter the practice of both religions in one household.

8.3.3.13 Theme 19: Engaging of Religious (and Cultural) Practices Prior to Marriage and Changes since Marriage

8.3.3.13.1 Data Analysis

20% of males (partners) who converted to Christianity stopped going to church and even withdrew from any practices, however only attended church during Easter and Christmas. They failed to maintain the high standards of the Bible and especially the frequent fund raising exercised in the church. Generally the females were committed to whatever religion they followed. 80% of the time, the children followed what the mother practiced. Those who followed Hinduism also failed to cope with the many rituals and in the case of the Muslim religion, many stopped praying five times a day and attending Mosque on a Friday.

8.3.3.13.2 Interpretation

It is clear that some will just convert for consent to marry and later refrain from all practices, except for special occasions just to please the family – this happens especially with the males. In general,

most males are committed to change and follow the new found religion with great sincerity. Where females are committed to the observance of religious traditions and rituals, they mostly are found to be the catalyst in the family and first to lead by example. In Christianity it is emphasized that the household should be God-centered and that the husband should lead as a spiritual head of the household – the household is affected if the leader is not interested in observing religious practices and traditions.

This is very important because usually children always follow the mother and the religious practices she does. When partners are forced to observe any religious practices, they tend to at some point become disengaged and non-participants and more passive. The study done by Chin (1994) indicated that partners of inter-religious marriage have more issues to be concerned with in maintaining a relationship – adjustment must be made to sustain the relationship. Tolerance and patience is essential for partners of different backgrounds to deal with conflicting demands of love and traditions (cf. Crohn 1995: 9; Laird, 2000; and Biever et al., 1998).

8.3.3.14 Theme 20: Nature of Couple's Agreements and Arrangements with regard to their Different Religious Practices

8.3.3.14.1 Data Analysis

All the respondents indicated that they worship together as they attend religious services together and also observe the prayers at home together, except for those who have not converted or practice the same religion in the house. The couples that did not impose conversion on their partner, and who believed that their partner should be connected to their cultural and religious roots, were not really threatened by their religious and ethnic differences. However, they believed that they would be able to resolve these differences in much the same way they would resolve other types of differences. However, separate religious practices by some respondents led to the husband ignoring family commitments, and moving into isolation and apart from the wife and children and may even have extra-marital affairs.

8.3.3.14.2 Interpretation

It is possible to worship freely and establish a healthy relationship even in an inter-religious marriage if one religion is practiced by the whole family – compromise and agreement is possible

to practice a single religion. It is a risk to agree to practice both religions under the disguise that the partner should be connected to their cultural and religious roots. If it is so difficult to deal with challenges that exist in normal marriages, how much harder it will be to overcome challenges of religious differences. People mislead themselves if they say they will solve problems of inter-religious marriage the way they do in marriage. In most cases there is a great struggle to maintain and sustain the practice of different religions in the same household – which may lead to stress, tension, guilt, anxiety, disharmony, instability and often the relationship ends in divorce. According to literature, a number of articles indicated that inter-religious marriages have a high rate of divorce and a high risk of failure (cf. Gaines & Agnew, 2003; Markoff, 1977; and Fu et al.: 2001). However, Laswell (1991: 405) indicated that it is not conclusive that inter-faith marriages have a higher failure rate as compared to couples who chose to practice the same faith as is always suggested. Even so, it is mostly true that couples who practice different religions may enjoy reduced efficiencies and may experience greater conflict (cf. Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993: 386).

8.3.3.15 Theme 21: Couples' Worship and Theme 22: Couples' inter-religious Participation in Ceremonies, Ritual or Festivals

8.3.3.15.1 Data Analysis (Themes 21 and 22 combined)

As indicated in in the discussion of Theme 17, arrangements have been made to choose certain rituals and celebrations that the family will observe together. This pertains to those who refuse to convert. All the couples who refuse to convert did not worship together but observed their religious practices separately. In some cases, which is a very few, couples reached some compromise and observed certain celebrations and holidays but not when prayer was required and offerings made to God. These were proven to be very sensitive areas.

8.3.4.15.2 Interpretation (Themes 21 and 22 combined)

It is evidently explicit that “love may conquer all” is not really true in reality. There are definitely conflict experienced in the inter-religious marriages but compromises are reached to keep the peace and harmony in the family. As such, certain celebrations and selected religious practices are observed. This was sometimes happening in some cases –for the sake of the children. When families communicate and reason, a solution to the situation or problem could be reached. How to

merge religious traditions is something to ponder too. Issues pertaining to attend worship services separately or together or worship services of both religions need to be answered prior to marriage. The choice of religious holidays or religious activities to celebrate or observe certain beliefs and practices should be answered before marriage. Finally, when children are born it is important to decide which religious worship they will be trained in (cf. <http://www.aimee-larsen-stoddard.suite101.com/2009>)? In an internet email on inter-religious marriages, the couple indicates that they practice their own religious traditions and are happy. They receive family support and don't let society intimidate them or force their views on them. Both are learned in their religion and love each other (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>).

8.3.3.16 Theme 23: Number of Children and Their Current Age

8.3.3.16.1 Data Analysis

Name	Gender	No of Children	Age	Religion of birth	
				x	y
Desra	F	0	-	C	H
Jay	F	1	3	H *	C
Dovan	M	2	5 and 10	C	C
Adrian	M	0	-	C	H
Nath	M	1	3	C	H *
Macia	F	2	4 and 9	C	C
Sandra	F	0	-	H	C
Thumba	M	2	20 and 23	C	H *
Peter	M	2	4 and 9	C	C
Mohammed	M	4	9,17,21 and 23	Is *	C **
John	M	1	7	C	H *
Mary	F	1	8	H *	C
Glen	M	2	25 and 28	Is *	C
Ruth	F	4	9,17,23 and 25	C **	Is
Afzal	M	1	22	Is #	H *#
Patricia	F	1	7	H *	C

Esther	F	2	18 and 20	C *	Is
Gorima	F	3	20 and 23	H *	Is
Basil	M	2	28 and 35	H #	Is *#
Sharon	F	3	10, 14, and 20	C **	H
Jeniffer	F	3	3,10 and 14	C *	H
Viola	F	2	1 and 14	C	C
Charm	F	2	16 and 19	C	Is *
Marc	M	1	1	C	H
Lalla	F	3	16, 18 and 20	C	H *
Mabote	M	0	-	C	C
Bertha	F	2	8 and 10	C	C

56% of respondents have an average of 2 children and 30% have 1 child. 70% have children 20 years and below. The average ages range between 14 years and 18 years.

8.3.3.16.2 Interpretation

The couples of this generation chose to have small families and restricted themselves to having only 2 children or less – inflation and the cost of raising children may have that influence. Due to the average age of the children, it is clear that most of the couples have their children as soon as possible and soon after they got married.

8.3.3.17 Theme 24: Arrangements with Regard to the Children's Upbringing and their Relationship to Religion(s)

8.3.3.17.1 Data Analysis

All indicated that religion plays a vital role in their children's lives and upbringing. It impacts on their identity and therefore they should not be confused, hence they should be trained in following at least one religion and its traditions. The children become aware of religion and the meaning of the practices, especially between the age range of 16 and 20 years in most instances. Basically, children merely follow the parent's instructions and have no self conviction most of the time. Hence, they are not actually religious as they focus on other entertainments than religious practices.

In rare instances children understand at an earlier age what they observe in religious and cultural practices.

8.3.3.17.2 Interpretation

The education of children in the belief systems and life's philosophies are most critical and challenging as to what approach is employed. All religions have similar value systems but differ mainly in religious traditions and practices. The children have to be spiritually enlightened with both religions at the earliest possible stage. They would become more conscious of the different religious practices – more so than the children from a single or the same religion marriage. The children would grow up and develop as guided by both parents to inculcate a broader objective worldview that treats people as human beings and not by caste system, creed, race or religion (cf. <http://www.loveinindia.co/2013>).

It is understood that the children should not be confused and have to be confronted with the identity issues. Religion cannot be ignored in the upbringing of children. The children should be trained and disciplined at a young age to follow a single religion if the couple so chooses. However, it may be difficult in current times to instruct children as they are very rebellious and have their own minds, especially from around 16 years of age. Although the parents may endeavor to guide their children to follow a religious path, they may not always succeed. Literature available declares that more research is required in the area of identity issues pertaining to children in multi-religious households and also to understand what to do for children to remain in a desired faith community (cf. Biever et al., 1998; Henandez, 2003). Some parents who follow their religious practices fervently, normally apply pressure on their children to strictly observe their religious traditions from a young age. However, it is imperative that the children be directed correctly in religious matters whilst growing up, that is, to ensure the child is established in the faith and not experience identity confusion – which may impact negatively on the self-esteem of the child.

8.3.3.18 Theme 25: Religious Identity as Couples and Family

8.3.3.18.1 Data Analysis

All respondents indicated “YES”, they have a religious identity since they have chosen a religion

or religions to follow in order to have a relationship with God their Creator and also family stability. They would definitely bring up their children in the same religion or religions they have chosen. Religion and the rituals and traditions observed give them a sense of belonging, identity, and a purpose for living in the present and future, not only for them but for their children too. Religion keeps them in touch with nature and appreciation of life and its destiny. It is a driving force that always keeps them in line with regard to morality, harmony and peaceful living. Religion also maintains family unity, harmony and prosperity. Inner peace and tranquility is experienced, as well as a sense of being in touch with the Supreme Being that is made accessible through religious experience. Therefore, they recommend that all, including their children should follow a religion and observe it with full commitment and dedication.

8.3.3.18.2 Interpretation

The couples who follow a single religion, most of the time achieve more stability, harmony and peace in the relationship with little danger of separation or divorce. Religious identity is established by following one religion. The purpose and meaning that religion brings to life, will be clear in the family relationship and commitment. The children will face no confusion or disillusionment concerning their faith in God. It has also become clear that the single religion marriages have an advantage to achieve success as compared to the practicing of two religions in a household. Family will also assist and offer support in a single religious practice, especially when they are also practicing the same religion. Raising children becomes easier. The family is focused on improving their relationship with God, society, children, and marriage. Due to the stability of the family structure and religion, the family and every one in it can focus their energy on the future and their careers. According Crohn (1971: 262) the individual identity model describes how inter-cultural relationships evolve and it gives an outline of healthy growth and movement from a low inferiority identity complex to confidence and self-empowerment.

Where the Muslim husband, for instance, in most instances pressure the Hindu or Christian wife to immediately convert or eventually to practice the Muslim religion, this may lead to tension. The birth of children and the identity of family may inject this additional pressure to convert. The children are expected to be raised in the family religion – normally the children are not given a choice. Due to the strong stand of Muslim men, the wife normally converts (cf.

<http://jayasreesaranathan.com.htm/2009>). Some sources say that parents should not be too rigid and allow the children to decide when they are older as to the religion they wish to observe.

8.3.3.19 Theme 27: Possibilities of Improvements with regard to Couples' and Family Relations

8.3.3.19.1 Data Analysis

20% of the interviewees failed to comment on this matter. 80% who responded, indicated that religious and cultural tolerance; identity; and support from family and friends are important and always in need of improvement. Firstly, It is important to improve cultural and religious tolerance because everyone has freedom of choice and as such their cultural and religious beliefs and practices should be respected. Judgement should be reserved and eradicated from the family. Tolerance should be fostered and inculcated in each one in order to live in peace and harmony. This also relates to family tension and conflicts which may lead to separation and divorce. Secondly, without an identity, a family or children may have no direction or sense of belonging and hence be confused. Those who are affected may experience an identity crisis and it may impact on their behaviour and attitude to life and their family. Hence, their development of their personality and inner spiritual growth may be hampered. They may have no purpose and meaning in life and also fail to not only deal with the challenges of life but even religious and cultural challenges. Thirdly, the support of the family and friends are of paramount importance as they may contribute to the failure or success of the marriage and family life. They are needed for emotional support, especially to assist couples to overcome religious and cultural challenges. It was also suggested that special structures should be in place and provisions prioritized to educate couples, family, and friends in these areas of concern. It was implied that family and friends cannot be divorced from the inter-faith relationship, because it is not only the couple that is joined but they remain joined to their families and friends, and hence need their support.

8.3.3.19.2 Interpretation

There is need to improve religious and cultural tolerance, identity issues and social support systems. If religious and cultural tolerance can improve, then inter-religious and inter-cultural marriages will survive and the success rate will increase – the tension rate in the family system will decrease. Couples should consider dealing with the identity issue by taking into consideration challenges they

and the children will have to face in the family. All human beings need to have an identity: to know where they come from, where they belong, and why they are here, especially a sense of belonging. Family and children cannot afford to be confused. An identity crisis produces behavioural problems that will affect attitude to life and inter-religious relationships and family – inner spiritual growth will also be affected. Families of inter-faith couples may lack a common purpose and meaning to life and may not have the capacity to deal with religious and cultural challenges of the marriage. Support structures are necessary and must play a role in the improving of relationships and to find solutions if there are challenges. Those who convert should be educated in understanding the challenges. They must be equipped with the necessary skills to cope with challenges, especially with regard to inter-religious communication, and religious and cultural tolerance. Family (relatives) and friends must not be quick to pass judgements but offer all the support they can. Crohn (1995: 9) stated that the practice of religion co-exist with the community and community life and also that family loyalty is necessary to reinforce cultural identity and religious beliefs so that each person has a sense of belonging and identity. Religious leaders may discourage inter-faith relationships and may be cynical when such marriages fail. If a partner is experiencing a challenge with regard to the spouse's religious beliefs he or she may also obtain support from another experienced inter-faith couple who found ways to solve such challenges. Meeting with others in a similar situation can assist helping struggling couples find a sense of belonging and acceptance that will in turn benefit the marriage (cf. Tan 2001; William & Lawler, 2000:210).

8.3.3.20 Theme 27: Possible Advantages of Single Religion Marriages Compared to Inter-religious Marriages

8.3.3.20.1 Data Analysis

All respondents, without a doubt, indicated that although all marriages have their own challenges, inter-religious and inter-cultural marriages further compound and complicate the challenges. The challenges of inter-marriages are too enormous to cope with and always contribute towards tension and stress in the relationship and with the arrival of children the situation becomes compounded. Therefore, the single religion marriages have a greater advantage to achieve success than inter-faith marriages.

8.3.3.20.2 Interpretation

It is a reality that inter-religious and inter-cultural marriages expose couples to more challenges

than the same faith or same culture marriages. Tension, stress and culture shock may be present in an inter-religious and inter-cultural relationship. Children will further complicate and compound the already present issues and challenges. Hernandez (2003) stated that solutions are required for religious conflicts, identity of family and children, anxiety, fear, guilt and shame, despair, pain, rejection, prejudice, and unforgiveness. It is easier to deal with problems faced in a single faith or of a marriage of the same religion and culture. Berghe (1997: 15) indicated that religion expose couples to culture which includes customs, ceremonies, beliefs, behaviour and practices, including inter-cultural practices. In a single religion marriage the identities of children and family are easier to cultivate. The choices of religious celebration and practices are also of no concern. Even prior to marriage the choice of venue for the marriage celebration is also of no concern as to whether the couple will choose a church or temple or mosque to be married. Inter-faith and inter-cultural marriages have a higher failure rate and risk for an unsuccessful union, marital dissatisfaction, reduced efficiency and divorce than couples of shared religious beliefs. They may also experience greater conflicts (cf. Laswell, 1991: 405; Lehrer & Chiswick 1993: 386; Browne, 1987; Fu et al., 2001; Hegar & Greif, 1994; Laird, 2000). It is evident from research that inter-religious couples seeking family therapy have added issues that need to be considered by therapists and counsellors as those compared to intracultural couples (cf. Bonacci, Moon, & Ratliff, 1978; Biever et al., 1998; Chin, 1994; Hegar & Greif, 1994).

8.2.3.21 Theme 28: The Most Important Challenges Inter-religious Married Couples

Face

8.2.3.21.1 Data Analysis

Apart from the normal challenges of marital adjustment and lifestyle, some of the inter-marriage challenges disclosed by the respondents are firstly prior to marriage: societal approval; which religious ceremony to choose for the marriage; the identity of children; which naming ceremony of children should be observed; which religious practices, rituals, celebrations to observe; circumcision of male child and cutting of hair of children; the foods to eat and the type of dressing; communication, tolerance, and religious ignorance; and cultural respect, especially to cultural codes and symbols. Other factors for some couples were cultural traditions and norms (holidays and gender roles); raising children and language barriers; and learning each other's culture.

8.3.3.21.2 Interpretation

Inter-religious marriages definitely are exposed to enormous critical challenges that cannot be

overlooked. Some of the challenges are: religious tradition and culture, rituals and celebrations to observe including holidays, food and dressing, identity of children and family, ethnic issues, religious tolerance and cultural ignorance, cultural codes and symbols, communication and language barriers, gender roles and raising of children. Romano (1988) listed some of the challenges of inter-religious marriages such as values, food and drinks, sex, gender roles, place of residence, politics, friends, finances, in-laws, social class and caste system, religion, raising of children and family acceptance, language, communication and symbols, dealing with stress, illness and suffering, and ethnocentrism, prejudices and stereotypes, lifestyle and oppression. Research conducted by Grove (1991) and Chin (1994) also confirms the same challenges (cf. also Markoff, 1977; Greif, 1994; Biever et al., 1998; Bonacci et al., 1996; Gainnes & Agnew, 2003; Crohn, 1995; Browne, 1992; and Laird, 2000).

8.3.3.22 Theme 29: How to Constructively Deal with Challenges Inter-religious Couples Face

8.3.3.22.1 Data Analysis

In order to combat religious ignorance in an inter-religious marriage, one should assimilate knowledge of the new religion that one is exposed to by engaging in research. The couples should develop communication skills in areas they are lacking and also be conscious of the partner's feelings and strive to make the relationship work as they chose to be in it. The couple may lack understanding and patience to accept the different religious background of the partner. Prior to marriage decisions should be taken on where to marry; what religion to follow; how to raise the children; and including consideration of identity of children and family; and finally what religious practices should be observed. Always it is important to reach a compromise and attend pre-marital and even marriage counselling events. The respondents agree that though inter-religious marriages are not easy, for success the couple has to practice respect, be responsible, honest and sincere.

8.3.3.22.2 Interpretation

The support structures of inter-religious couples should engage in education of the religion or religions practiced by the couple. The family and friends should grow in their understanding of the challenges the couple faces. William and Lawler (2000: 210) said that if one is experiencing

difficulties in religious tolerance one should confide in a friend who faces similar challenges and find ways to cope and respect the partner's faith. In order to cope with challenges couples should ensure development of skills to cope with challenges, especially through communication and tolerance. Couples should be educated and made aware of working towards a common goal as this would assist them to cope with the stressors. Prior to marriage the couples of inter-religious marriages should be prepared for marriage through acculturation, the sharing of life experiences, and personal coping skills. Preparation for marriage also includes making relevant compromises especially with regard to the type and venue of marriage ceremony, religion to follow, issues around raising children and identity, and religious observances in the house. Pre-marital counselling is essential.

The couple from different religious backgrounds has to make the effort and go the extra mile to understand the religious traditions of the partner and in doing so grow in the understanding of each other – participation in certain religious traditions or even showing respect will contribute in coping with challenges. Patience in accepting differences would definitely assist in coping. Inter-religious marriages could become much happier and satisfying if respect is given to beliefs, faith, preferences, and individuality. Hence the family would experience a harmonious relationship.

8.3.3.23 Theme 30: How Inter-religious Married Couples Cope in their Relationship and How they Manage to Stay Together and Build Satisfying Relationships

8.3.3.23.1 Data Analysis

All respondents indicated that compromises need to be made in the relationship. In a situation where both religions are practiced, compromises were reached as to how children will be raised and what religious practices both will observe. The identity of each but also of the marriage relationship are two of the most important issues. Couples disclosed that if there are any conflicting feelings about one's racial, religious, or cultural identity, it needs to be sorted out as it would create confusion, conflict and pain in a relationship. It is also important to engage in interaction prior to making major decisions. In families where one had to convert, they ensured that they were committed to a single religion and its practices and were devoted in the observance of the rituals of that religion as a family. The lines of communication were always open and they always tried to please each other.

Some of the couples indicated that they confronted their differences and issues and tried to find a solution as avoidance would create more risk in their relationships. They also indicated that couples of different religious and ethnic backgrounds need to identify the existence and nature of these differences in one another's cultural codes. If there is no clarity this may increase tension, guilt and anxiety in the relationship – with understanding, one may be able to deal with the issues.

Some couples who practiced both religious traditions found that there were benefits in holidays as they were exposed to celebrate double holidays or events. They also mentioned engaging in common interests, fun and games in order to relieve stressors. Learning the partner's language and sharing cultural interests have strengthened some of the marriage relationships. Some respondents mentioned that inter-religious marriages means that one acquires communication skills that one would not otherwise have. Working together towards a common goal was also listed as a way couples could develop a common purpose and also deal with stressors. Others felt that their own personal preparation for marriage through acculturation, life experience, and personal coping skills were resources for their inter-marriage. The strong sense of commitment to their spouse, and to the marriage as an institution have contributed towards a successful relationship – they believed that their love for each other can overcome any differences they have. They believe that problems should be resolved quickly and that they should endeavour to make the marriage a safe and secure place for both.

8.3.3.23.2 *Interpretation*

Compromises are essential for any inter-religious marriage to work. The diverse potential of conflicts should be resolved or a way to cope with them should be addressed prior to the marriage or even prior to children being born, especially to deal with the matter of the identity of children. Gainnes and Ickes (1997) indicated that research reveals that inter-faith couples often lack coping skills. If one party converts, the commitment to a single religion and its practices must be maintained. Clarity must be sought and differences cleared concerning ethnicity in order to alleviate tension, guilt, shame and anxiety in the relationship – communication, patience and understanding will contribute to a victorious, harmonious and healthy marriage. Focus on common interests and entertainment may also strengthen the relationship. A strong sense of commitment to each other will assist in the relationship. Also the success of the mixed-religion partnership depends on respect for one another (cf. <http://aimee-larsen-stoddard.suite101.com/2009>). Sung (1990: 347) found in

his study that inter-cultural couples have a strong commitment to the relationship, are very flexible and that they are more resourceful in dealing with differences – much more so than their peers from the same religion and culture.

The couple also needs to be made aware that the differences in religious beliefs are inevitable, irreversible and irresolvable. In order to foster commonality, and common and shared understandings, coping skills are necessary. This consciousness that religious differences cannot be solved should cause the couple to accept the differences but continue to strengthen their love for each other as this is crucial for a satisfying and successful inter-religious marriage.

8.3.3.24 Theme 31: Counselling Needs in Inter-religious Marriage

8.3.3.24.1 Data Analysis

50% of respondents did not choose to receive counselling and 50% attended counselling sessions to deal with the religious challenges they face and even to come to a decision as to which religion to follow and when an attempt should be made to come to a compromise. Therefore, at times there is a need for intervention from an expert or support from family and friends. In seeking professional help, they were able to learn when to talk and when to give each other space. However, most Christian partners refused to go to a secular therapist for counselling and chose to see the Pastor.

8.3.3.24.2 Interpretation

Not all couples will seek counselling when faced with issues during marriage or even prior to marriage. Outside intervention is necessary, especially from family to drive couples to seek support and counselling and a way forward to resolve issues that they fail to resolve. The counsellor will facilitate a situation where they can come to mutual understandings or offer suggestions as to how to work around problematic issues. The expert intervention would guide the couples to inward reflection, self-searching and re-connecting with spirituality. It is clear that some Christians are instructed into believing that secular counselling has no place as Biblical counselling is sufficient to influence change in people. The Biblical counsellor focuses on the deepest problems related to sin and contravening God's will. But psychological and secular counselling approaches suggest practical strategies as to how to overcome negative thought patterns and behavior. It is imperative

to use both and integrate Biblical Spiritual methods with psychological theories – a Psycho-Spiritual counselling model is the ideal. Therefore, sometimes or always an external neutral intervention and even literature with coping techniques is required to assist couples in understanding and to reach a solution. Ata and Furlong (2005: 200-209) disclosed some identified patterns of coping with inter-faith challenges (see literature review chapter 2).

8.3.3.25 Theme 32: Possible Counselling and/or Support Group Assistance to Couples and Children from Inter-religious Marriages

8.3.3.25.1 Data Analysis

60% of respondents indicated that they received acceptance and support from their families and friends. All respondents indicated that the assistance from counsellors and support groups are definitely necessary to help couples in inter-religious marriages. The family and friends should respect the inter-religious couple's decision to marry and make them feel welcome – this inculcates trust between the family, friends and couples. Families and friends bring stability to inter-religious marriages. Attending religious services together with friends and family definitely assisted the couples. Assistance from other inter-married couples was also of great help. The couples indicated that they were positive and supported each other.

8.3.3.25.2 Interpretation

The success of the marriage depends on how much preparation was made prior to marriage, especially during pre-marital counselling as major decisions are taken that would impact on the marriage. The acceptance by family, friends and even from counsellors play a vital role to rescue and assist couples with inter-religious issues and decisions. Family support, tolerance and respect to decisions taken by the couple will certainly contribute to the stability of the couple's relationship and even with their immediate families. Also the support and acceptance (positive response) from the community at religious gatherings will give the couple dignity and confidence to build their relationship especially religiously. Crohn (1995: 9) stated that religious practices cannot be separated from the life of a community and as such family loyalty gives a person a sense of belonging. Couples that expressed that they experienced intolerance and lack of support from the family indicated that they were pressured into converting from Hinduism to Christianity

by doctrines of the faith and beliefs pertaining to the theology of being “saved and unsaved”. Couples also indicated that the Hindu families were accommodating but the Christians did not reciprocate the respect (cf. also <http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>). Families may also bully a person in ending a relationship without any support or respect (cf. <http://aimee-larson-stoddard.suite101.com/2009>).

8.3.3.26 Theme 33: Advice to Newly Married Inter-religious Couples

8.3.3.26.1 Data Analysis

All respondents indicated that pre-marital counselling is imperative and major decisions that may have impact on the marriage must be taken prior to marriage. It was recommended that a single religion is an advantage for new couples. It was also stated that one must look for friends with whom you have as much as possible in common. Hence, if they seek for commonness, these couples will not be apt to experience conflicts. It was also disclosed that lines of communication must always be open. Each partner must be committed to the marriage and endeavour to make it work. They must make it their goal to please each other and always try to reach a compromise where no one will give in. They must find ways of dealing with conflicts maturely.

8.3.3.26.2 Interpretation

Decisions and compromises on how to deal with inter-religious marriage issues and living arrangements must be made and settled with each other and family before the marriage. Couples will be advised that the practice of a single religion in the house will be an advantage for them and for the fostering of a healthy relationship. Couples, when choosing a partner, should focus on the commonness in their religions and ethnicities. This will reduce complications after marriage. Communication, understanding, respect, tolerance, and commitment to the relationship and marriage to work are essential. In issues of no agreement, a compromise must be reached and maturity is required in dealing with conflicts. Sung (1997: 347) in his research conclusion indicated that inter-cultural couples must be willing to make a change, have strong commitment to their relationship, share commonness and become aware of the difficulties they will be exposed to. Couples of mixed-faith should focus on how to create a loving, supporting, nourishing, and

empowering relationship in the face of potential religious conflicts that may cause the couples to drift apart (cf. also <http://www.SuaraAnum.com.htm/2001>).

Bryan Wood indicated that the following is a stumbling block for successful inter-religious marriages and should not be ignored (<http://www.bryanwood.co.za/2012>): Religious differences should be addressed and not ignored; not recognizing or respecting the religious traditions of the partner; believing that love only matters and love will fix every issue; ignoring the in-laws or family concerns; and denial that there will be challenges and inter-religious issues to overcome.

The saddest one left out in this list is not mentioning the importance of counselling. Counsellors are experienced people who are there to assist and support couples in inter-religious marriages. Through counselling, couples are able to come to a better understanding of the factors that impact their relationship, as well as gain skills to deal with these challenges. This will prevent them from experiencing issues that remain unresolved in the relationship.

8.3.3.27 Theme 34: Views on whether a Person should Marry Outside their Faith

8.3.3.27.1 Data Analysis

80% of the interviewees indicated that a person should not marry outside their religion and culture as the challenges are too enormous. On the other hand, 20% indicated that it is the choice of the individual. For them, conversion and the following of a single religion as solutions.

8.3.3.27.2 Interpretation

It is clear from this research that marriage outside the faith, religion and culture is not recommended by the interviewees as the challenges that a couple would be faced with outweighs the issues that would be experienced by same faith marriages. Inter-religious marriages are challenging as religions often may contradict each other (cf. also <http://www.intermarriages.htm/2007>). A single faith or religion would be highly recommended or one of the partners should convert and a single religion should be practiced and observed in the house. Most people continue to marry in their own faith groups, although inter-religious marriages are on the increase. Most South Africans still choose mates of the same religion and

also date within their own race (cf. Kephart 1981: 236; Bell 1967: 142). Ata and Furlong (2005: 200-209) disclosed from their research findings some patterns identified and one of them is *Conversion or annexation* where one partner converts.

In conclusion it is clear from the research that the challenges of inter-religious marriages are too enormous and will definitely require immense support from counsellors, religious groups, family and friends for the marriage to be successful. For a marriage to work there must be compromises. It is encouraged that it is safe for a person to choose a partner for marriage from their own religion and culture. On the same note it was clear that a single religion must be practiced and common religious practices advocated for inter-religious marriages. If one of the partners converts it would alleviate the religious problems. Also inter-religious marriage may work if 'problematic' religious practices are not observed. The research also reveals that the practice of two cultures and the observance of two religious traditions can cause identity confusion, instability and discontent to the marriage, family and especially to the children. On the other hand, if one faith is practiced it can alleviate religious conflict and hence produce harmony in the marriage. Love and commitment to the marriage by both partners can overcome any challenge. If the couple overcome their religious differences and become tolerant in observing each other's faith, they would succeed in an inter-religious marriage relationship. For an inter-religious marriage to work the couple must be able to cope with religious and cultural conflicts. The six identified patterns of coping with inter-faith challenges of the research listed by Ata and Furlong (2005: 200-209) which are discussed in chapter two of the literature review, have also been evident in this research, e.g. conversion or annexation; ignoring or withdrawing; compromising and negotiating; pastoral/ecumenical yielding and respect for otherness.

Finally, the researcher stresses that caution must be practiced as to the generalization of the outcome of this research as voluntary participants and a convenient sample was used in this research. Much study is still necessary to establish how best to address inter-religious marriage differences and to help couples discover similarities and strengths, especially through therapy and counselling.

8.4 CONCLUSION

Inter-religious marriages are no longer (more) a taboo in South Africa though it is still one of the

great spiritual challenges to religionists. In the past, the difficulties of reconciling two faiths often led inter-religious couples to observe neither religion. But today many find that creatively practicing two faiths in one family or to decide to only follow one religion is worth the challenge.

There are five primary tasks that couples in inter-religious marriages can take on to create successful relationships: Face the issues; clarification of different religious and cultural codes; sort out confusion about one's own identity; be aware of the social context of one's relationship; and find one's own path and how to help one's children find theirs.

People who really care about each other can end up destroying their relationships because they fear dealing with problems that are obvious to both of them. Facing the issues may be difficult and frightening, but it is far less risky than avoiding them. One of the most important tasks for partners in inter-marriage is to learn to understand and deal with the differences in the religious and cultural codes and practices, which they have brought into the relationship. And when either partner of the inter-religious marriage have conflicting feelings about his or her own racial, religious, or cultural identity, it can create confusion, conflict, and pain in a relationship. Societal attitudes about racial, cultural, or religious inter-marriage will have a major impact on how well the relationship is accepted by family, friends, and strangers. The biggest challenge most inter-cultural couples face is in raising children. Finding creative ways to explain and helping children develop a clear sense of identity are complex tasks. Couples of inter-marriage need to learn to be especially skillful in handling difficulties within their relationships and dealing with their differences, including the children.

All inter-faith marriages pose new challenges. The challenges begin with the wedding ceremony. Muslims, for instance, do not permit religious symbols in their worship space and consider prayers to "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" as violations of their belief in one God. Hindus, meanwhile, have multiple gods and symbols. Cultural customs, such as dietary and alcohol restrictions, complicate things further. Religious and cultural values are sometimes difficult to disentangle. We live today in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. We mix freely with, and respect people of all faiths. There should therefore be more religious tolerance.

From the empirical research it has become clear that for a marriage to work, compromises must be reached to observe religious traditions and practices. If one of the couple converts it would alleviate

the religious problems. Also inter-religious marriages may work if 'problematic' religious practices are not observed. If the couple overcome their religious differences and become tolerant in observing each other's faith, they would be able to succeed in an inter-religious marriage relationship. A husband and wife in an inter-faith marriage each brings deeply rooted beliefs and values to the relationship. It is not different religions or the act of disagreeing that threatens an inter-faith marriage. Rather, it is unresolved conflict over religious issues. So even with differing beliefs, inter-faith couples can have a happy marriage if they work out a plan for handling religious issues in their relationship.

The strategies, such as commitment to marriage; learning conflict skills; respecting religious differences; to compromise and to find a common ground to live together; choose the religion in which the children will grow up; and choose the religious holidays to celebrate, have been identified to overcome the challenges of inter-religious marriage. The support from friends and family is most necessary and can alleviate external pressures. Pre-marital counselling, including on-going counselling of inter-religious marriages and relationships should not be ignored but made a requirement for inter-religious marriages.

Marital adjustment is the degree to which a couple gets along with each other or have a good working relationship and are able to satisfy each other's needs over the marital life course. It is an on-going process, and this chapter highlighted some of the dynamics in this life-long engagement. The next chapter focuses on the developing of an integrated counselling model for inter-religious marriage counselling.

CHAPTER NINE

A COUNSELLING MODEL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this research is to produce a Psycho-Spiritual marriage counselling model that can be used by counsellors in inter-religious marriages. Since humans are complicated integrated beings, an integrative approach to counselling practice is employed which focuses on thinking, feeling, and acting – this combination gives a comprehensive approach to practice counselling (cf. Berne 1961: 15; Perry 1991: 66 and Corey 2009: 1). Counselees can be helped with their needs by counsellors making use of integrative techniques and theories. The counsellor may also utilize systematic or technical eclecticism, where they employ a particular technique or theory but also borrow from other approaches. The eclecticists use procedures from various sources without necessarily subscribing to the theories or disciplines from which they derive. The best eclectic treatment procedure is used instead of just a single one relevant to counselees' problems (cf. Lazarus 1992: 17; Lazarus 1996: 59 - 68; Colledge 2002: 258; Norcross & Newman 1992: 3).

This chapter will focus on the Pastoral care counselling and psychotherapy that form the ingredients of the Psycho-spiritual model being proposed. On the one hand it recognises the distinctions between Christian counselling and secular counselling. On the other hand, the model integrates the two approaches into one model with different facets.

Christian counselling is embedded in Biblical beliefs and spirituality. In this context, Pastoral counselling uses a variety of healing methods to help people deal with challenges they experience in ways that are consistent with Biblical teachings. Light is also shed on Psychotherapy to disclose that it is an in-depth process to change the way counselees think, their attitude to life and to make them spiritually aware. Pastoral psychotherapy and Christian counselling, when used together can be called a Psycho-spiritual counselling approach. In order to motivate for this approach in the context of inter-religious marriage counselling, there are eight facets to consider. These are the distinctions between Pastoral Care Counselling and Psychotherapy; the analysis of Christian Counselling versus Secular Counselling; the Principles of Christian Counselling; Marriage Counselling and Coping Strategies; Inter-religious Marriage Counselling; Counselling and

Christian Spirituality; and Coping Strategies.

Forgiveness is the main healer in a marriage relationship, since without it no counsellor can achieve any success in assisting counsellees in their relationships. Therefore in any kind of the facets of counselling couples in inter-religious marriages need to accept this fact. It is important for coping skills in pre-marital counselling, cross-cultural marriages, marital conflicts, and crisis counselling. The highlight of this discussion is the introduction of Clinebell's marriage growth counselling approach as part of the Psycho-Spiritual Model proposed here, especially his *Human Potential Approach* which is linked to *self-actualization* and also the *Person-Centered model*, which both run through the Psycho-Spiritual model like a thread.

Before discussing inter-religious marriage counselling, it is important to focus on pre-marital counselling. If counselling already starts here, the couple will be well prepared for challenges that may arise in marriage. Here, the important factors are to already at this point cover aspects such as repressed feelings of guilt, identity confusion, self-esteem, and disassociation. Counselling should be a pre-requisite prior to marriage as the challenges of inter-religious relationships can be addressed and dealt with earlier – life changing decisions can already be made at the pre-marital counselling stage. This is followed by inter-religious marital counselling where the focus is on repressed emotions and feelings, self-actualization, the inability to analyse and solve problems in the relationship, distorted cognitions, behaviour and emotions, and dysfunctional families.

For the Psycho-Spiritual model, the techniques prevalent in different therapy approaches that are appropriate and relevant are chosen. These mainly come from Psychoanalysis; Client-Centred approaches; the Rational Emotive approach; Cognitive Behavioural therapies; and the Multimodal approach by Lazarus, including Christian Spirituality. Drawing on these approaches, the Psycho-Spiritual model focuses on the factors that are a reality and actually experienced in inter-religious marriages. People are affected by stimuli they are exposed to from the environment, from interaction with other people, and their own interactions – they react to these stimuli either in a positive or negative way. Firstly, their cognition (thinking) is affected negatively or positively (values and beliefs are formed). Secondly, their feelings (emotions) are affected, either negatively and positively. Thirdly, there is an impact on change in attitude and behaviour negatively or positively. In the Psycho-Spiritual approach, the focus is on eradicating the negative actions which

are detrimental to the inter-religious marriage, because they stifle the growth and self-actualization of an individual. The above combination of aspects of the main Psychotherapy models are necessary in order to help counselees understand their beliefs and assumptions, deal with their conflicts and to start living in a more actualised way. The Psycho-Spiritual counselling approach assists clients to mobilize their competencies and potential in areas of thinking, feeling, and acting. In this regard, it is also an integrative counselling method because it mainly assists counselees to integrate aspects of these models into their relationships in the context of the diversity present in religion, and a diverse cultural background (cf. Ryle 1997: 42; Lazarus 1996: 60).

In order to develop this model information will also be drawn from the data retrieved earlier in the research, especially the theories, counselling models, and interviews for the empirical research. Information will also be retrieved from the respondents' experiences (mostly negative experiences) and how they overcame challenges and made inevitable decisions to move on with their lives to ensure success and optimal functioning. However, it must be noted that fictitious names of the respondents are used to protect counselees and avoid repercussions from occurring.

The model will also disclose that Christian counselling and spirituality should be integrated and used within the integrated counselling model (dependent on the counselee's religion). In developing the counselling model, the next section will consider Pastoral Counselling and Psychotherapy.

9.2 PASTORAL CARE COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Counselling attempts to provide encouragement and guidance for those who are facing conflicts, losses, decisions, or disappointments. Counselling can stimulate personality growth and development; help marriages cope more effectively with their problems, with inner conflict, and with crippling emotions; assist individuals, family members to resolve tensions or relate effectively to one another, and assist individuals whose life patterns are self-defeating, and lack fulfillment. Only when a real problem is identified, finding a solution may be possible (<http://www.patheos.com/2013>).

The Christian counsellor seeks to bring individuals into a closer personal relationship with Jesus Christ and help them find forgiveness and relief from the crippling effects of sin and guilt.

Ultimately, the Christian hopes to help others become disciples of Christ and disciplers of others (Kirwan 1984: 42).

Kirwan continues by making a distinction between Pastoral care, Pastoral counselling and Psychotherapy. Pastoral care refers to the church's overall ministries of healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling people to God and to one another. Pastoral counselling is a more specialized part of Pastoral care that involves helping individuals, families, or groups as they cope with the pressures and crises of life. Pastoral counselling uses a variety of healing methods to help people deal with problems in ways that are consistent with Biblical teachings. The ultimate is to help counselees experience healing, learning, and personal spiritual growth. Pastoral psychotherapy is a long-term, in depth helping process that attempts to bring fundamental changes in the counsellee's personality, spiritual values, and ways of thinking. It is a form of help-giving that seeks to remove blocks, often from the past, that inhibits personal and spiritual growth. It is the work of a trained specialist. However, in moving towards a marriage counselling model, the Pastoral care counselling (Christian counselling) and psychotherapy approaches can interface to form a Psycho-Spiritual counselling model to accommodate inter-religious marriages. In this context, we need to make a distinction between Christian counselling and Secular counselling.

9.3 CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING VERSUS SECULAR COUNSELLING

According to Kirwan (1994: 2), "Counselling is a facilitative process in which the counsellor, working within the framework of a special helping relationship uses specific skills to assist people to help themselves more effectively." Christian counselling gives Christians spiritual guidance and direction. They are assisted to perceive and understand God's ways and how to form a relationship with God and to please him in their actions, attitude and living. The client is assisted to identify and understand the problems they face and suggestions are made according to Biblical principles as to the spiritual direction to follow in resolving the problems faced.

In order to fulfil this purpose of counselling, there are differences between Christian, Christ-centered counselling and Secular counselling. The main difference is due to the fact that, what people accept and believe as truth about themselves, others and God and how to meaningfully live life, here on earth, is different from the secular view on life. The Bible guides a Christian to be cautious and not easily conform to worldly thinking but test it to know that it is in line with

the will of God and to know what is good, acceptable and perfect (Romans 12: 2). The Christian point of view is that challenges experienced, and problems of the past may be identified and dealt with in terms of the will of God as revealed in the Bible, coupled with the introspection of the believer. The uncovering of the problematic issues is mainly to encourage dependence on God's grace, power and provisions (John 15: 1-10) (<http://www.newbeginningsclinic.com/christ-centered.htm/2010>). This must be done in the Biblical context of humanity as sinful and separated from God and that it is only through Christ that people can be made whole again and become new creatures.

Ultimately, Secular Counselling humanity has the innate potential to solve its own problems. Secular Psychology is built upon theories that hold that introspection and self-examination will somehow cause a change in the client and situation and assist one to constructively deal with the challenges one faces. Ultimately, secular counsellors leave the individuals to decide what is best for themselves without any standards to meet. In Christian counselling, the client is guided to live according to the will of God and by God's standards – the Bible is the measuring tool for the truth.

Secular Psychology move people to independence and self reliance, and facilitate processes through which they could reach their full potential. Secular counselling or psychological counselling after understanding what the incorrect thinking and bad behavior are, seeks to find ways to deal with the challenges. On the contrary, in Christian counselling the focus is on the sin problem and the relationship with God, including its eternal consequences – the Christian develops sufficiency in God alone – to have fellowship and intimacy with God (<http://www.patheos.com/2013>).

The difference between Pastoral counselling and Secular counselling is that Pastoral counselling is then that the latter is God-centered. Clinebell (1966: 93) writes that Christian counselling differs from ordinary counselling, in that God can rarely be entirely omitted from pastoral counselling and that ethical and religious matters are very likely to arise. This however, does not preclude Christian counselling to also draw on psychological practices. Christian counselling draws from secular therapy and modern psychological techniques and together with Biblical beliefs and ethos can form Christian spiritually-orientated counselling approaches. These approaches endeavor to help counselees in need of Christian counselling but draws on secular

counselling since it also endeavours to assist people to overcome problems, find meaning in life and aims at influencing people's health and well-being. The main distinction though is that Christian counselling focuses on the teachings of the Bible and Christianity, including guidance, devotion and prayer which are not practices in secular therapy (<http://www.therapy.org.htm/2013>).

With regard to one main approach in Christian counselling we can refer to Adams (1980: 44) and his nouthetic approach. This is a type of Christian counselling that is God-centered and uses solely the teachings of the Bible in counselling. Adams (1980: 47) says that the basis for Christian counselling is the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is his counselling textbook. The Bible was given to help humanity come to the saving faith in Christ and then to transform believers into God's image (11 Timothy 3: 15-17). According to Adams (1980: 50) it is God who created human beings, and therefore when a human being is troubled God cannot be ruled out of a human being's affairs. God's Word is powerful and can transform a person's life completely despite the circumstances. Adams further argues that it is only Christ who can change the heart of a human being, which is where good and bad things originate. Adams has correctly affirmed the usage of scripture as a means for opening people to the healing God of the Bible. The Bible contains many truths, which are pertinent in the counselling process.

Adams further stated that counselling that cannot change the person's heart (thinking, feeling, attitude and action) is inadequate (<http://www.patheos.com/2013>). Adams neglects the use of secular therapy, and psychological approaches more broadly speaking. Adams even criticized the use of psychological theory and methods in Christian counselling. However, secular psychologists and Christian counsellors drawing on secular theories and approaches criticized this extreme view as it ignored human sufferings and emotions and also that it lacks the deeper understanding of the complexities of human nature. Some secular counsellors support Christian approaches that draw on secular approaches but they do not support Adams's nouthetic counselling approach. It is too limited and one-dimensional.

In more general terms, Christian counselling has many things in common with secular counselling. It overlaps, since it also endeavours to assist people to overcome problems, find meaning to life and to influence people's health and well-being. Where the ways split though, is that Christian counselling includes the teachings of Bible and Christianity, including spiritual

guidance, devotion and prayer as central components in counselling (<http://www.therapy.org.htm/2013>). These aspects do not form part of Secular counselling.

The Christian counsellor should have an understanding of the problems pertaining to inter-religious marriage (how they arise and how they might be resolved) – a knowledge of Biblical teachings about these problems and familiarity with counselling approaches and skills. Once the problem of the inter-religious couple is identified, a challenge should follow as to how the problem can be resolved. The Christian counsellor seeks to bring individuals into a closer personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to help them find forgiveness and relief from the crippling effects of sin and guilt. Ultimately, the Christian hopes to help others become disciples of Christ and disciples of others (cf. Kirwan 1984: 42; Narramore 1960: 133; Worthington 192: 14-15).

Some believe that secular counselling is not relevant to the counselling of Christians and that Pastoral counselling is sufficient to counsel Christians. However, others acknowledge that Christian counselling should integrate Biblical spirituality and psychological secular counselling (<http://www.therapy.org/htm/2013>). It is also the view of the researcher that a Psycho-Spiritual model that combines both sets of approaches is important, especially for inter-religious marriages.

9.4 THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING

The Christian counsellor has the responsibility of both aiding the individual believer and building the body of Christ. The counsellor, Pastor or Minister is guided by certain principles, which are the authority of the Bible, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 14: 16-17), and the totality of a person. The counsellor's base will be the authority of the Bible which is very positive and will empower the counsellees to make choices in order to change their behaviour and experience spiritual and emotional healing. A high percentage of individuals in inter-religious relationships will experience emotional pain, inner conflict, guilt, resentment, unforgiveness, and anger (cf. Adams 1980: 52; and Meier 1982: 17). The Christian counsellor must assist couples to deal constructively with these experiences and emotions.

As a Christian Counsellor, counselling must be in harmony with the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The Psychoanalysis approach, the Client-Centred approach, the Cognitive Behavioural approach, Reality Emotive Therapy and even the Multimodal approach by Lazarus must be integrated in Christian counselling.

9.4.1 Biblical Authority in Counselling

The book of Proverbs, with which King Solomon is associated with, contains many thoughts on counselling. Its wealth of wisdom for counsellors covers topics such as the cultivation of wisdom and rules for child development and mental health. Proverbs's therapeutic wisdom was directive because its counsel agreed with the counsel of God and the wisdom of his time.

The facilitative approach in Client-Centered therapy (Rogers 1951) is somewhat evident in King Solomon's as recalled in 1 Kings 3: 16-27. Two women fought over a child and each one claimed it was theirs. The women and the child came before King Solomon. Since both women refused to give in, it was up to King Solomon to make a decision. King Solomon played on the women's emotions and decided in the presence of the women to divide the child into two and share the body among the two women. The one woman consented but the other woman refused and indicated the child must be given to the other woman instead of being slain. King Solomon realized that the woman who stopped the action was truly the child's biological mother and she was given the child. We also understand from the above illustration that practical wisdom influences thinking, behaviour and action (cf. Carter 1975: 149-160; Glasser 1965: 18; Meier 1982: 315).

In the New Testament, Paul is also an example of a wise counsellor. One can see in his writings to early Christians some of the ideas later developed by Freud (1976). Freud's id for instance may correspond to what Christians call the "old nature." Freud's superego corresponds roughly to the conscience. The ego corresponds to the will. In one passage Paul writes: "May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless" (1Thess. 5: 23). He refers to the body, soul (mind, emotions and will), spirit, flesh, a good but weak law of the mind, an evil law of the members, a supreme law of the Spirit, an eternal deadening law, and how all those factors interrelate (Meier 1982: 335).

Jesus Christ, of course, was the Counsellor of counselees. We can all learn from him, because he had perfect insight into human problems and was able to share that insight with others. He was an expert at asking questions, using them to teach, to rebuke irresponsible behaviour, and to help others gain insight. He genuinely cared for others, giving them a feeling of self-worth. Because of his warm and personal concern for them, people were able to deal with their problems and not feel threatened. He could act in a way, be it rebuking, or by being friendly, as appropriate.

Jesus Christ could counsel others because of his close relationship with God the Father and because He understood human problems. He not only knew what people needed to do to deal with their problems, but also knew how to motivate people to change. Often he would lay down guidelines or formulate a plan to help individuals deal with their problems.

Christ was a master counsellor with perfect balance. He knew to be directive and when to be suggestive. He knew when to deal with the past and when to deal with the present. He knew the importance of feelings, but he also knew how to effect behavioural changes.

With regard to inter-religious marriages, the Bible also provides some practical steps to promote racial, cultural and religious harmony: Numerous biblical principles can be presented to believers to help them in interpersonal relationships – principles that also can greatly enhance inter-religious relationships (cf. Mercer 1996: 15; Crohn 1995: 25). These include consideration for others (Matthew 7: 12), avoid showing partiality (James 2: 1-4), being equitable in personal relationships (Proverbs 11: 1), modeling Christlikeness (Matthew 5: 44), obeying God's command to love Him and one's neighbour (Matthew 22: 37, 39), and following the example of neighbourliness of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10: 25-37).

An important spiritual issue for many religious couples and individuals is that of forgiving those who have wronged them, or asking forgiveness of those whom they injured. Christian clients, in particular, are likely to view forgiveness as a Biblical mandate and as a moral obligation (Frame, 2003). Jesus said in Matthew (18:22) in response to the question concerning how many times one must forgive. Jesus answered 77 x 7 times, meaning that it is ongoing - as it is only in forgiveness and being forgiven, that one experiences peace of heart, mind, and soul. One may experience release from anger and the actions that are associated with retribution and revenge through forgiveness. Forgiveness is considered as a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment,

negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour towards the person who unjustly injured one. Forgiveness is considered a virtue not only in Christianity, but also by other religions as well. The belief in a Supreme Being shapes the way forgiveness is conceived. In Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, there is a God who models forgiveness for humans. Forgiveness is one of the spiritual interventions most frequently used by counselors. Some researchers have found that promoting forgiveness among clients result in clients experiencing more positive affect, in improved mental health, a greater sense of personal power, reconciliation between alienated persons, and freedom to grow. However, clients should be ready to forgive. It cannot be forced (cf. Richards & Bergin 1997: 11).

Expectations for the other member to conform to one's own religious and cultural characteristics must be repudiated. The differences of traditions, rituals, identity, etiquette, leadership, communication, and work ethic may be distinct in inter-religious marriage or relationships. The counsellor must make a particular effort to pose questions and assign homework that will draw these differences out for the couple to clearly see. Some of these particular differences will now be investigated, keeping in mind that they pertain to all marriages, but especially in inter-religious marriages (cf. Mercer 1996: 15; Crohn 1995: 25).

The ultimate issue that must be addressed is that of authority. What will be the authority in the home and what gives that authority? If the new home about to be built is going to honour God, it must accept and embrace the authority and sufficiency of God's Word (2 Timothy 1: 13; 2: 15; 3: 15-17). The Scriptures must be what defines love, what dictates roles, what establishes parenting guidelines and so on. Once the couple understands this, then they know where to go when trouble arises. Out of these issues, quite probably the most common that will arise will be the authority in the home. If the Scriptures are given their proper respect, then the answers will be available to both the husband and the wife (cf. Evans 1974: 62-64; Kirwan 1984: 185-189).

The counsellees need to realize that in most cultures the husband is regarded as the head of the home. However, this position may not be abused to such an extent that the beliefs systems and values are forced onto the "weaker vessel" by using the doctrine of submission. Esther, for instance, although she was submissive to her husband and practiced his religion, did not give up on studying and being a career woman. She was pro-active and made herself useful in teaching new converts at the Islamic guidance school. The couple reached a compromise and chose to

observe certain of the Christian holidays and traditions and also she did not fully follow the Muslim dress code – due to this reciprocal flexibility, free communication, understanding and racial and religious tolerance, Esther’s self-development and growth was not inhibited. She was able to bring out her potential and perform to an extent that self-actualization was possible. Counsellors can help individuals to maintain optimal potential. According to Adams (cf. 1980: 10) for the Christian, the goal in life is to be complete in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit which brings spiritual maturity and “Christ-actualization.”

The Christian Scriptures state that the husband is to be the head of the home (Ephesians 5: 23). In some cultures the wife takes on leadership roles. The counsellor should be aware of these issues and help the inter-cultural couple understand that while they do not need to forsake their cultural identity, there may be elements that they have to integrate in their own relationship. What is important is that the Ephesians text starts off by saying that the married couple must be submissive to one another – they must serve one another. This is an important aspect of married relationships, and often forgotten by pastors. So, compromises must be reached prior to marriage so that couples know how they will interact once married. The counsellor must ensure that this is clearly understood by the non-Christian partner (cf. Hendricks 2002: 61; Evans 1974: 62; Eyrich 1987: 71; Crohn 1995: 25-41; Meier 1982: 3-9).

9.4.2 Why Christian Counselling is Unique

Christian counsellors use many techniques that have been developed and used by non-believers, but Christian counselling has at least four distinctive characteristics. Meier (1982: 18) states that the counsellor seeks to help change behaviour, attitudes and values, to inculcate social skills and/or perceptions - teach problem-solving skills; and increase counsellees’ competence and “self-actualization.” It has been noted that secular counselling does the same. However, the Christian goes a step further in stimulating spiritual growth in counsellees, to encourage confession of sin and the expression of divine forgiveness to model Christian standards, attitudes, values and lifestyles, to present the gospel message, encouraging counsellees to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and to stimulate counsellees to develop values and live lives that are based on Biblical teachings. The ultimate goal is to help counsellees experience healing, learning and personal spiritual growth.

From Christian perspective, successful families and marriages are established and maintained on the principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work and wholesome recreational activities – however, the understanding of this, especially in inter-faith marriages can cause great conflict between spouses. It may not be the different religion but rather unresolved conflict over religious issues that may cause friction. Even with differing beliefs, inter-faith couples can have a happy marriage if they work out religious issues in the relationship. The counsellor should assist the couples of different religious beliefs to overcome miscommunication, misunderstanding, resentment and guilt – religious doctrines are very detrimental if not dealt with by counsellees cautiously. Counsellors should instill in counsellees the critical ingredient of commitment to the inter-religious relationship, assist in learning conflict skills and to nurture respect of religious differences. Counsellees should be guided to reach compromises, find commonalities to live together and to choose a religion the children should practice in order to avoid identity confusion – holidays should also be selected as it can also cause conflict (cf. Heaton 1984: 736; Chinitz 2001: 733; Greenstein 1993: 428-431, 732; William & Lawler 2000: 208-210; Yob 1998: 15 -23, 72-74; Petsonk and Remsen 1988: 219-222).

9.4.3 Unique Methods and Techniques

According to Welter (1985: 48), all counselling techniques have at least four characteristics. They seek to arouse the belief that help is possible; correct erroneous beliefs about the world; develop competencies in social living; and help counsellees accept themselves as persons of worth. To accomplish these goals, counsellors consistently use such basic techniques as listening, showing interest, attempting to understand, and at least occasionally giving direction. Christians and non-Christian counsellors use many of the same helping methods. But the Christian does not use counselling techniques that would be considered immoral or inconsistent with biblical teaching. For example, encouraging couples to engage in pre-marital sexual intercourse; using abusive language; or urging counsellees to develop anti-biblical values would all be avoided, regardless of their use by secular therapists. Other techniques are distinctively Christian and would be used in Christian counselling with some frequency. Prayer in the counselling session, reading the scriptures, gentle confrontations with Christian truths, or encouraging counsellees to become involved in a local church are common examples (cf. Worthington 1982: 13; Heaton 1984: 739; Chinitz 2001: 734):

The following activities can assist the counsellor in developing focused and effective interactions with the counselee (Havens 1976: 212).

Leading is a skill through which the counsellor gently directs the conversation: “what happened next?”; “Tell me what you mean by ... ?” are brief questions that can steer the discussion in directions that will give useful information. *Reflecting* is a way of letting counselees know, that the counsellor is “with them” and able to understand how they feel or think. “You must feel ...”; “I bet that was frustrating”; “That must have been fun”; are examples of reflecting response. A brief periodic summary of what has been said can be one way of reflecting and stimulating more counselee exploration. Whenever the counsellor makes a comment, the counselee should be given an opportunity to respond. Through reflection the problems will be identified and placed outside of the counselee, thus externalizing it – positive elements will remain and negative elements will be removed. *Interpretation* involves explaining to the counselee what his or her behaviour or other events mean. This is a highly technical skill with great potential for enabling counselees to see themselves and their situations more clearly. But interpretations can also be harmful, especially if it is introduced before the counselee can handle the material emotionally, or if the interpretations are wrong. If one begins to see possible explanations for another person’s problems or actions, one should first ensure if the counselee is intellectually and emotionally ready to handle such an insight. As the counselee discusses the interpretations, he or she will often develop greater insights and be able to explore future courses of action with the counsellor. *Supporting and encouraging* are important parts of any counselling situation, especially at the beginning. When people are burdened by needs and conflicts they can benefit from the stability and care of an empathetic person who shows acceptance and gives reassurance. Support includes guiding the counselee to take stock of his or her spiritual and psychological resources, encouraging actions, and helping with any problems or failures that may come as a result of this action. A powerful learning tool is the *immediacy* response. This involves the ability of a counsellor and counselee to discuss openly and directly what is happening in the “immediate” here-and-now of the relationship. Such honest, on-the-spot statements let individuals express and deal with feelings before they build up and become problematic. Immediate responses also help counselees better understand both how their actions affect others and how they respond emotionally to interpersonal relationships. It is important for Christian counsellors to have an understanding of problems (how they arise and how they might be resolved), a knowledge of Biblical teaching about the problems, and a familiarity with counselling skills (cf. Worthington

1982: 13-18; Havens 1976: 210-215; Meier 1982: 17-18, 41-43, 2002: 98-123; Kohut 1978: 16-18; Welter 1985: 52-53; Sharf 2004: 37).

There are three approaches to counselling that is the *Expert and Common Knowledge* (non-Christian) and the *Divine Knowledge* that is the approach by Christian counselors. In the *Expert Knowledge* technique, the experts (counsellors) must do it for you as they alone possess the proper knowledge, methods and techniques and that a person is not solely responsible for his/her own actions or behaviour. However, according to scriptures, God holds people responsible for their kind of lifestyle that they adopt and live by (1 Thessalonians 5: 21).

Freud said humanity's main problem is poor socialization. Skinner the behaviourist said that the environment is the cause of human behaviour. For Freud a problem must be discovered by counsellee analysis via psychoanalysis or psychotherapy and an attempt be made at resocialization. On the other hand, Skinner says that an environmental cause of the "poor" behavior must be located and changed as to re-program the counsellee's responses – in terms of rewards and aversive control. In these approaches, the Biblical approaches to persuasion, conviction, and personal commitment are ignored. For Rogers (*Common Knowledge*), again, there is no need for an expert's views on relationships at all. He says that all people have adequate knowledge and resources to handle their own problems – the basic assumption is that persons with unresolved problems simply have not been living up to their own potential and that they have the potential within them to change behavior and do right. The counsellors must assist the clients to draw out solutions to their challenges from within themselves. This allows the client to become proactive in bringing out an answer and to solve the challenge faced – clients do not need expert advice from a counsellor. In Christian counselling though, counsellees are made to put their dependence upon God for answers and inspiration and that they as human beings are responsible for using those valid means directed and provided by God. 11 Peter (1: 3) says that "His divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and Godliness" (cf. Adams 1973: 73-86; Freud 1913: 62-65; and Rogers 1951: 76).

Carter (1975: 149-160) indicates that a counsellor should *identify problem feelings* by pinpointing the problem emotion:

... to distinguish the feeling as anxiety, resentment, or guilt, despair, or a vague sense of emptiness. Once the counsellee expresses, understands, and accepts the deepest emotional experiences felt, they will feel together and the symptoms will vanish. The counsellor should then move to the exploration of the person's attitudes and beliefs – what caused the negative feelings or problem behaviour.

The counsellor must deal with the problem thinking and assumptions and correct it by explaining the Biblical alternatives. The counsellor should assist the counsellee to seek new possibilities for coping with or changing the problem and in the process develop their own abilities – the goals must be clear, specific, priorities established, implications considered, be action orientated and the counsellee should be actively involved. As the experiences accumulate, the counsellees should develop appropriate ways of thinking and responding, which eventually should become part of their personality make-up. The counsellee can also develop specific cognitive and behavioural strengths in dealing with the accumulated life experiences and their demands for change. These abilities can be viewed as coping skills. How counsellees use these skills to deal with adversities and combat vulnerability is a measure of how they gain a sense of self and how they learn to cope with the stresses of life (cf. Meier 1982: 72; Mcmillan 2002: 82; Egan 1990: 31-43; Yufit 1988: 14; and Motto 1979: 17).

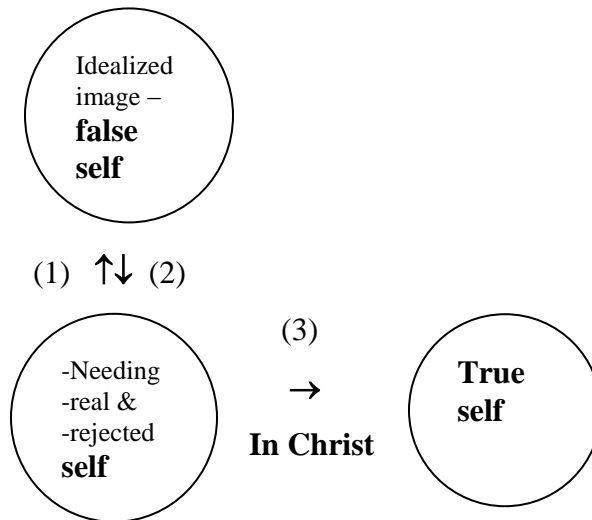
Friedmann (1978: 61) uses Bowen's theory and focuses on three things that the counsellor needs to do in order to succeed in empowering counsellees and families. Firstly, the people will be enabled by the counsellor to deal with their anxiety effectively. Secondly, the counsellor should remain connected to relationship systems as it is not only about one's self. Thirdly, the counsellor should understand that he or she is part of the relationship system. The counsellor will act as a "coach" (breaking down the problems) encouraging every member of the broader family relationship to participate (to contribute information and support) in the healing process of a family member – provide the framework for intervention and healing. The systems theory aims to identify and explore patterns of belief and behaviour in roles and relationships. In analyzing a counsellee or family as a system, reasons may be discovered for certain behaviours by family members. The clients, after understanding the reasons can make relevant changes to alter their behaviour. The counsellor of inter-faith couples should assist them in distinguishing irrational from rational beliefs in their family systems. The state of belief affects feelings and emotions and produces behaviour. Therefore, negative feelings and emotions should be changed in order to

modify behaviour in the family. Counselees must be open to experiences and be responsible for behaviour – behaviours should be goal directed and also realize meaning. The events can be understood and given meaning through their emotional, cognitive and spiritual views (cf. Denny 2006:1-16; Peterson 1996: 25; Meier 1982: 98-315, 2005: 82; and Coleman 1998: 28).

9.4.4 Goals of Christian Counselling

The ultimate goal of Christian counselling is to guide the individual towards achieving wholeness in Christ by completely accepting the real self. The figure 8.1 below illustrates that prior to accepting Christ the individual seeks to attain an idealized image (false self) as a result of being in need, empty and unsatisfied. In Christ the individual gives up the fight to attain the idealized image as he or she now, with the help of the counsellor, can move towards experiencing completeness and a true self.

Figure 9.1



According to Kirwan (1984: 185-187):

The goal of Christian therapy is to work through the counsellee's area of needs and rejected selves, and to facilitate reunification into the true self. This is possible only through acceptance of the real self based on Christ's acceptance. As the needing and rejected selves give up their struggle to attain the idealized image, the client can experience wholeness and completeness in Christ.

What steps should the Christian counsellor follow to assist the client to experience this wholeness?

First, the counsellor must ascertain the basic direction in which the troubled person is moving in order to cope with insecurities, anxiety, and depression. That is, is the client “moving towards,” “moving against,” or moving away” (Karen Horney, 1945 cited) of an integrated personality? Second, armed with this knowledge, the counsellor will be able to determine the basic form of the client’s idealized image. Third, to uncover the details of the image, the counsellor needs to acquire and correlate a great deal of specific data about the client: childhood fantasies, inherent abilities, needs, special personal experiences, individualized solutions to cope with internal conflicts, and so on. Fourth, the counsellor should deal with a client’s idealized image, which, as we noted, is the source of major difficulties. For example, it causes alienation from one’s real self by introducing an impossible standard of perfection. Moreover, the individual becomes “so alienated from his [or her] actual self by trying to live in this idealized image that he [or she] can blame all his [or her] failures upon outside forces” instead of himself or herself. The counsellor must gradually show that the struggle to attain the idealized image is a vain search for glory that can drain away one’s whole life. The emergence of the true self, the ultimate goal of Christian counselling, can occur only as the individual faces and accepts the real self. If the real self is in Christ, nothing about it should be avoided or denied. In principle, Christians have no need for an idealized image. The struggle to attain such an image betrays an inner rejection of the real self. On the basis of Christ’s death and unconditional acceptance, Christians can face the real self without resorting to deceptive attitudes and their futile flights from truth (cf. Boschof 1970: 21; Kirwan 1984: 188; and Adams 1990: 17).

It was earlier explained that the three major types of personality are rooted in an inability to cope with the excessive needs and rejection experienced by the real self. There are different methods of trying to escape from the despised negative elements of the real self. As the client comes to terms with and accepts the real self, however, the extreme characteristics of the “moving towards,” “moving against,” and “moving away” personalities will accordingly diminish in intensity. No longer afraid to face the real self, the individual can gradually drop the unhealthy perceptions, which were adopted to compensate for perceived shortcomings. The goal of the Christian counsellor is to understand what is happening inside the counsellee. As the counsellor comes to understand the counsellee, the biological factors and factors from the environment are

considered as possible reasons for the client's insecurities. The possible solutions are discussed to remove the insecurities to improve the client's image of self. Subsequently, the Pastoral counsellor would encourage the client to trust in God and to draw spiritual strength from God. The Christian counsellor would hope that the client reconcile to God in line with the Apostle Paul's word, "Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5: 20). This reconciliation Paul speaks about gives the person the hope of eternal destiny and change in their inner emotional life. Specific counselling goals will depend largely on the counsellee's problems, but any list is likely to include at least the following:

1. *Self-Understanding* is often a first step in healing. Many problems are self-imposed, but the one being helped may fail to recognize that he or she has biased perspectives, harmful attitudes, or self-destructive behaviour. Consider, for example, the suicidal adolescent who complains, "nobody likes me," but fails to see that the complaining annoys others and is a major reason for the rejection. Counsellors assist the counsellee to see what is going on within them and the life outside them.
2. Many couples' problems stem from a breakdown in *communication*. Many suicidal adolescents are unable or unwilling to communicate. The counsellee must be encouraged to communicate feelings, thoughts, and attitudes both accurately and effectively. Such communication involves clearly expressing oneself and accurately receiving messages from others.
3. *Learning and Behaviour Change* - Most of the clients' behaviour is influenced by their encounters in life. Counselling changes the client's bad habits and teaches better ways of doing things – the strengths of the counsellee may be used to realize the counsellee's goals. It may be more effective than a medical approach of healing the deficits and weaknesses.
4. *Self-Actualization* - some writers have stressed the importance of helping the clients to realise optimal potential. This is termed "self-actualization" and is proposed by some counsellors as a goal for all human beings whether or not they are in counselling. For the Christian, "Christ-actualization" might be substituted to indicate that the goal in life is to be complete in Christ, developing one's greatest potential through the power of the Holy Spirit who brings us to spiritual maturity.

5. *Support* - often individuals are able to meet the above goals and to function effectively, except for temporary periods of unusual stress or crisis. These individuals can benefit from a period of support, encouragement, and “burden bearing” until they are able to remobilize their personal and spiritual resources to meet effectively the problems of living.

6. *Spiritual Wholeness* - the heart of pastoral care and counselling is helping people deal with their spiritual needs and find spiritual wholeness. Counselees frequently fail to see or admit that there is a spiritual dimension to all human problems. The Christian counsellor, therefore, becomes a spiritual leader who guides spiritual growth, helps counselees deal with spiritual struggles, and enables them to find meaningful beliefs and values. Instead of dialogue between counsellor and counsellee, the Christian strives for a “triologue” that acknowledges the presence of God at the heart of effective people helping.

It is better if the counsellor and counsellee work together in setting goals. Such goals should be specific (rather than vague), realistic. If there are several goals, they need to be organized into some logical sequence that identifies the goals to be worked on first and, perhaps, for how long (cf. Horney, 1967: 51; Kirwan 1984: 188-189; Adams 1980: 10; Clinebell 1966: 41; and Kerr 2001: 61).

9.5 MARRIAGE COUNSELLING AND COPING STRATEGIES

9.5.1 Cross-Cultural Counselling

Cross-cultural counsellors must understand at the very outset that culture is passed on from generation to generation, through family practice and oral traditions, and through the social customs and cultural norms. It is deeply embedded in people’s minds yielding their typical religious mindsets. What intense influence culture has on people – their thinking, emotions and actions – may unconsciously be governed by certain traditional ways, or they may be reacting to these traditions. Therefore counsellors that deal with counselees should understand cultural factors in order to counsel sensitively and effectively. Inter-marriages are richer, more complex marital systems due to both partners’ religious, cultural, and racial differences – it is a challenge to cultivate a religious environment. Counsellors should be aware of the impact that religious and cultural beliefs have on the marriage – spiritual convictions can affirm a relationship, help a

couple bond through shared values and beliefs, and encourage participation in shared activities. The question would be as to what role does spirituality and faith have in the relationship of the counsellee – education about the role of cultural differences in the relationship. If an inter-faith couple is able to discuss their religious differences and respect differing viewpoints and traditions, they are better able to make constructive use of their dissimilarities and support the partners' development of their individual religious practices and identities, while they create a new blended culture that expresses their goals and values. Inter-marriage couples have to learn to live together in spite of their differences and without feeling threatened (cf. Adams 1980: 52; Fiese & Tomcho 2001: 23; Eaton 1994: 210-213; Gottman 1999: 145; Patsavos & Joanides 2000: 218; Ata 2003: 12).

Couples who focus their attention on their spiritual differences, rather than similarities, more often, have persistent conflicts that have a bitter effect on marital stability and family welfare, as well as recurrent regret and frustration. If religious differences and frustrations are not dealt with effectively, couples may begin to feel emotionally disconnected. It is critical that couples with different faiths explore each other's religious customs, values and beliefs (cf. Joanides 2004: 19; Eaton 1994: 213).

The basic procedures and skills of counselling must be flexible when helping couples from diverse cultural groups. In cross-cultural counselling the client's perception of being accepted, both in terms of himself or herself and their value system, different norms and customs, is the area in which the helping relationship is most at risk, and where the counsellor needs to devote special attention. The immediate emphasis lies in building trust with the client and limiting any negative effect on the helping relationship, which may arise from differing cultural backgrounds and personal values. The counsellor should have skills to listen and develop competencies in hearing nonverbal communication, especially when the counsellee is silent. Furthermore in inter-cultural counselling, commitment to understanding the cultural contexts and characteristics of counsellees are very essential. In traditional and non-traditional cultures, the counsellor should be flexible, listen and avoid theoretical counselling dogma (cf. Meier 1982: 336; Trimble & Jumper-Thurnman 2002: 193; Bornstein & Kazdin 1985: 74).

Counsellors should be willing to learn and develop skills to deal with cultural differences. The focus should be on the problem at hand, and to guide counsellees to establish specific, concrete

goals to solve problems. The counsellor should explore, actively challenge and acknowledge biases, prejudices and cultural assumptions about other groups. Counsellors should avoid making snap judgements based on stereotypes – more sensitivity is necessary. They should strive to work within the client's cultural frame of reference, encouraging him or her to correct cultural misunderstandings that he or she detects. The counselor should also bear in mind that some cultural groups may have different attitudes towards matters such as personal communication distance, punctuality, time schedules, etc. They should scrupulously avoid stereotyping and labeling individuals or groups, as clients may interpret any reference to stereotyping as an indication of generalization about people. They should involve the client maximally in goal-setting, and if necessary, suggest alternatives, but encourage him or her to make his or her own choices. Where appropriate, they should enquire about the client's traditional family structures and support systems as these may differ from culture to culture (cf. Sue et al. 1994: 4; Meier 1982: 336).

The counsellor should become aware of the nature of the basic ethic of religious groups and the attitudes of members of those groups. One must know what kind of social relationships are accepted and what are not, being sensitive to the local culture of the community and family. Through self-awareness one is able to help others become more self-aware and find ways to solve their own problems as they may arise. Knowing one's physical, social and spiritual place in the world is central to well-being of the counselors. There may always exist barriers to cross-cultural counselling, especially when an attempt is made to draw on more intimate aspects of the counsellee's life or unfamiliar ground is covered that may cause conflict and counsellees may display resistance or become defensive as the information may not fit with their culture (Westwood 1989: 31; Sue and Sue 1981: 44).

9.5.2 Pre-marital Counselling

Pre-marital counselling is a therapeutic couple intervention that occurs with couples who plan to marry and also an impartation of information on ways to improve their relationship once they are married. The couples who participate in pre-marital counselling experience positive psychological health and do not have serious relationship problems. Early intervention with couples is beneficial because the risk of divorce is highest in the early years of marriage. The counsellor facilitates change in behaviour and prepares the couples on family life aspects, in

which they may have limited knowledge and experience. Goals amongst others includes, enhancing the couple's communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and open discussions on sensitive issues (cf. Kreider and Fields 2001: 11; Senediak 1990: 26; Lingenfelter & Mayers 1986: 17-18).

Religious background introduces diverse sets of needs and preferences that influence the degree to which young inter-religious couples hold positive attitudes towards pre-marital counselling. Every couple comes from a unique experience even if they are from the same region, race, ethnic group, social class or religion. Even today, marrying a person of another race or religion is considered taboo by many, although acceptance has grown in recent years. The couples, who seek relationships across religious and cultural barriers, must, prior to engaging in a more serious commitment, ascertain if they would be able to adapt or accept the religious traditions and cultural differences of the partner. The pre-marital couples or couples enagaging in a relationship, must fully understand the Biblical or Islamic doctrine or Hindu culture of their partners if they marry outside their own religion – religious and cultural tolerance is imperative in corss-cutlrual and inter-religiosu marriages (cf. Alouise 2003: 91; Silliman 1995: 23; Mercer (1996: 15, 57; Crohn 1995: 3-9; Bob Stritof 2007: 2; Lehrer 1998: 245).

Biblical steps to promoting racial, cultural and religious harmony that should be applied to these marriages: Numerous biblical principles can be presented to believers to help them in interpersonal relationships – principles that can also greatly enhance inter-racial, inter-cultural and inter-religious relationships. These include consideration for others (Matthew 7: 12), avoid showing partiality (James 2: 1-4), being equitable in personal relationships (Proverbs 11: 1), modeling Christlikeness (Matthew 5: 44), obeying God's command to love Him and one's neighbour (Matthew 22: 37, 39), and following the example of neighbourliness of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37).

The ultimate issue that must be addressed is that of authority. What will be the authority in the home and what gives that authority? If the new home about to be built is going to honour God, it must accept and embrace the authority and sufficiency of God's Word from Christian perspective (2 Timothy 1: 13; 2: 15; 3: 15-17). The Scriptures must be what defines love, what dictates roles, what establishes parenting guidelines and so on. Once the couple understands this, then they know where to go when trouble arises. Out of these issues, quite probably the most common that

will arise will be the authority in the home. If the Scriptures are given their proper respect, then the answers will be available to both the husband and the wife. The Scriptures are clear that the husband and wife have different roles but that they should serve one another (Ephesians 5: 21ff). In some cultures the wife takes on a leadership role. The counsellor should be aware of these issues and help the inter-cultural couple understand that while they do not need to forsake their cultural identity, there may be elements that they have observed in their parents' home that need to be conformed to Scriptural standards. In the inter-faith relationship where the spouse to be is not a Christian, the Christian wife to be must serve her husband as scripture requires, and vice versa. However, a compromise must be reached prior to marriage that the spouse must not be hindered under any circumstances to practice his or her religion. The counsellor must ensure that this is clearly understood by the non-Christian partner. The counsellor must confront the personal matters pertaining to conversion or practicing a dual religion and expose the person to awareness of the challenges and risks they would face – especially conflict as to the raising of children within the context of racial, cultural and religious differences (cf. Evans 1974: 62-64; Hendricks 2002: 61; Crohn 1995: 6).

Another factor that may be a challenge to inter-cultural and inter-religious couples is that of ethics. Although the term 'ethic' may refer to a guiding principle of good and bad, for this research it will be used to mean 'a guiding philosophy'. Since the topic of the authority of the Scripture has already been covered, it can be assumed that anything that is dictated by scripture as morally wrong should stand for all Christians. What the Biblical counsellor should pay attention to in this realm are philosophical differences that may exist between the two cultures represented by the couples. These issues might include work, raising children, personal habits, cleanliness, and worship. The counsellor might pose some questions regarding what rituals should be observed in the house or restricted to outside the house, how many times must the Hindu partner attend the temple worship or the Christian the church services or the Muslim the mosque, should the child be christened by one culture or both, and what cultural attire or dress should the wife follow. The inter-religious and inter-cultural couple must deal with these issues with specific thought to the two cultures represented. The counsellor should be attuned to the differences that might exist between the two cultures in areas that might not otherwise create problems in relation to a guiding philosophy. It should be added that for the Christian this 'guiding philosophy' should be different from the world's thinking. This may seem obvious, but both the Biblical counsellor and the inter-religious married couple must keep in the forefront of

their minds the fact that “the world is a different world” for the Christian and for the non-Christian (cf. Lingenfelter & Mayers 1986: 57; Feinberg 1993: 51).

Of all the challenges that face married couples, communication is usually near the top of the list. With inter-cultural couples, there may be unique challenges in regard to how they communicate and what they communicate. In some cultures, men do not reveal what they are feeling, or women are not raised to be independent or they are raised to be very independent. Whatever the situation, greater challenges in communication may occur. Again, understanding each other’s culture is the key to successful interaction. For all couples, communication must be protected from contentious remarks. But the inter-cultural couple must be careful not to allow a disagreement turn into a personal attack. If an inter-cultural couple is going to experience healthy communication they must understand and exercise real diligence in developing their communication skills. Because the problem is communication, a development of healthy habits will likely not occur by default. The counsellor can be especially helpful in identifying these areas and helping each member communicate more effectively, while understanding the differences between their two cultures and the effects that their respective cultures have had on their understanding of communication. Even when two Christians come together in marriage, it is not always the case that their parents are Christians. In respect to inter-cultural couples this may present unique challenges where the parents’ homes are not submissive to God's Word. The engaged couple must effectively resolve how they will handle this unique challenge and openly communicate about it, especially in their first years of marriage. They should understand that while they can not change the cultural habits of either of their parents, their home must be established and function according to the standards they set. Crohn (1995: 25-41) indicates that the counsellees must face the issues, clarify different cultural codes, sort out the identity confusion, and understand social context (cf. Root 2002: 39; Hendricks 2002: 62-66; Eyrich 1987: 13; Mecer 1969: 58; Murstein 1976: 56-58; William 1993: 47).

9.5.3 Marital and Family Conflict Counselling

According to Paolino and McCrady (1978: 103), the successful marriage is defined on the basis of endurance, marital counselling and reported satisfaction. These observations ignore the fact that most marriage relationships are far from ideal, though the marriage does not end in divorce or separation or even that a couple does not attend marital therapy. Instead of marital adjustments,

cultural and intra-psycho factors negatively impacted the relationship. Marriage counselling and therapy entails intervention with individuals in terms of their marital and family living contexts. Their individual personality attributes, strengths and weaknesses are linked to family ties and attachment to each other. Marriage counselling is a relationship treatment that focuses on maintaining, enhancing, and strengthening the marital bond.

Family values have experienced some shift from survival and economic security to communication, companionship and love, as well as societal expectations and individual goals. The roles and expectations of women also contributed to the transformation of the modern family. Self fulfillment moved the focus from culture, traditions and responsibilities to quality family lives. Hence, couples are to become partners in the fostering of their own families. This is important because modern life also impacts on making people more independent individuals with selfish goals, styles and personality. The emphasis on equality and women empowerment has also affected households, especially in the case of domestic duties (Hart 1976: 69). This can be channeled positively or negatively in households.

In households, there may be conflict due to the differences in beliefs, interests, desires, values, expectations or competition between partners. However, partners can find creative solutions to their differences and experience an healthy relationship, if they respect and recognize different interests, engage in open and honest communication and trust each other. On the contrary, if partners are locked in power struggles, use threatening tactics, coercion and deception, it would surely contribute to mutual suspicion, lack of communication and disappointment. In general, wives may conform easily to the husband's expectations and the husband may not conform to the expectations of wives. This needs to be addressed, in the early years because it may result in the experience of a reduction in self-esteem as compared to the husbands later in life (Paolino & McCrady 1078: 5).

Previously, parents accepted responsibility for their children's financial support, moral and spiritual development, and even for their discipline. It has now shifted to democracy within the family, greater recognition between husband and wife and the children have a say in decision making. Family counselling realizes that the problems experienced by individuals are mainly due to the fact there is trouble within the social system, the family. The diverse issues of marriage, children, various changes and societal stresses can contribute to dysfunction within the marriage

and family unit. Every individual has the potential for growth and the resources to flourish. The counsellor should help the client accept responsibility for their own growth, to link new behaviours to pain and self-defeating behaviours to enhance their expectations for successful outcomes and interventions – to understand how each member of the family impact each other. Individuals should be lead to openly discuss their pain and to form family goals and also equally participate in their implementation. The therapist helps the client or members of the family to function responsibly and independently. The belief is that individuals in families and marriages have their own potential to solve their own problems – increased awareness of their feelings and mutual trust with partners and family members leads to a greater expression of inner feelings and moving towards being themselves in the family relationship. There is a greater understanding, cooperation and better communication to solve problems, clarify values and make decisions – harmony experienced in a person-centered environment. In this context, counsellors should coach, persuade and encourage clients to think and act against their own self-defeating behaviours – clients should be guided to change thinking (beliefs), feelings and the connections between thinking and emotions that result in facing certain consequences. Hence, in family and marriage counselling, the focus is on replacing the individual's irrational thinking with positive rational ones (cf. Stone 1950: 38-39; Satir 1967: 12-42; Rogers 1959: 184-256; Ellis 1977: 302-326).

According to Goldenberg (2002: 38-40) the family must be able to tolerate change to sustain continuity in a living system and maintain stability and equilibrium when faced with problems – the system's approach allows for growth, change, modification and adoption of new solutions to ensure stability in the family functioning. Family stability is rooted in change. The systems thinking provides a model for understanding the contexts of behaviour – the emphasis is on family inter-relationships over individual needs and drives in order to maintain homeostatic behaviour. The family counsellor should deal with the current on-going problems and the interactional processes that cause dysfunction.

According to Maslow (1954: 248-249),

One important aspect of a good love relationship is what may be called need identification, or the pooling of the hierarchies of basic needs in two persons into a single hierarchy. The effect of this is that one person feels another's needs as if they were his own and for that matter also feels his own needs to some extent as if they belonged to the other.

Clinebell (1975), used the growth counselling approach (4 step tool) in marriage to help couples intentionally make their marriage more liberating and mutually fulfilling. In the Intentional Marriage Method (IMM), the couples are given the four-step tool to reach their desire goals. Step 1 is *to identify and affirm the strengths of the relationship*; step 2 *identify growth areas* (needs and wants); step 3 *recontracting for change* (deciding to satisfy more mutual needs); and step 4 *taking action* (implementing plan and monitoring progress).

After the shared needs are satisfied, a move is made to address needs that don't contradict each other and then the conflict needs are addressed through negotiations and compromise. After successfully meeting shared and non-conflicting needs, it becomes easier to work on conflicting needs. The couples move towards experiencing real self-actualization when love and trust grow and each partner's needs are satisfied. Hence, the couple live in harmony which gives them satisfaction and fulfilment – the marriage is no longer self-centered and move in the direction of realizing the full potential of the marriage. The Christian doctrine emphasizes love, freedom, responsibility and justice – the couple possesses within themselves the power to create their own marriage future and intentionally changing relationship. As the Christian life-style is intentional and the growth is essential, so is making a marriage work. Clinebell continues to say that the couples have to develop their skills in self-awareness, listening, self-affirmation, risk and trusting, increasing spiritual and physical intimacy, and coping constructively with conflict. Biblically Spirituality plays a vital role in growth of the marriage from Christian perspective.

The main counselling focus in an inter-religious marriage is the questions, who is going to convert, and what about the children's faith. The couples have to choose a spiritual path that they can live out, discover and follow together. Each partner will contribute spiritual strengths towards the growth of the relationship. Worship together as a family, if this could be decided upon, is essential for satisfying marriage growth and growth in family relationships (<http://www.inter-faithfamily.com/2012>).

9.5.4 Crisis Counselling and Marriage

Marriage crisis occurs when an unusual amount of stress or conflict causes anxiety that becomes too intense for the couple. If this results in anger, resentment, dissatisfaction, frustration and

hopelessness in the relationship, outside intervention is required (<http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriageincrisis/2001>).

The institution of marriage has always been challenged. For every three couples that marry, one marriage ends in divorce. The attitudes and the practices of young adults have a great impact socially in marriage. Counsellors have to design effective strategies to assist them with regard to their needs. A recent survey shows that a happy home life is at 80% at the top of the list for many young couples; a quality marriage life, in most cases, is central, and often takes precedence over the quality of parenting. In this study, 51 percent of women and 58% of men support “woman’s liberation”. In addition, the husband and wife relationship in young adults are emotionally intense; the marriage was understood and valued mainly in terms of communication, personal growth and satisfaction; the couples preferred small families; though religion was valued the couples lacked interest in church; search for more flexible, creative marriage styles; there is less hurry to marry and many chose just to live together without any legal commitments. The study also showed an increased lack of support from extended families (<http://www.religion-online.org/2003>).

In modern life there are many issues as stated in the above research that can affect any family and marriage. These may lead to conflicts, and these conflicts, if not treated, may lead to a crisis. Therapy and counselling can assist in these conflicts and crises, and facilitate processes through which partners may learn how to manage challenging relationships. The behaviour patterns, trends and the history of the relationship and the issues that gave rise to the crisis should be engaged in counselling. Frequent arguments, disagreements, a breakdown in communications, angry outbursts, avoidance of what causes conflict, and physical conflict are some signs of family crisis. The differences in opinion, personalities, beliefs, values and goals, religious differences, cultural differences, change in family circumstances, financial problems, harassment, and lack of trust and respect in a marriage relationship may lead to crises. These experiences can be distressing and contribute to negative emotions, stress, confusion, feelings of isolation, eating or sleeping disorders and social and marital conflicts (<http://www.familylife.com/trubled-marriages/2008>).

The couples experiencing conflict that leads to a crisis need to learn how to talk about their disagreements and feelings, accept differences, make a plan and get counselling or therapy. The Christian counsellor would also bring in the necessity to trust God, pray and read the Bible. They

may even quote scriptures like God is faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13); be anxious for nothing (Philippians 4: 6-9); ask for wisdom (Proverbs 16: 3); and that one should cast one's cares upon Him (1 Peter 5: 7). These, however might not be sufficient for crisis counselling. The problem must be identified and dealt with therapeutically and then followed by spiritual care with Biblically-based encouragement. Family counselling and therapy assist families to address the issues and problems. Most therapists address communication issues and how the individuals impact the cohesiveness of the family system – families need to understand each other, communicate effectively and learn to remove unhealthy patterns of interaction and behaviour (http://www.goodtherapy.org/family_problems/htm/2014).

9.5.5 Therapeutic Intervention and Religious Beliefs

With regard to the counselling of inter-religious couples, the therapist should be aware that couples of inter-religious marriages are often exposed to religious discrimination and social misunderstandings which are based on homogenous ethnic and religious beliefs by people in society. In view of the fact that couples may seek counselling, counsellors should be equipped to understand their social contexts and the religious backgrounds from which they come, e.g. religious traditions, beliefs, customs of inter-religious clients of all religion and even culture or ethnic groups (religious tenets and practices). The reality of the beliefs and obstacles should be addressed in therapeutic interventions. As such during engagement of inter-religious clients and more especially when facing diverse cultures, the counsellor should be objective and should consider that one counselling technique does not fit all – cultural or religious assumptions should be relaxed and sensitivity should be practiced (cf. Carter & Rashidi 2003: 399; Ali et al. 2004: 638; Hall & Livingstone 2006: 142).

The familiarity to cultural expectations of the entire family, even extended family without leaving out the belief system and individuality of the couple of inter-religious marriage is necessary. “While cultural and religious components are important to understand, sensitivity to the uniqueness of each individual client may be a prerequisite to doing good therapy and counselling” (Carolan et al. 2000: 69).

In general, the counsellor should understand the religious biases within himself or herself. The personal ideologies, opinions and beliefs should not be a stumbling block in therapy. The

theoretical counselling model and its practice should be flexible and be relevant to inter-religious couple counselling - a universal set of rules cannot apply to all cultures. An assessment should be initially conducted to understand the religious level of the client and dovoutness to their faith and the extent of acculturation – is it a spiritual or circumstantially related problem. Hence, counselling in relation to spirituality should also be considered (cf. Sayed 2003: 450; Barise 2005: 120).

Counsellors should develop rapport and trust before rushing into sensitive issues of inter-religious marriage counselling that may result in shame – the client may then not continue with therapy. As such the counsellor should not pressure the client in discussing issues that are painful. The counsellor should be indirect by utilizing various communion techniques to retrieve sensitive painful information, especially those underlying unconscious repressed feelings of guilt (Abi-Hashem 2008: 165-164).

9.5.6 Forgiveness Heals Relationships

In order for healing and progress in marriage the couple has to be prepared in counselling to forgive. This would improve the way they think about themselves and to realize self-actualization. Without this process no counselling can repair the relationship or be successful. Spirituality has a vital role to play in this area of counselling and therapy, especially in inter-religious marriages. Hence, the religious stance on forgiveness by Christianity, Hinduism and Islam would be discussed.

9.5.6.1 Forgiveness in Christianity

Jesus forgave the adulterous woman and did not condemn or pass judgement. The text says:

He without sin, let Him cast the first stone ... did even one of them condemn you ... No my Lord ... neither do I, go and sin no more (John 8: 1-11).

In Luke (15: 11-32), the prodigal son took his share of the wealth from his father and left home. He returned after squandering all his money. His father forgave him and accepted him back into the family.

Forgiveness is central to the love of God and Christianity – God reaching out to reconcile sinful mankind. Jesus was the ultimate gift of forgiveness to humanity. This manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christians and needs to be practiced by Christians in imitating the love and forgiveness of God. In the New Testament, Jesus proclaimed God’s forgiveness and repentance (Mark 1: 15). It is said by the authors of the New Testament that Christ’s death and resurrection demonstrated the greatness of God’s forgiveness to sinful humanity – repentance accompanies forgiveness (cf. Holeman 2004: 99; Volf 2005: 40; Jones 1995: 199).

The believers who have received forgiveness of God are to demonstrate this forgiveness to one another, especially towards their offenders (Matthew 5: 9-15). According to Jones (1995: 100), the practice and observance of Christian rituals of forgiveness restore the relationship with God through repentance. The same is true for the restoration of relationships with one another. Forgiveness should be accompanied by repentance for any wrong doing. The observance of the Eucharist (bread and the wine) is a church sacrament that reminds Christians of their own forgiveness and challenges them to practice forgiving, repenting and reconciling with one another (Volf 1996: 41; Matthew 6: 12). If Christians don’t practice forgiveness, they cannot experience salvation from God – emotional and spiritual healing begins in forgiveness. Marriage problems are best taken care of through forgiveness and the expression of genuine love.

9.5.6.2 *Forgiveness in Hinduism*

Hinduism refers to the cosmic law as Hindu Dharma which is the basis of Hindu morality and ethics. The path of Dharma includes a life of integrity that includes practices of “forgiveness, righteousness, forbearance, compassion and patience” (Rye et al. 2000: 201). Couples who let go of self-contempt, grudges, and resentment create a way towards forgiveness.

Hindus believe in *karma*, the negative harmful actions of the past affects the present and future life. In order to deal with these issues, one should let go of resentment and guilt feelings of the past through forgiveness. In doing so it releases the offender and removes the *karma* bondage (Friedrichs 1986: 41). However, every one has to experience the punishment of karma prior to the sins being destroyed. The festival of *Mahasivaratri* is closely linked to forgiveness. According to Shastri (2002: 15) the festival focuses on “*ahimsa* (non-injury), *satya* (speaking the truth),

brahmacharya (continence), *daya* (compassion), *ksama* (forgiveness), and *anasuyata* (absence of jealousy).”

9.5.6.3 Forgiveness in Islam

Forgiveness in Islam is associated with the relationship with *Allah*. *Allah* is referred to the *al-Ghaff-r*, the forgiver. It has been said that sin offences may be “against *Allah*, against a person, against a group or society and against animals” (Rye et al. 2000: 202). *Allah* forgives one if one forgives others as interpersonal relationship and forgiveness produce peace and reconciliation in relationships, marriage and family.

In order to receive forgiveness, Muslims pray (*salat*) five times a day, read the Qur’an and engage in meditation (Matthews 2002: 51). Two weeks prior to Ramadam, Muslims request *Allah* to forgive them for their sins.

9.5.6.4 Implications of Forgiveness on Marriages

All religions seek forgiveness for healing of a relationship and marriage in order to ensure peace, harmony and meaning to a quality family life. Walsh (1999: 6) stated that, “beliefs about forgiving, repenting, retaliating, and reconciling provide the scaffolding for the stories that families construct to explain why they do or don’t get along. They provide motivation to heal fractured relationships (e.g., seeking a right relationship with God, blessings in this life or promoting good *karma*).” Anger and hostility is released for restoring relationships. The practice of religious rituals opens the door to forgiveness and restoration in marriages, individuals and the families.

Beliefs about forgiveness assist the families to understand the causes and therefore solutions for healing relationships. Christianity and Islam do not attribute hurts to karma or past actions but rather believe that hurtful family and marriage interactions are ascribed to the responsibility of individuals or family members or husband or wife. Beliefs about forgiveness also shed light on the extent of reconciliation. The Bible commands Christians to forgive one another. Such forgiveness is not cheap. Husbands who abuse their wives cannot ask for forgiveness, if they continue with the abuse. How is forgiveness and reconciliation possible in such a situation?.

Hinduism believes that reconciliation is not automatic when there is forgiveness, as it should be followed with an apology or else temporary detachment (cf. Holeman 2004: 100; Jones 1995: 200).

Richards and Bergen (1997: 215) indicated that “forgiveness is nurtured as family units participate in holy day celebrations, special prayers and rituals – these holy observances remind the couples of marriage and families of their duties and responsibilities as related to forgiveness.”

Families and marriages may avoid collapse, deterioration, disintegration or even separation if they practice forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation – forgiveness is the best healer of relationships.

9.5.7 Clinebell’s Marriage Growth Counselling (1977)

In the following discussion Clinebell suggests ways to make a good marriage better, turn crises into opportunities for growth and to activate an individual’s faith (Clinebell 1977).

9.5.7.1 The Human Potential Approach

Many marriage counsellors have moved to the human development, positive-potential approach in their counselling. The emphasis is on what is right and possible in the individual’s life. The counsellor’s focus is on the facilitating of processes that may lead to the releasing of the positive potential of individuals. The clients are shown how to use their strengths and abilities in their thinking and understanding, in communicating with people, to be creative, and even in their spiritual activities. Faith, hope and love are essential in people’s lives, and especially in their marriage relationships.

Psychotherapy focuses its procedures on the psychological needs of security, love and self-esteem. After the needs are satisfied, the individual is guided to develop the new need to increase in creativity by fully using their innate potential towards self-actualization. An integration of certain methods may be drawn from reality therapy, transactional analysis, gestalt therapy, and action therapies and growth counselling methods, including spirituality. Growth counselling of

human potential approaches (self-actualization) blend with psychology and counselling in relationship building.

In spirituality, the Bible indicates that people are the children of God (Romans 8:16) and that they are made in the divine image of God (which means that there are tremendous possibilities in all) (Genesis 1: 27). Romans (8: 19), also says that the whole of creation awaits the fulfillment of these potentials with “eager longing”. The growth parables have a similar rationale (Matthew 13: 33 - leaven; Matthew 13: 31 – mustard seed; Mark 4: 31, Luke 3: 19 – sower; and Matthew 25: 14-15 – talents). They always emphasize growth and progress of creation, and these could be drawn on in Christian and spiritual counselling.

9.5.7.2 The Intentional Marriage Method

Secondly, Clinebell says that caring and confrontation also give us growth. In a marriage relationship the affirmation of love should be honest, sincere and open. Love should be given in the relationship and does not have to be earned. However, judgement is needed in order to realize how a partner is hurting the other. In open, honest discussion, this may lead to greater healing and wholeness – if confrontation is needed, it should lead to caring and acceptance of the partner. Let the partner know the truth but this must come about through love (Ephessians 4: 15).

In such interactions, the counselees should be made aware of their inner positive strengths and that these could fulfill their needs as well as those of their partner. By recognizing the same in the partner, one should show and verbalize appreciation for the partner. One should not pressure the partner to do what oneself is unable to do. One should refrain from the transfer of blame onto each other but develop a workable plan. To improve the marriage, partners need to clearly indicate their needs and expectations. If this is done, the couple can commit to change towards the improvement of their relationship by focusing on the meeting of one another’s needs. They must aim at making the marriage mutually satisfying. If they decide on this route, to take action to improve the relationship, they must also commit to the monitoring of progress. They must refrain from also contradicting each other. After dealing with simple issues they can move to the more complex conflicts which may require negotiation and compromise (religion to follow, traditions to observe, the raising of children and religious identity, etc.). The couple needs to be guided to move to becoming selfless and marriage centered by sharing their feelings and thus move towards

self and marriage actualization. Such a process may assist the couple to make changes and improve their relationship.

9.5.7.3 Improving a Good Marriage

Loving perceptions, whether as between sweethearts or as between parents and children, produce kinds of knowledge that are not available to nonlovers (Maslow 1971: 17).

Marriage relationships should endeavour to nurture a sustained, fulfilling relationship of growth and well being, aimed at optimal satisfaction. The activities and interactions in the marriage should be overt and conscious. One cannot expect a quality relationship to develop by itself. One should work on the relationship and discover the latent strengths and potential of oneself and one's partner and bring that to impact the relationship. This would lead to more intimate, more fulfilling and more alive marriages. One's latent strengths need to be released, especially if there are repressed feelings of guilt, anxiety, hurt, lack of self-concept or mutual neglect. Marriage relationships normally only use a small percentage of their full capacity for love without enough satisfaction. This may be manifest in communication, sexual pleasure and mutually fulfilling love. If one does not have such a focus in marriage, when crises are experienced, the marriage may easily break down.

Clinebell indicated that there are many obstacles that need to be engaged if one wants to improve a marriage relationship. Like others, he mentions that one in every three marriages end in divorce. There are many obstacles that may lead to this. For instance, many young couples refuse the traditional form of a marriage ceremony. This may alienate them from their family, friends and their larger social support network. In a study on *young adult marriages* by Compaan (1973), it was reported that the relationships of young married couples are usually emotionally intense, and not sufficiently centered on communication, personal growth and satisfaction. This may lead to poor communication and interaction between couples. Furthermore, small families was preferred, and having children was not a priority. Initially this may be good, but especially if the couple wants to build a rewarding family life, they need to plan for the family, and interact with one another about this. Today, couples of young marriages search for a flexible and more creative marriage styles; they also opt for egalitarian man-woman relationships and do not conform to the

more traditional rigid gender and sex roles. Couples are also in no rush to get married or to make a legal commitment to one another. The flipside of this is that couples may take a marriage lightly and think they can easily dissolve the marriage if they are not happy with their partner, or if the marriage is not mutually fulfilling. Couples may also feel more sexual freedom before and after marriage, which is detrimental to the relationship.

For a better marriage the couple should become responsible in satisfying the needs of each other. There should be an open and caring communication and a genuine fairness, including equal treatment should be practiced. The couple should have a commitment to commitment to their own growth as well as that of their partner. If this happens, the marriage will be enriched. They should nurture intimacy and resolve differences through negotiation and compromise. Growth in the intimacy of faith and spirituality will feed into the marriage identity and make the relationship stronger. Counselling should be designed to assist couples to acquire the necessary skills achieve these goals but to also cope with anger and conflict if these arise. The conflicts, especially emotional hurts, if not clarified, can intensify and grow to a point of no return. In this regard, it is important to practice the wisdom of Ephesians 4: 26: “Don’t let the sun go down on your anger”. One should not go to sleep with unresolved conflicts or remain angry.

Spiritual intimacy should not be neglected as it is very important for sustaining growth in marriage. The couple should ensure spiritual growth in their faith in God. The counsellor should remind the couple to practice spirituality through Bible study or reading, daily prayer as a family, participating in religious activities, and observing religious traditions.

If couples of normal marriages experience problems and conflicts, how much more complex issues would inter-religious married couples be exposed to. The next section is on inter-religious marriage counselling.

9.6 INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE COUNSELLING

It is imperative to take a closer look at the inner emotional conflicts that couples of inter-religious relations may experience, especially with respect to repressive feelings, identity confusion, self-esteem and dissociation. If potential stresses and conflicts are not resolved at the pre-marital stage, then it could surely roll over to the actual marriage and family.

9.6.1 Pre-marital Counselling

Lehrer (1998: 245) states that pre-marital counselling should be compulsory for couples. This would prepare them for marriage and reduce the divorce rate. With regard to religion, inter-religious couples need to be given guidance on issues of how to deal with religion, especially when they decided to practice dual religions. They should be made aware of the possible challenges and risks they may confront in the marriage between themselves, but especially pertaining to the raising of children. The situation may be compounded, if the relationship also includes racial differences in addition to the cultural and religious differences. Couples must develop skills to confront their differences (cf. Alouis 2003: 91; Mercer 1996: 57; Crohn 1995: 3-9; Yob 1998: 72; Lingenfelter 1986: 17). Counsellors should advise clients to consider choosing one common religion or at least one of the religions they practice for children to follow. This should include the observance of religious festivals and religious holidays.

80% of the couples who participated in the empirical research in this study indicated that they did not consider the implications their inter-religious marriage would have on their families and prior to marriage. Where applicable, they have also not considered differing ethnicities. These do play a vital role in inter-religious or inter-cultural relationships as two cultures need to be accommodated in one relationship. In the relationship, the identity of family and children will also be an issue and couples must be prepared to confront this challenge prior to marriage in order to understand ways to instill a sense of identity in their children when they are born and raised. In my study, the respondents indicated that it takes a great deal of learning, understanding, tolerance and compromise to make inter-cultural marriages work – counsellors should not ignore this as differing religions, ethnicities, and cultures affect identity formation (cf. Yob 1998: 15–78; Greenstein 1993: 431; Lingenfelter 1986: 18).

It has been discovered from the research that there are some common existing issues in inter-faith relationships that would have benefitted couples if these were addressed prior to the marriage. When these are addressed in pre-marital counselling, counsellors need to be tactful, discreet, sensitive and cautious when guiding couples at this stage of their relationship, especially when individuals are deeply loyal to their ethnic identities and religious traditions and have to reconcile this with the partner's identity and religious traditions. The discussion to follow will cover repressed feelings of guilt; identity confusion; self-esteem; and disassociation (cf. Crohn 1995:

32; Berghe 1997: 15; Augsburg 1986: 137 ; Meier 1982: 243; Yob 1998: 72; Virginia Satir 1967: 81; and Chinitz 2001: 743).

9.6.1.1 Repressed Feelings of Guilt

Judas who betrayed Jesus committed suicide due to feelings of guilt. He failed to deal with this negative emotion or ask for forgiveness (Matthew 27: 3-5). Peter's denial of Christ, on the other hand, ended positively as he felt remorse and wept, and was released from guilt (Matthew 26: 75).

Guilt refers to the feelings that are suppressed by individuals and prevent from surfacing. This is especially the case with regard to feelings of guilt that stem from decisions made against one's own religious belief system. This may affect not only their relationship with themselves, but also their relationships with their families. If couples get married contrary to the advice from family and friends, this may also lead to regret later on, because they may regret their rebellious thinking and behaviour. Another aspect of guilt is that the religious practices they may choose to follow in their marriage – if it is contrary to the ones with which they grew up – may also be incongruent to what they really believe. In the interview with Desra in this study, it became evident that she suffers from guilt. As a Christian she took a decision to marry a partner outside Christianity, and that against the wishes of her parents, and Christian principles.

In the case of guilt in inter-religious marriages, guilt may be experienced towards God, their families, and/ or circle of friends. The potential of guilt in marriage needs to be discussed prior to marriage in pre-marital counselling. This is especially important for couples from Christian or Muslim backgrounds because these religions have strong doctrinal views on marrying outside one's own religion. The counsellor should advise couples that they should not take this issue lightly, by thinking that the partner will easily convert or that they will adapt to one another easily. What also needs to be cleared is that compromise, and religious and cultural tolerance are not easy. These are attitudes that would need constant and conscious work by both partners. It would also help if relatives and friends are involved in this process and that they do not continue to condemn the couple for their decision to get married (cf. Sheri and Bob Stritof 2007: 2; Crohn 1995: 16; Barnett 1963: 626).

Augsburger (1986: 137) says that guilt may arise if one is unable to conform to conventional

standards, social rituals and cultural norms in one's context. If someone like Desra has a low threshold level to tolerate the guilt feelings, she may not be able to cope with the pain and anxiety caused by these repressed feelings. Lazarus also elaborates on this issue (cf. Lazarus 1992: 244; College 2002: 258). In Desra's case, her emotions and behaviour were affected due to the fact that she acted against her parents' wishes and religious and cultural convictions. In the interview, it also became evident that she had questions about her own salvation, and that she had some resentment against her mother-in-law. As Chinitz (2001: 743) indicates, feelings of guilt will surface if they are not dealt with constructively. Freud (1913: 65) also indicates that the do's and don't's of religion are responsible for the mental health of a person as it may introduce feelings of guilt – if they feel they are violating the will of God. This impacts on the person's conscience. In a situation like this, if the person experiences true guilt without resistance, then change is possible (cf. Hyder 1971: 121; Meier 1982: 244)

As a counsellor I believe that someone like Desra should be honest and also not be partial towards the partner's religion. She should face the issue, and attempt to resolve it and move towards the eradication of guilt and shame (cf. Crohn 1995: 17; Murstein 1976: 56). The counsellor in this case should advocate that the partners should practice their own religion – helping her to stay true to her own religion – but reach a compromise to observe certain common interests of their religious practices. The individuals should be made aware of such Biblical values like loving one's neighbour and extending one's care and commitment just like the Good Samaritan did (Luke 10: 25-32). This should be accompanied by bringing the feelings of guilt and shame out in the open and not allow it to be bottled up, as this will continue to cause inner conflict and discomfort to the marriage. In counselling one could also inquire about dreams and preconscious guilt feelings. The counsellee should be allowed to freely speak about these in counselling, so that he or she can verbalise what they feel (cf. Freud 1976: 771; Frankl 1955: 22; Chinitz 2001; Meier 1982: 165; Augsburger 1986: 137).

With regard to the Bible, the counsellee should be made aware that although they may feel that Biblical doctrine was contravened, it is the "Spiritual law" that counts and according to the Bible, that it is the Law that kills. Rather, the "Spirit gives Life" (2 Corinthians 3: 6). The Christian individual must be brought to the conviction that God is merciful and that his grace is unconditional. God will forgive if asked to do so as God's love is a respecter of no person. Guilt should not be repressed as it would lead to anxiety, insecurity and unacceptable behaviour and

may reveal itself later in the marriage. The individual should be prompted to discuss the feelings of guilt as God does not judge but people. If one is prepared to admit a fault, God is always merciful and forgives and also removes the guilt.

Someone in the position of Desra, must also learn to forgive herself and then receive forgiveness from God. This should also be communicated to parents. Desra was required to communicate her inner repressed feelings and deal with it. In order for the counsellee to be released from the social guilt and shame of failure to conform to conventional standards, social rituals and cultural norms, the repressed feelings must be exposed and dealt with. As a counsellor, the Free Association of Freud's Psychoanalysis therapy would be useful, because it may assist to lift repressed unconscious material (events, feelings, irrational beliefs, anxiety and guilt) into the conscious and with interpretation the counsellee may reach reasons for past behaviour with suggestions of possible solutions and ways to act in future (cf. Freud 1976: 769-771; Crohn 1995: 8 ; Meier 1982: 339).

The counselling should drive counsellees towards enhancement of communication and conflict resolution skills and encourage them to speak out their feelings on sensitive issues as this may positively improve their psychological health (cf. Senediak 1990: 26; Kreider & Fields 2001: 11). Someone like Desra should also be encouraged to communicate her feelings and change with her parents and partner, especially on the religious issues and how she has dealt with these. Although she might have pursued the relationship against her parents wishes, she should be assisted to talk about it, and hence release the repressed feelings that lead to guilt and shame.

9.6.1.2 Identity Confusion

The Bible promises a divine identity in Christian Conversion: "To as many have received Him (Christ), gave He power to become the sons and daughters of God" (John 1: 12).

All people wish to belong and have an identity. Relationships impacted by religious and cultural differences can lead to identity confusion. When a White Christian female have a relationship with a Muslim man they may be exposed to conflicts, and especially identity confusion. The interview with Esther in my study, will be discussed in this section including as to how she coped with the situation, especially the identity issues pertaining to herself and future children.

In the case of Esther, being a woman, she was required to convert to Islam, prior to the marriage. Due to the religious and cultural differences, she had to deal with the identity issue and even the future children's identity prior to marriage (cf. Also Yob 1998: 15-23; Lingenfelter 1986: 17-18; Crohn 1995: 32). In a situation like this, the counsellor should ensure that consensus is reached with regard to religious practices and the upbringing of the children prior to the marriage. The counsellor at the very outset should ensure that decisions are made by couples as to what religious and cultural practices the woman should keep and practice with her children as to avoid complete separation from her upbringing which has contributed to her values and identity. Although she will convert, there should remain space for her own religious beliefs and practices, if possible.

It should be decided prior to the marriage that even though the children will be brought up in Islam, there should be space to participate in certain Christian activities. To some degree, then the children would be educated in both religions' religious and cultural practices but must be made aware that they would follow primarily Islam. The counsellor must guide couples into choosing one religion to follow as it would lead to stability in the marriage and family. The individual who decides to convert always carry a mixed bag of contradictory feelings about cultural, and religious identity – in inter-racial marriages, this would also include race. The counsellor should include the issues of raising children and the place the couple would choose to live as this in the future would be a challenge for biracial children – children should be prepared to face racial as well as cultural differences. The counsellor must ensure that this is sorted out before marriage as it would cause inner confusion if not dealt with constructively. If not sorted out this can create conflict, confusion and pain in the relationship. The respondents in my study indicated that a choice had to be made as to which religion the children should follow to avoid confusion in the children's identity – so ultimately partners have to reach some kind of compromise, and if this could be done prior to marriage this is even better (cf. Mercer 1996: 15; Lingenfelter 1986: 17-18; Lehrer 1998: 245; [http://www.prospect.org/premarital counselling](http://www.prospect.org/premarital_counselling)).

Where couples decide on these issues, they will inevitably bring about identity changes. Since the change in identity causes behaviour change, the counsellor should assist someone like Esther to decide and develop her own identity in the relationship. If he or she is fully conversant with the changes, then this will bring about stability in the relationship. The counsellor should also assist the counsellee to be open to experiences of the other religion. This would require flexibility and the counsellor should discuss this issue of flexibility with the counsellee. This must be done in a

rational way and Cognitive Behavioural therapy may be helpful in this regard – to expose the potential of irrational behaviour and thinking. The counsellee must be made aware of the fact that if this arises, then it must be confronted with rational and positive thought and action. The individual will then be more tolerant and accommodatory of the partner's religion prior to marriage but also after marriage (cf. Beck 1990: 2; Sharf 2004: 72; Denning 2006: 16).

It is possible for an inter-religious marriage relationship to work and to be fulfilling, if the issue of identity confusion is addressed timeously prior to marriage. Counsellees should be educated and made aware of inter-religious challenges as discussed above. If identity issues are not resolved it not only can cause tension in the relationship but also become a hindrance to developing a person's self-concept, growth and even self-actualization.

9.6.1.3 Self-Esteem

Inter-religious married couples may experience friction and tension when they are exposed to new religious traditions and belief systems in their relationship. In this context, adjustment is necessary to adapt to the new religion. From Christian perspective it is necessary to emphasise texts such as the following: "... I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of your self as you ought to, but think with sober judgement according to the measure of faith God has assigned" (Romans 12: 3); and Psalms (139: 13-14), "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together ... for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...".

People in inter-religious relationships, especially those who are prepared to convert to the partner's religion, are actually coerced by love for the partner to change their religion. In time this may result in insecurity, loss of self confidence and loss of self-esteem or a low self-esteem. In this section the discussion will focus on the self-esteem challenge experienced by Esther and what direction the counsellor may give to counsellees in a similar position.

The individuals who choose partners across the religious and racial barriers like Esther may be exposed to tensions within themselves as well as in their relationship, due to religious as well as racial prejudices from families and friends. These may impact on identity issues and self-esteem. In addition, when one marries someone from the Muslim faith, the general subservient role of Muslim women, and that they are treated separated from men, may also impact on the partner,

especially on self-esteem. Within such parameters, the counsellee, must understand that each religion has certain boundaries but that there is also space to move and feel free in these boundaries. These need to be explored, together with the partner. If she converts to Islam, as Esther did, she must nevertheless understand that she will still have to submit to the basic requirements of the new religion (cf. Jayaram 2007: 22). For her own growth and development these considerations are important, and she should not take these issues that may impact on and affect her self-esteem into the marriage. She should be assisted to deal with them constructively.

The low self-esteem of a partner can bring about emotional disconnectedness between partners. In the research done, respondents agreed that both partners must be advised in counselling, about how to reach compromises with regard to religious practices. They must also be helped to be flexible to one another's beliefs and practices, so that an environment will be created in the marriage relationship that will facilitate harmony and personal growth, mental health, and ability for social adjustment which will realize a positive self-esteem and positive perceptions of themselves as well as their partners (cf. Greenstein 1993: 428; William and Lawler 2000: 208-210). Rogers indicates that if conflicts arise between a person's actualizing tendencies and his or her self concept these could be dealt with in therapy through non-directive discussions. As such, a counsellee may be helped to overcome negative feelings of worth that may impede one's accurate perception of oneself and others. This may help the counsellee to verbalise negative perceptions of the self and bring about decisions for positive actions that may cause the individual to realize his or her potential and strive for self-actualization (cf. Rogers 1951: 76; Meier 1982: 17-18; Macmillan 2002: 75-83).

The counsellor must also assist someone like Esther to deal with conflicts within himself or herself that affects self-esteem as it will influence his or her feelings and hence her behaviour. By utilizing Cognitive Behavioural therapy, the counsellee will be assisted via self-reflection to identify irrational beliefs that are responsible for behaviour that causes displeasure and anxiety. The irrational beliefs may then be replaced by more rational beliefs. A more reasonable way of thinking will be encouraged. This will also contribute towards realizing self-actualization and increase the self-esteem (cf. Beck 1990: 2; Macmillan 2002: 171).

A low self-esteem, if not dealt with constructively, can stifle growth and self-development. Fortunately there are counsellors and counselling techniques available to assist one to improve

one's self concept and self-esteem. The support from the partner, family and friends is also important and needs to be engaged, so that family and friends can also support the partner in the inter-religious relationship.

9.6.1.4 Disassociation

Partners of inter-religious relationships take the risk of being disowned by their families – families cease to associate with someone who actually belongs to the family. Rejection by parents is difficult for children to cope with alone. Intervention by counsellors may instill hope that someday the parents will change their attitude. Glen has been exposed to this experience of disassociation from his parents. He received no support from family and friends.

59% of respondents' family and friends expressed intense objections to the inter-faith marriage, especially converting to another religion – Muslim families were very verbal and even physical when their children converted to another religion. They were concerned with what the community would think and the identity of the children. Christian respondents indicated that their parents felt that the son or daughter would lose their salvation. Glen was threatened with disassociation (being disowned) from his Muslim parents and relatives due to his relationship with a Hindu girl. However, the girl Ruth also experienced pressure from her parents. Although the couples were exposed to great resistance from others, they were not prepared to back out of the relationship. Glen's family threatened him with physical harm. The couples were also faced prior to marriage with the religious dilemma.

Being aware as a counsellor that the future of the couple was inevitable, the counsellor may suggest to them to make a choice prior to marriage as to which religion to follow. Since both may not be able to choose either religion, the counsellor may suggest a neutral religion, e.g. Christianity, if the couple is not Christian. In some such cases, the partners decided to become Christians prior to marriage. The counsellor may focus on the conflict and disharmony experienced by the couple within themselves which stem from the disassociation instead of the religion. The couple may be encouraged to communicate their feelings and anxieties that are experienced as a result from the disassociation. It may be emphasized to the couple that it is not their fault for their parents not understanding and accepting their relationship. They may be encouraged to work through those problems and not let it affect their relationship but try to endeavour to strengthen their

relationship. The counsellor may endeavour to resolve social guilt and shame by ensuring that the couples bring those feelings to the open and not bottle it up (cf. Meier 1982: 75; Worthington 1982: 13). The couples may be given support with prayer and affirmation that God according to the Bible possesses no partiality and that He has given every individual a free will to make choices and are responsible for their own decisions. The couple's thinking must also be changed and worrying about what others think and to waste energy in pleasing others as it would impact on them functioning to their full potential and hence hinder growth (cf. Macmillan 2002: 16-22). The Psychoanalysis; Client-Centred; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy that has been discussed in chapter 9, may be utilized to find solutions to problems experienced by a couples such as Glen and Ruth (cf. Freud 1913: 62-65; Rogers 1951: 76; Beck 1990: 2).

In the above models spiritual counselling may also be used to guide counselees to choose possible solutions that will assist in overcoming the challenges and issues of inter-religious relationships. Once solutions are found for identity confusion, reasons for the guilt feelings are identified and dealt with, measures are taken to deal with the self-concept and rejection, the pre-marital couples can move on with their lives and achieve goals that will produce growth and self-actualization. There may be other issues that will be dealt with in the actual inter-religious marriage which will follow.

9.6.2 Counselling Married Couples

Some of the issues faced by inter-religious married couples that will require an integrated counselling model will be reflected upon in our discussion:

Anxiety – voidness, misery and the threat to be isolated and rejected accompany our daily life. A human fundamental fear of rejection, hence the current need for intimate relationships.

Guilt – everybody experiences guilt or guilt feelings in some way. Feelings of shame, disappointment and failure are part of being human. Whether due to cultural or religious influences, guilt and our sense of responsibility are intertwined. People need to be freed from feelings of guilt and failure.

Despair – our greatest threat in life is the possibility that our achievements are meaningless.

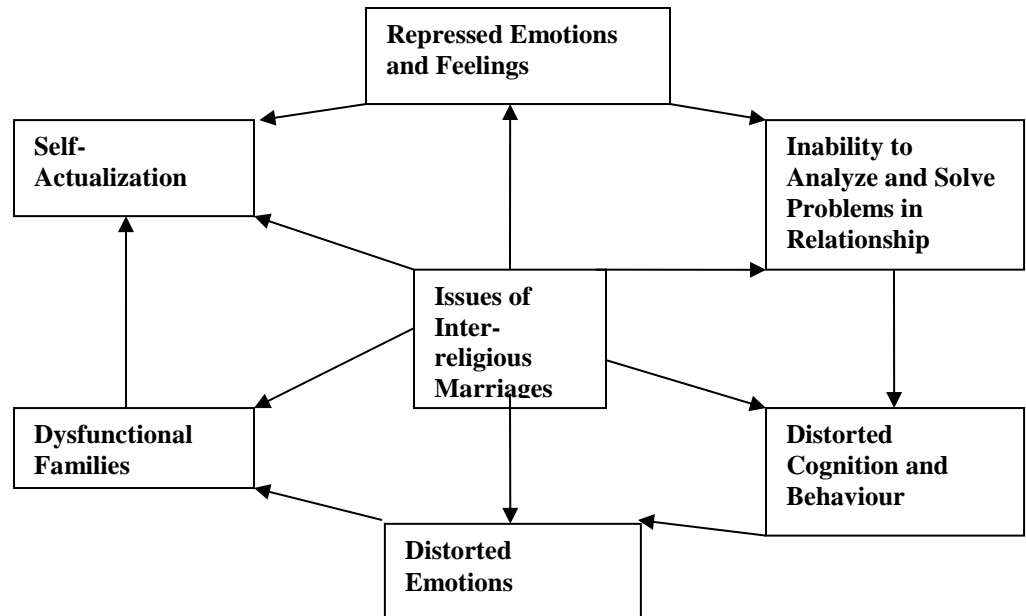
Hence we feel helpless and hopeless. A lack of hope and expectation can lead to disillusionment.

Identity confusion (ethnicity) – this refers to religious issues after conversion and the identity of children even when no conversion takes place where each partner observes their own religious traditions in the same household.

Some of the relevant models will be examined to retrieve counselling techniques that may be useful to integrate in the endeavour to develop a new integrated model. Since the counselling focus will be on as to how couples of inter-religious marriage think, feel, act and produce behaviour that affects their lives in social relationships, growth and development. What are the elements of inter-religious, inter-faith and inter-cultural marriages that have an impact on the couples, their relationship and family? How do they respond to environmental stimulus, since the senses come into play during their daily social and environmental interaction. Lazarus (1981: 18) indicated that individuals are essentially biological organisms who act and react, experience affective responses, respond to stimuli, imagine, hold beliefs, opinions, attitudes and values, and interact with one another (tolerate, enjoy or suffer in various interpersonal relationships). He introduces modalities: Behaviour, Affects, Sensations, Cognitions and Interpersonal may interact with each other – a negative image or cognition may trigger a negative emotion. Individuals have different thresholds for stress tolerance, frustration, pain, external and internal stimuli in the form of sound, light, touch, smell and taste. Psychological interventions can be used to modify these thresholds but often the genetic predisposition has an overriding influence in the final analysis. All human beings wrestle with basic issues that require counselling for healing to occur (cf. Jinpa 2001: 81; De Villiers et al. 2006: 63; Haley 1987: 25).

Not only how tolerance levels come into play but also the processing of information (Cognition) received in whatever form, especially pertaining to inter-religious marriages. Psychoanalysis may be used to uncover repressed emotions and feelings, Client-Centered counselling may be used to deal with the blockages to self-actualization, Cognitive Behavioural counselling to explore the distorted cognitions and behaviour including distorted emotions, Rational Emotive counselling for the inability to analyze and solve problems in relationships and Bowen's Theory for dysfunctional families. There will be an interface between models as one person may experience multiple issues that will require an integration of the counselling models.

The challenge to the counsellor is to address the inter-faith issues within an individual and instill faith and hope. The following **schematic diagram** (*designed by the writer of this research*) illustrates the interface that occurs with the problems experienced by inter-faith, inter-religious, inter-cultural, and inter-racial couples and families.



9.6.2 .1 *Repressed Emotions and Feelings*

It must be emphasized that human problems are multi-levelled and multi-layered. Few problems have a single cause or simple solution. Lazarus indicated that psychological disturbances are products of one or more of the following: conflicting or ambivalent feelings or reactions; misinformation; missing information which includes ignorance; skills deficits; maladaptive habits including conditioned emotional reactions; issues pertaining to low self-esteem and lack of self-acceptance; inflexible and rigid thinking styles and attitudes; unhelpful beliefs maintaining a low frustration tolerance; cognitive distortions; misplaced affections; and biological dysfunctions. Individuals avoid or defend against discomfort, pain, or negative emotions such as shame, guilt, depression and anxiety (cf. Lazarus 1989: 213; College 2002: 258).

Although from the research it was clear that Hindu parents are usually not that forceful in persuading their children's decision, in Desra's case both the Hindu and Christian parents refused

to compromise. Desra against her parent's wishes and blessings chose to marry a Hindu. Since both partner's parents wished for their child to be married according to their own religion and culture, they injected immense tension between the families and couple who then were forced to just get registered. Desra's disobedience to her parents and the Biblical doctrine of being 'unequally yoked with unbelievers' (2 Corinthians 6: 14), have created immense deep-rooted guilt and shame within her. Although the couple chose to practice their own religion within the same household, it created tension and disharmony in the marriage. Desra repressed this unpleasant emotion and did not face the issues but behaved irrationally. The couples always disagreed most of the times with regard to religious issues, family visitations and religious functions, but always put up a front when family and relatives visited them. Eventually, family and friends felt the tension and also kept their distance.

According to Lazarus (1989: 213) "human beings have different levels and degrees of awareness, and subliminal or unrecognized stimuli that influence feelings, thoughts and behaviour." To gain access to these unrecognized stimuli (e.g. memories) it is necessary to tap into the unconscious. The individual use defensive reactions of denial, overintellectualisation, overrationalisation, displacement and projection. The defensive reactions are used by a person to avoid pain, discomfort, guilt, depression, shame, anxiety and other negative emotions. People deny or distort their perceptions, mislabel their feelings and lessen their awareness. Defense reaction is evident in people who try to avoid pain, discomfort, guilt, depression, shame, anxiety and negative emotions (cf. Freud 1973: 140; Lazarus 1992: 245; Lazarus 1981: 18).

The counsellor must persuade the counsellee to disclose everything that occurs to them even if uncomfortable or painful (free association). With Psychoanalysis therapy painful and uncomfortable guilt feelings are expressed and uncovered and dealt with. The behaviour or insecurity in the individual will be removed once the cause or problem is addressed (cf. Freud 1913: 62; Meier 1982: 243; Mcmillan 2002: 22). Once the individual understands that God does not condemn (guilt feelings are removed), the irrational beliefs will be replaced by rational beliefs, hence behaviour change as indicated by Cognitive Behavioural therapy. Counselling endeavours to remove all blockages that cause psychological problems and guilt feelings (underlying feelings) which produce tension, anxiety and defensiveness and inhibits human drives. The person is assisted to expose true feelings and these negative feelings when reduced or relieved will move the person towards experiencing growth and progress – increase self acceptance and autonomy.

The counsellee is directed to accept the truth and put all self-criticism aside, although painful that friends and family would not acknowledge the relationship or marriage, or that time may change their perception that God forgives and that they need not condemn the couple of being “immoral or committing sin” (cf. Macmillan 2002: 15-23). The individual is taught to not live to please others or their expectations but to freely be open to all forms of experiences of the inter-religious marriage and to practice and observe the good things of the other religion that will assist in dealing with change and move toward growth and self actualization as also indicated by Client-Centred therapy (Rogers 1951: 76; Meier 1982: 165). The achievement of meaning to life according to Logotherapy is solely the individual’s responsibility. The counsellor assists the clients to find meaning to life and in this process find answers from outside and not inside them as opposed to psychotherapy. Once the guilt feelings are linked to an external cause, the counsellee is guided to rationalize and understand the cause and then directed to think and act responsibly and to do the right thing (*Right Activity*). The individual is directed to move the focus from himself or herself to meaning of life. Wong uses logotherapy with Cognitive-behavioural processes to Meaning-Centered Counselling (cf. Frankl 1883: 255 – 260; Wong 1997: 88 – 91).

9.6.2.2 *Self Actualization*

Gorima, a Hindu was married to a Muslim and Esther a White English Christian was also married to a Muslim. Both these females were exposed to the Muslim disregard of equality between husband and wife and the subservient role of woman as practiced by the Muslim religion. Both experienced an identity crisis, religious and cultural conflict, and role confusion within themselves and later after the birth of their children. The counsellor must perceive that the discord will create disharmony in the marriage and endeavour to move counsellees such as Esther and Gorima in making a choice in how to deal with these issues. If not dealt with, the individual will not function optimally and hence, not realise their own potential.

The counsellor should influence counsellees such as Esther and Gorima in making a choice as to what they desire and how they want achieve their goals in life. The most important is to create a harmonious relationship in the family. The fact that both women decided to convert, means that they have made a choice to observe all religious and cultural practices of the other religion and hence meant a change of religious identity even for their children (cf. Yob 1998: 15-23). However, a compromise may be reached for such partners if there is some flexibility, e.g. by creating and

nurturing a conducive emotional environment, where both women, may be allowed to continue certain beliefs and practices of their own religion, e.g. the celebration of Easter and Christmas in Christianity. 15% of the respondents agreed that some celebrations and traditions must be kept by both parties and they should not be divorced completely from all practices of their own religion in order to maintain some of their beliefs and practices emanating from their own cultural upbringing. Such individuals may then be assisted to make the adjustments in order to achieve personal growth, a healthy family life, personal growth, quality relationships, and contentment (cf. Yob 1998: 74; Meier 1982: 68).

Esther indicated in the interview that it was not the adjustment to religious requirements and spirituality but the expectation to be a good Indian wife to a Muslim man – this was very stressful and created strain since she was not an Indian. Esther whose upbringing was in Western culture was now compelled to learn to cook and live the Muslim Indian lifestyle in order for the marriage to work. She had to make a decision to comply and alter her attitudes and behaviour.

Rogers (1951: 76) expresses in his Client-Centred therapy that all individuals possess a strong drive toward personal growth, health, and adjustment, which he calls self-actualization. The guilt and regret of conversion and the estrangement from religion of birth and family can contribute toward emotional confusion in the individual. Also rejection by one's parents and the unacceptance by the husband's family can contribute emotional tension in the relationship. To relieve this tension and interference by families, the couple must be influenced to chart and live their own life.

As a counsellor, an endeavour may be made to make the counselees understand the different forces and situations that influence their behaviour. The understanding of the core of the problem will cause them to be flexible and invoke the necessary changes for improvements and adjustments in their lives. The counselees will be moved towards expressing their feelings and identify their problems and feelings and also to exploring, reflecting, understanding, and clarifying feelings. An attempt must be made for counselees to disclose and remove all blockages that cause psychological problems and hindrances to self-actualization. The psychological approach of helping counselees involves seeing managing problems as more of a pro-active than a re-active process. As such, problem management is considered to provide opportunities for clients to learn life enhancing skills. As a counsellor, the counsellee should be assisted to manage

their problems in living more effectively and develop unused resources and missed opportunities fully and also help clients become better at helping themselves in their everyday lives (cf. Egan 1990: 31-44; Rogers 1951: 7).

According to Egans (1990: 45) the problems that clients bring to counselling arise, in most part, from their difficulties in harnessing energy and resources (both internal and external) to realize their best potential. Once the core of the problems are identified, the counsellee must be challenged with possible solutions and compromises to the problem. The counsellee will be encouraged to utilize every possible means of achieving the goals. The counsellee must make a choice to face the reality, take action and produce responsible behaviour, thus by this process, to remove guilt, regrets and failure. The counsellee will be guided in the search for their real self. The counsellees will be encouraged to be open to their experiences which will assist them in dealing with change and to be open to a range of life's choices available to them. The aim is to inculcate more efficient behaviour, for the individual to be more rational and have more positive self regard and hence, be responsible for their own self-actualization (Rogers 1951: 76; Kirwan 1984: 41-42 and 188; Meier 1982: 315; Denny 2006: 1-16).

In the cases of Esther and Gorima, both women were taught to avoid self preoccupation with keeping up appearances; to have a sense of duty to external obligations; to not merely live up to other's expectation; to value integrity in oneself and others; to engage in the ability to direct oneself; valuing of one's feelings and self as to positive and negative; valuing experiences of the moment and growth process; to commit to greater intimacy and a quality relationship; to understanding and greater respect for others, especially in-laws and family; to valuing and being open to all forms of experiences in themselves and to others; to adapting to and accepting one's situation; and practicing religious tolerance. The counsellees should be taught to bring out their own desires to grow, develop and react with the environment including what it offers to realize their potential – which may mean that counsellees need to be assisted in changing their thoughts and actions. Gorima and Esther had to take charge of their circumstances and environment, especially with coping and adapting to the observance of holidays and cultural identity issues of the other religion. The counsellees hold on to some existing elements in their environment and gain control that will satisfy their needs – only when out of control stress and tension is experienced as desires are not achieved. The counsellor should assist counsellees to devise plans to follow and successfully achieve their own desires – identity change leads to a change in

behaviour. The multimodal BASIC ID approach used by Lazarus also focuses on the behaviours and perceptions (cause of mood changes) that becomes an obstacle to personal growth and happiness – the level of tolerance to these obstacles requires investigation and the counsellee as assisted by the counsellor will find ways to increase the tolerance level that also dictates behaviour patterns. The cause of a certain behaviour (including strengths and weaknesses) according to the BASIC ID counselling model should be identified. Gorima's and Esther's thinking and the negative responses to the environment including challenges of the inter-religious marriage needed to change, negative habits removed, and wrong behavioural responses understood. If they are assisted to deal constructively with their challenges, counsellees will accept themselves with their limitations and abilities – and decide for responsible behaviour (cf. Reality Therapy – control theory) (Mamillan 2002: 82-83; Meier 1982: 68; Glasser 1965: 10-18; Lazarus 1989: 313; 1981: 18; 1992: 245; College 2002: 258).

Gorima and Esther needed to establish who they are (identity) and needed to understand that they are responsible for their own actions. Pearls (1969: 49) agrees with Gestalt Therapy that seeks to create experiences that increase self-awareness. The couples must accept their new identity and find ways to overcome and/ or live with the challenges that have been introduced to their life through inter-religious marriage. In being responsible for their actions and becoming aware of who they are, the counsellees would be able to find meaning to their lives as indicated by Frankl (2006: 99), that people's search for meaning is their primary motivation in this life and can only be reached by himself – Logotherapy. As the counsellee deals with life's problems and situations by finding solutions on their own it will translate into meaning and change – to actualize their full potential the counsellee must be influenced to engage with the environment (outside) and not remain cloistered within the self. They need to realize meaning which would result in constructive change in behaviour and positive attitudes that will lead to family peace and harmony in marriage (cf. Pearls 1969: 49; Meier 1982: 308; Frankl 2006: 99-110).

Since spirituality plays a vital role in family life and relationships, counsellees should also be guided into making decisions concerning worship, prayer and observance of religious traditions and rituals as these are fundamental contributors to change to meaning in life and identity – hence self-actualization. The counsellees should be encouraged and supported in their spiritual beliefs and religious practices as it is understood that they have a spiritual and moral obligation and are consciously aware of it (cf. Walsh 1999: 79; 181-185; Worthington 1989: 27).

Both women were encouraged to move away from regrets, guilt, and blaming oneself for apparent failures. The counsellor should assist the counselees to change behaviour and determine goals for self enhancement and to realize their full potential, and move towards self-actualization.

9.6.2.3 Inability to Analyse and Solve Problems in Relationship

Two couples of the empirical research, Nath (Christian) and Jay (Hindu); and Christians Dovan and Macia (White European) were married but were exposed to religious and cultural issues that caused conflicts. Nath's and Jay's parents were against their relationship or the marriage and Macia's parents (Socialists) also initially rejected the relationship. Respondents indicated that the support from family and friends are of paramount importance as they contribute to the failure or success of the marriage – religious beliefs and practices should be respected and judgements reserved. 60% of respondents disclosed that they received support from their families and friends.

However, Nath and Jay agreed on observing their religious rituals independently. But, they agreed on not having any form of shrine in the house – exposed to major cultural religious differences between Christianity and Hinduism. Nath attended church, whilst Jay prayed at the temple. When their first child was born, they experienced the same problem from their parents regarding the religious traditions. The child was Christened in the church and also subjected to the Hindu traditions. The innocent child had to face the tough challenges that lay ahead, hence experienced religious identity confusion. Sue et al. (1994: 4) indicates that couples in such relationships are exposed to major cultural differences (lifestyle, customs, ceremonies, beliefs, behavior, practices, prejudices and stereotypes) and they should develop skills to deal with them as the counsellor leads them to develop concrete goals in solving the problems (cf. Berghe 1997: 15; Markoff 1977: 18; Biever et al. 1998: 31; Hegar & Grief 1994: 6; Bonacci et al. 1996: 28; Gainnes & Agnew 2003: 14; Liard 2000: 62).

Although Jay converted to Christianity due to pressure from Nath's parents, not all issues were resolved. Subsequently, the birth of the child intensified the disharmony and discord in the marriage as the couple experienced tension and extreme stress in the home due to the ongoing religious conflict. Also the non-participation of the partners and the religious practices observed separately contributed to instability and discontentment in the marriage.

In the second example, initially Macia's parents refused to give consent to her marriage to Dovan. Firstly, they did not wish for her to marry an Indian. Secondly, they took for granted that she will marry someone from their own culture. Thirdly, they hoped for her to complete her studies and support the family, as they were economically challenged. Fourthly, Dovan, who depended on individuals and the Church for financial support, was of no asset to Macia's family. Subsequently, the couple still married against her parent's wishes and was threatened with disownment. Not only the breakdown in family relationship and communication (language barriers) contributed to the stress in the marriage, but also the difficulty experienced by the couple, especially Macia, to adapt to the Indian way of living.

The counsellor assisted both the couples to analyze their challenges and to make choices towards possible solutions. The counsellor realized that both couples failed to be flexible and creatively able to find possible solutions that would work for them. Their thinking and ability to solve problems were limited. The counsellor endeavoured to move the couples to a point of understanding about what was important and to be realistic in order to find solutions to the challenges they experienced in their marriage. The counsellees were further enlightened as not to intensify the situation by making an insurmountable problem out of their challenges but to find solutions by addressing the challenges. The counsellor presented effective strategies to deal with stressful events. These impacted on their joint relationship. They were empowered as clients to learn to be more effective at identifying problems and challenges, to effectively engage and manage them, and to see these as opportunities for self development and self actualization. Counselling can help to overcome early challenges in the marriage by enabling the client to acquire skills in living, in particular with regard to interpersonal and problem-management skills. The counsellees will then be capable of realizing their potential and rising above their challenges. The counsellees must be directed to focus on the positive things in their lives that are working for them. Constructive change can come about through action (cf. Egans 1990: 31-45; Perry 1991: 66-67; Crook 1997: 50).

The couples mentioned were directed to make decisions in choosing possible alternatives for their marriages to work. The counsellees were encouraged to be open to new experiences as it would shape their behaviour since it is their own experiences and that they should make choices about these. They needed to be responsible for their own choices and behaviour and take the necessary actions to constructively engage their particular situations (cf. Meier 1982: 315; Meier 2002: 82;

Rogers 1951: 76). Dovan decided to learn the Bulgarian language to increase positive healthy communication with his wife and her parents. Through prayer and perseverance, Macia's parents eventually accepted her relationship with Dovan and accepted the marriage. Dovan has coped with the Bulgarian way of living and when Macia relocated to South Africa, Durban ten years ago, she chose to adapt and hence coped with the Indian way of living and integrated the cultures as well, especially the preparing of food. Macia willingly learnt about the traditional family structures, the support systems and ethnicity of the Indian culture. Dovan learnt to speak the Bulgarian language and also the way of life of Bulgarians. Family structure, support system and ethnicity even acceptable attitudes differ from culture to culture and even in different communities and should be understood and learnt. The couple needs to communicate correctly as in some cultures men especially fail to express their feelings, and women may be brought up to be dependent. The respondents agreed that cultural understanding (assimilate knowledge) and communication skills are of paramount importance in an inter-cultural or inter-religious relationship. The counsellor should ensure that the couples develop their communication skills to constructively engage challenges (cf. Westwood 1989: 31; Sue et al: 1994: 4; Roots 2002: 39; Eyrich 1987: 71; Hendrichs 2002: 64). In the latter case, what made it easier is that both of the counselees observed only the Christian traditions and followed the Christian way of life. The common faith has made it easier for them to live in harmony and peace despite their different ethnicities. The couple has two children who speak English and Bulgarian – the identity issue was not a problem.

On the other hand, on the birth of their first child, Nath and Jay were encouraged by the counsellor to make choices and compromises for the harmony of the marriage and to avoid the child having to grow up with identity confusion. Jay acted rationally and made a decision to convert to Christianity and to observe all the Christian religious practices. Partners in inter-marriage relationships must be prepared to adjust and adapt to religious and cultural changes, especially when they make the decision to convert. The decision to convert to Christianity established an identity in the counsellee, especially religious identity and sense of belonging inside the person and family –identity change had to be followed by a change in behaviour. This decision empowered the couple to focus on developing a healthy relationship. In the empirical research, 55% of partners of the research converted and 52% of them gave in to follow the husband's religion (cf. Crohn 1995: 9; Sung 190: 86; Meier: 1982: 309; <http://talkingaboutintermarriage.com>, in such situations). The parents eventually embraced the

relationship and marriage and injected no religious interference. What contributed to the healthy relationship not only with the couples but also with the parents was the fact that the couples chose to be independent and live on their own – this practice alleviated any further repercussions, interferences and complications with the parents.

The counsellor guided the couples to identify, clarify their problems and determine goals. The couples were guided into identifying the behaviours that are responsible for their unhappiness, tension and stress – what are the sensations that affect a person's feelings and behavior and how does the family actions affect their lives as indicated by Lazarus' Multimodal counselling model (cf. Lazarus 1981: 18-25 & 1992: 244). In order to change the family environment for a healthy stress-free relationship, the couples were guided into making valued judgements and plans (decisions), and to alter negative behaviour and thinking to more positive and rational one. Reality Therapy affirms this counselling technique by stressing that the counselees should be guided to face the current situation in the present, take the right action and be responsible for change to take place – be fully responsible for present and future behaviour. Lazarus (1992: 245) also indicated that counselees should be directed to take action to achieve desired goals under the modality of "Behaviour". Reality therapy aims to inculcate responsible behaviour in an individual who experiences displeasure and anger as a result of being stressed, threatened, and frustrated. The married couples usually find it difficult to solve personal problems on their own. As such they required help from a counsellor. Couples may find it difficult not only to think of alter ideas but also when a solution is proposed to them, they may not know how to implement it. Problem Solving therapy aims to assist couples to identify the core of the problems and feelings. The difficulty is identified and analyzed, possible solutions are suggested, consequences are considered, and solutions accepted. The counsellor should direct the counselees not only as to why their challenges occurred but also about what needs to be learned and explored in order for new and happier experiences to occur. The use of acceptance strategies is one of the major means of helping couples resolve their differences (cf. Ellis 1988: 32-35; Ryle 1997: 42; Macmillan 2002: 98-123; Glasser 1965: 10-18; Meier 2002: 92; Perry 1991: 66).

The search for the cause of challenges assumes that such a quest is both desirable and useful – that there is an objective truth about the counsellee to be uncovered. Counsellors, should encourage the couples to make value judgements that would alter behavior and assist them with alternate propositions, after analyzing the cause of the challenge. It is their decision to take action

to change thinking and behaviour in order to resolve challenges. This will help them to experience inter-faith marital contentment and harmony. Macia chose to alter behavior and adapted to the Indian lifestyle and Jay chose to convert and observe a single religion. The counsellor assisted them in their choices, what they decided to do, and to establish new ways of behavior and action. This approach of problem solving also applies to challenges that exist in social relationships (cf. Meier 1982: 309; Glasser 1965: 14-18; Macmillan 2002: 6).

Brief counselling sessions cannot assist with all the counsellee's problems but by supporting the development of skills in observation, analysis, reflection, prediction, impulse recognition and control, evaluation and self-feedback, the counsellee is educated and empowered to continue problem solving for themselves. Finally, the counsellee must be assisted to analyze, understand, define and clarify life goals and to endeavor to find meaning in their lives and relationships – focus should be concentrated not on the past actions but on the present and the future. Counsellees should be directed by the counsellor to inculcate positive attitudes, make sense of human existence and events, hence, create meaning – linked to Reality Therapy in that it is goal directed. Frankl states that the humanity (couples) does not need a tensionless state but freely chosen worthwhile goals and tasks – the decisions taken will lead them to make adjustments and live meaningfully. The couples cannot reverse the past actions but can correct it and not repeat the same behavior in the future (cf. Ryle 1997: 42; Meier 1982: 121; Wong 1997: 89; Frankl 2006: 110-115).

9.6.2.4 Distorted Cognition and Behaviour

Distortion in thought processes, cause individuals to think and behave irrationally and can contribute to disharmony and dysfunctional marriage relationship. The way counsellees interpret their experiences dictates how they respond, feel and act. The counsellor should focus on assisting in correcting erroneous thinking habits and distortions and facilitate more realistic patterns of processing information – orientated towards constructive change (cf. Beck 1990: 2-4; Macmillan 2002: 71; Meier 1982: 335).

Desra (Christian), who married a Hindu; single mother Bertha (Coloured Christian); and Sharon (Christian) will be analyzed in the light of the behavioural changes that resulted due to their cognitive distortions. Desra was tolerant to her husband's religion as she hoped that her Hindu husband will convert sometimes in the future and her husband hoped that she will convert. Desra

was paranoid when she found ‘prayer ashes’ in her room. She thought that her husband engaged in some witchcraft and brought ‘ashes’ to convert her. The ashes could have been placed by her husband as he does pray in the house. She did not confront him with the issue but told him not to place ‘ashes’ in the house and this caused conflict and tension between them. Desra became withdrawn and always suspicious as she also believed that her husband sister’s plotted to break up the marriage as they did not invite her to their religious functions.

Bertha (Coloured) had a relationship with a White Afrikaner and she has two children. The boyfriend’s parents were against the relationship and did not consent to the marriage. They were racist and prejudiced towards her and the children. She was not allowed to visit them. They did not wish to have anything to do with their son’s children. The rejection made her feel that she was an outcast and unworthy. She thought and felt inferior. This affected her self-concept and her self-confidence. She depended on the father of the children for support and felt useless as she was not gainfully employed. This contributed to withdrawal and depression. This behaviour contributed to the neglect of her children.

The caste system practiced by some cultures can cause an immense inferiority complex in people and relationships. The Hindu religion in India still observes the caste system (social hierarchy) to a greater extent as compared to South Africa – the religious rules and restrictions with its defined boundaries prevent others from trespassing (social control). This rejection, disownment and cultural thinking can contribute to a barrier and breakdown in relationships. Hence, individuals are exposed to discrimination and prejudice. People displayed indifferent and unacceptable attitudes during earlier times on inter-caste marriages but have changed overtime by becoming more tolerant. Esther, who teaches at an Islamic guidance school for new women converts, disclosed that the caste system played itself out in South Africa to a large extent but that in India it is still a common practice. The coloured women/wives are regarded as lowest in social standings – these women have to work harder to be accepted in the Muslim community. The counsellor should focus on inculcating self-acceptance and the removing of the feeling of unworthiness and insecurity (cf. Crohn 1995: 40; Dhruvarajan 1993: 12; Williams 1993: 46; Jayaram 2007: 22; Browne 1992: 12).

Cultural diversity can influence thinking and behaviour. Of the challenges that face married couples, communication is usually near the top of the list. Esther disclosed that the women of the

school are encouraged to discuss issues with their partner and not hold back or suppress matters of concern pertaining to the marriage. With couples of inter-marriage, there may be unique challenges in regard to how they communicate and what they communicate is influenced by how individuals think. In some cultures, men do not reveal what they are feeling, or women are not raised to be independent or they are raised to be very independent – this has an impact on the thought processes and behaviour. Again, understanding each other's culture is the key to successful interaction. The American woman who marries the Japanese man may need to be tactful when she voices her opinion, especially in front of his family. The Arab man who marries the American woman may have to overcome his own resistance to bottle up his thoughts and feelings. The American woman who has been raised to be outspoken and independent who marries the American man whose mother was quiet and shy will have to carefully guard her tongue, while the man will have to learn not to be offended by her outspokenness. The inter-cultural couple must be careful not to allow a disagreement turn into a personal attack which can become a cultural attack. If an inter-cultural couple is going to experience healthy communication they must understand and exercise real diligence in developing their communication skills. The counsellor can be especially helpful in identifying these areas and helping each member communicate more effectively, while understanding the differences between their two cultures and the effects that their respective cultures have on their understanding of communication – a change of thinking is necessary in order to adapt and behave in a certain way to accommodate other cultures (cf. Adams 1980: 52; Sue et al.1994: 4; 1981: 44; Roots 2002: 39; Yob 1998: 72-74; Crohn 1995: 25-41).

As a counsellor the focus for the above cognitive distortions and how to deal with them, is to identify the irrational negative thoughts that are responsible for negative behaviour by individuals of the inter-faith marriage. This must be replaced by more positive rational interpretations and replace the biased distorted cognitions. Paranoid thoughts, feeling insecure, inferiority complexes, identity confusion, ethnic conflicts, and incongruent self-concepts may be resolved through a counsellor assisting the married couples or individuals to understand and analyse the cognitive distortions and to identify what has caused their negative perceptions and thinking. For instance, Desra should not have reached a conclusion or taken for granted that her spouse would convert in the future. She must be directed by the counselor to move to being realistic and change her thinking and behaviour to adapt to the present situation for positive progress in her life and family. She also was paranoid when she found 'prayer ashes' in the house. She was aware that her

husband does pray in the house and that it could have been him who left the ‘ashes’ in her room. Instead she thought that he engaged in some witchcraft and had placed it in her room to convert her – hence this misunderstanding led to tension and conflict. She also felt unwanted with the creation of suspicious thinking that her sister-in-law deliberately fails to invite her for a religious function and that she plotted to break up the marriage. One significant approach is to assist couples to get clarity of their distorted cognition. They need to identify all the distorted thinking and then work towards changing it through realistic analysis. The distorted thinking and beliefs can then be changed to positive and rational thinking and interpretations of the experiences and events. Attempts must be made to change behaviour in order to adapt to a situation or to address the issues to create harmony in the person’s life and with their relationships. Responsible behaviour should be inculcated in an individual who experiences displeasure and anger as a result of being stressed, threatened and frustrated. However, the individuals must be prepared to change thinking and behaviour as thinking and beliefs influence behaviour. Cognitive analytical therapy reformulation seeks to empower the counsellee to a re-vision of their identity, their resources, and their possibilities. (cf. Beck 1990: 2-4; Meier 1982: 199; Macmillan 2002: 120-123; Gottman 1999: 36; Ryle 1997: 42).

Cognitive behavioural therapy supports the aforementioned counselling approach in that the individuals are assisted in distinguishing irrational from rational beliefs. Irrational beliefs can be uncovered emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally. Cognitive behavioral approaches believe that psychopathology stems from irrational, faulty, negative and distorted thinking or self-statements that a person makes to himself or herself. The individual feels trapped by negative beliefs such as, “I’m damned if do, I’m damned if I don’t.” The underlying truth in behaviour can be changed or eliminated, or new behaviour taught by the systematic use of reward or punishment. The objective in behavioural counselling is to introduce and motivate new ways of behaviour, or alternatively to modify existing behaviour. According to Rational Emotive Therapy there are two types of beliefs – rational and irrational beliefs. The irrational beliefs must be located, confronted, and then replaced by more rational beliefs. The individuals are taught to generate active cognitive skills in the face of stressful life events. Cognitive counselling takes an information processing approach to the counsellee. Because clients learned incorrect processing and interpreting habits during their cognitive development, counselling is aimed at helping them to correct erroneous thinking habits and distortions and to learn more realistic ways of processing information. The counsellor endeavours to engage the counsellee in the joint creation of conceptual tools which

can then be internalized. This helps to relativize the prior fixed attributions and empowers the patient to use new ways of behaving as a support for developing and maintaining new ability to perceive options and to mobilize resources towards constructive and effective choice making. The focus of cognitive analytical therapy is on removing the blocks that the counsellor and counsellee identify as leading to suffering (cf. Beck 1990: 4; Meier 1982: 75; Macmillan 2002: 199; Denning 2006: 16; Gottman 1999: 36; Ryle 1997: 42).

The counsellor needs to direct someone like Bertha to stop and re-evaluate her situation and options. She needs to be made aware that the rejection is not her fault but prejudice and racism is responsible for this behavior from the spouse's parents. Hence, she should move away from the irrational thoughts of feeling inferior and unworthy. Bertha should not magnify the situation and personalize it – hence, create distortions of the facts. There is nothing that proves that she is inferior and therefore should not feel that way. She should move away from a tunnel vision in believing things that would affect her self-concept. The counsellor should direct the counsellee's attention towards a change in thinking and towards the choice of a suitable responsible behaviour that would raise her self-confidence and improve her self-concept. She should not allow the spouse's parents to be an obstacle to her progress and that she has the potential within her to be able to do anything she wish to accomplish – hence improve her status and situation on her own. According to Ryle (1997: 42), change occurs when the counsellee is able to step back from their familiar perceptions and observe new options which can be evaluated before a decision is made. This approach clearly demands that the counsellee is willing and able to engage in the tasks of stepping back, observing, reflecting, deciding, communicating, acting, and reviewing. The therapist helps the counsellee to develop the new tools they need in order to think, feel and act differently. In cognitive analytical therapy, the patients are encouraged to work on their own tasks in and with the presence and help of the counsellor. This works from the beginning to increase the counsellee's sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (cf. Beck 1990: 2-4; Meier 1982: 335; Macmillan 2002: 171-199; Gottman 1984: 4)

According to Rational Emotive Therapy (RET), thoughts, emotions and behavior are rarely separable in that counsellees act on their thinking and emotions which result in behaviour. In fact RET may also be used with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in counselling someone like Desra and Bertha. Distorted thinking and behaviour would be located and explained to the counsellees in order to create more realistic and rational beliefs. The counsellor should guide the counsellee

in self-discovery by identifying the events that caused distorted cognition, gain understanding and thoughts about such incidents and what behavior and attitudes were a result of these incidents or attitudes. The counsellor should attempt to minimize the self-defeating interpretations and move towards inculcating more realistic beliefs, thinking and behavior (attitudes). Irrational beliefs can be located and dealt with cognitively, behaviourally and emotionally. The counsellor should analyze and interpret as to how the counsellee's perception (self-image/concept) impact on behaviour, moods and sensations. Did the counsellees' beliefs and values have an impact on their thoughts? The counsellees must cooperate and be willing to make changes to attain positive outcomes. Pain may be removed through diversion, satisfaction of demands and influencing the counsellee to give up certain negative attitudes. The counsellees (even Desra and Bertha) should be directed by counsellors to move away from analyzing everything or finding answers (think and plan) to every action or incident they are exposed to but rather to develop skills to think realistically. Understanding of information correctly would lead to the counsellee to being equipped and able to face society and any situation that they confront. The correction of misconception in clients would result in addressing faulty cognitions and erroneous beliefs - Modality of Cognition by Lazarus. The counsellees are assisted by the counsellor to face their anxieties and then constructively engage in the opposite by relaxing and concentrating on good and relaxing thoughts – irrational thoughts and anxieties are replaced by self-control and self-confidence. Only when mistaken self-analysis are removed would the counsellee be able to participate in life's activities and progress to achieving goals and meaning in life. The counsellor must aim to inculcate meaning in the counsellee's life which would contribute to a positive self-concept – in other words they must be able to understand their existence, make sense of events which will give concrete meaning to their lives and also alleviate inner tension (cf. Ellis 1988: 32-35,120; Macmillan 2002: 123; Lazarus 1981: 18-25, 166-140, 1992: 244; Watzlawick 1978: 102; Mittleman 1948: 22; Frankl 1983 1-5, 55-75; <http://www.existentialanalysis.ca>).

9.6.2.5 Distorted Emotions

Egans (1990: 30-45) indicated that abnormal behaviour and emotional disturbances are seen as ineffective behaviour and its consequences, arising from lack of knowledge or skills. Since change comes through action, there must be evidence of internal change – a shift in inner change in thinking or feeling and external observable action in behavioural change. The counsellor should

assist the clients to identify and implement strategies for action that will result in positive and sustainable outcomes in this case.

All the couples in this research were exposed to and experienced emotional distortions in their marriages. In the case of divorce, this was also so with single parents, especially those from inter-faith relationships (Desra, Gorima, Sharon, Jay and Glen). Thinking and emotions are closely related (Ellis 1988). The counsellor must assist the counsellee to identify the thoughts and events of their life that are responsible for their feelings and emotions which move them to a specific behaviour or action. The individual needs to think and differentiate rational from irrational beliefs and emotions. The misinterpretation and adapting to religious diversity and beliefs, prejudices and discrimination, religious traditions, cultural conflicts, and religious insecurities including identity issues as these impact inter-faith marriage couples and individuals may cause them to act emotionally in ways that are detrimental to their inner peace. This may contribute to discord and disconnectedness in the marriage. Individuals should therefore be taught to interpret events and experiences accurately and not misconstrue them. If events and experiences are misconstrued and emotionally charged, they can lead to negative emotions and behaviours which would be out of harmony with the family, even society and even the self (Beck 1990; Ellis 1988; Meier 1982; Gottman 1999; Macmillan 2002).

With regard to the couples interviewed for this research, the counsellor discovered that the couples bottled up emotional tension caused by emotional stressors which were responsible for inner conflict and discomfort in the marriages and relationships. These blockages should be removed as they cause psychological problems. Rogers (1951: 76) says that emotional problems are a result of 'inconsistencies between a person's self-concept and the actual life experiences' – evidence of inner conflicts and negative behavior. The cultural issues also impacted on their emotions that contributed to the negative behaviour and attitudes of the couples. The inner confusion and conflicting feelings about religious and cultural identity may cause confusion, conflict and pain in the relationship. These repressed feelings of resentment by reluctantly submitting to cultural and religious practices revealed itself through emotional distortions. The counselor should make use of Freud's psychoanalytical and free association method to bring to the surface suppressed emotions and once the causes are discovered, healing is possible and distortions removed. Once the counsellor assists the counsellees to bring to the surface underlying feelings and gain contact with their true feelings and values, the destructive forces of conflict and anxiety are reduced,

progress and personal growth is possible. This could be assisted by the theorizing of Rogers and Client Centered therapy (cf. Meier 1982: 165; Augsburger 1986: 137-145; Chinitz 2001: 743; Murstein: 1976: 56; Freud 1913: 62-65; Rogers: 1951: 76).

According to Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) one of the human goals is to be free from emotional pain. Thinking and emotions are closely related. They are so closely related that they normally go hand in hand with cause and effect relationships, so that thinking becomes emotion and emotion becomes thought. Thinking and emotion take the form of internalized sentences or self-talk that become a person's thoughts and emotions. These internal thoughts generate and modify emotions. Thinking and emotions interact with behaviour in that individuals normally act on the basis of thoughts and emotions. The premise of RET is that when a person experiences an event, the individual thinks about that event and responds emotionally to that thinking of that event and hence that produces a particular behaviour. The emotional consequences are largely created by the individual's belief system. The partners of different backgrounds and belief systems may be threatened, stressed and frustrated by conflicting demands of traditions which may result in anger due to displeasure. Emotionally, irrational beliefs are revealed by inappropriate feelings. The counselees must be made aware that these feelings and emotions are normal but that they should be identified and revealed and not stored as it would result in bitterness, resentment and hostility. The counselor should guide counselees into changing feelings, emotions and behaviour – and to choose possible alternatives. By the use of the Cognitive method, the counsellee is also taught assertiveness and communication skills for distressed relationships. The negative thinking, distorted thoughts and beliefs that create negative distorted emotions must be monitored by the counsellee and replaced by more rational thinking and interpretations (cf. Beck 1990: 2-4; Ellis 1988: 32-35; Meier 1982: 309-315, 70-75; Gottman 1999: 36-45; Macmillan 2002: 95-123, 71-99; Crohn 2005: 16).

Sharon created emotional tensions within herself by pretending to observe the Hindu rituals and prayer to her husband and mother-in-law but secretly prayed to Christ. Desra again displayed emotional outbursts as she experienced stress and tension of being suspicious (paranoid) without any conclusive evidence when she found “ashes” in her room. The goal of the counsellor is to minimize self-defeating thoughts and emotions and to help an individual acquire a more realistic meaning of life. Since thoughts, feelings and behavior are interlinked to create irrational beliefs that produce emotional distortions, the counsellor have to focus on all three elements. Glen's

rejection by his Muslim parents instilled immense emotional pain, withdrawal and depression. The counsellor should engage in alleviating emotional pain by using several ways, including diversions, satisfaction of demands, and convincing a person to give up certain attitudes. The Bible (Ephesians 4: 32 & Colossians 3: 13) teaches forgiveness brings healing and if Glen forgives his family, the negative emotion within him would be surely released, even though the parents don't respond or continue disowning him – he could move on with his life. The individual is taught basically how to think – to separate rational from irrational beliefs. The counsellor shows the inter-faith married couple or individual when, why and how their beliefs are irrational and what emotions are distorted by the influence of those irrational interpretation of events and experiences. The individual is challenged as to what irrational belief to change, give up and to discover a more realistic self- awareness (cf. Macmillan 2002: 123; Ellis 1988: 32; Perls 1969: 49).

Counselees should be taught that although their grievances relate to an activating event or circumstances, their feelings of being upset (emotional distortions) as consequence are not justified. The counsellor should also endeavour to instill in partners relating and compromising skills without being dishonest about these. Counselees like Desra and Esther should be taught to be tolerant of the behaviour of their partners and others, irrespective of what the expectations of the partner are – especially when Desra's partner practices his religion in the house and Esther's husband wishes her to observe the dressing codes that are not those of a modern liberal woman. The counsellor needs to also assess the threshold level of tolerance in the counsellee since it has an impact on the social and spiritual interaction – anxiety, words uttered, thoughts and even faith issues. Once anger is removed rationally, assertive skills and quality communication skills can be introduced (Beck 1990; Ellis 1988: 32-35; Meier 1982: 335; Gottman 1999: 36; Macmillan 2002: 171-199; Denning 2006: 16; Lazarus 1989: 213, 1981: 166-240; Colledge 2002: 258-263).

9.6.2.6 Dysfunctional Families

There are many causes for a family to be dysfunctional. Role confusions in the family may create conflicts in the home as with many other challenges pertaining to religious traditions and practices impacting an inter-religious marriage. The identity issue, including the raising of children, may also inject emotional tension in the family. Unresolved issues, prior to marriage and repressed feelings, may also contribute to tensions in the family and may create obstructions to growth and

self-actualization. Incorrect cognition and a lack in problem solving skills may also lead to many prolonged and unresolved conflicts. Because of these and similar factors, the family may experience no peace and harmony but become dysfunctional. Bowen's (1988) Family Systems theory should be used by the counsellor in this case. This will assist to understand how the family functions. This must also be integrated with the other theories discussed in chapter 7 of this research – to constructively deal with the challenges of the dysfunctional family and to help members to inculcate peace, harmony and meaning in the family.

Virginia Satir (1967: 81) in her 'systems approach,' indicates that the family system of interaction is studied and modified to enhance the growth of family members and the unit as a whole. It is often found that family members with a low self-esteem cannot tolerate different attitudes and behaviours from other family members. Faulty family communication also creates problems and family dysfunction.

The respondents of this research indicated that gossip is also very harmful to relationships, especially if the mother-in-law is the one who gossips to the son about his wife without confronting her. Sharon married a Hindu and was forced to convert and observe the Hindu traditions. However, she still was a secret believer of Christ. She experienced religious and identity conflict. She became confused in her thinking when she against her wishes practiced the Hindu rituals. She did not always comply with her mother-in-law's instructions to light the lamp in the evenings at the shrine. Her mother-in-law always complained (gossiped) to her husband about her waking up late during the weekends and entertaining her Christian friends. The husband listened to his mother more than trying to understand his wife. The husband physically assaulted her several times. She knew then that her husband was a 'mama's boy' and always believed what his mother said about her. She thought that she was not so important to her husband any longer and that she will always come second to his mother. She thought that if she listened to her parents and not married a Hindu, her life would have been different, especially more peaceful and without conflict. The marriage was filled with discontent and discord as she became withdrawn and depressed. Her attitude changed as she became resistant and rebellious to observing the Hindu traditions. She came late from work and slept late during the weekends as she could not tolerate living in her house – she was also depressed and withdrawn. The marriage weakened and she wanted a divorce.

Esther again discovered from her guidance counselling school that gossip has a very damaging effect to the relationship, especially if it is from parents or the community – she recommended that since it is women that mostly gossip, they should be alerted and made aware of its detrimental effects to families and marriages.

Counsellors may utilize Psychoanalysis; Client-Centered Therapy; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; Rational Emotive Therapies and even the Multimodal approach where applicable together with Bowen's Systems interventions for dysfunctional families for dysfunctional inter-religious families.

Spencer (1990: 545) indicates that the family counsellor must attempt to teach the family to communicate more effectively and to encourage growth and the eventual autonomy, or independence, of each family member. Strategies should be turned into action. The strategies that counsellors should make counsellees aware of in order to deal with inter-religious and inter-faith marriages are as follows (cf. Greenstein 1993: 433-441; William & Lawler 2000: 208-210; Yob 1998: 72-74, 15-23): *Commitment to One's Marriage* – loving in spite of religious differences and disagreements. The couples should be engaged in frank discussions. *Learn Conflict Skills* – discuss a problem fully before trying to solve it. *Respect One's Spouse and Respect Religious Differences* – respect the partner's beliefs and avoid any forms of judgement. Do not issue religious ultimatums. Learn about one another's religion. *Compromise and Find Commonalities that Can Bring You Together* – find a common ground which is acceptable by both spouses and learning about the other's faith may lead to finding commonalities. Understanding each other would reduce conflicts. *Choose the Religion in which the Children will Grow Up* – the choice should be what is best for the child and to focus on avoiding identity confusion in the child's mind. *Holiday Dilemmas* – the couples should decide together on how to celebrate religious holidays they should celebrate from both or one of the religions (cf. Petsonk & Remsen 1988: 219).

Family systems theory suggests that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from one another, but rather as a part of their family, as the family is an emotional unit. Families are systems of interconnected and interdependent individuals, none of whom can be understood in isolation from the system. The basic concept is that the family is an organic system striving to maintain

balance as it confronts external pressures. The process by which the family systems operate is as follows (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 347; Hill & Rodgers 1964: 171; Bubolz & Sontag 1993: 419).

When two people, typically a couple, join into a single self, the process is called fusion. Such fusion creates anxiety produced by intense togetherness. The more undifferentiated each partner is, the greater likelihood there will be emotional reactions designed to minimize anxiety. Some of these mechanisms include: withdrawal and seeking emotional distance; couple conflict; the transmission of problems to a child in the system; and dysfunction emerging in at least one of the partners (cf. Hill & Rodgers 1964: 172; Bubolz & Sontag 1993: 421).

There should be structural change and establishment of family roles prior to the symptoms of individuals being reduced or eliminated – a set of social expectations that are appropriate for a given position. A man who believes that a woman's place is at home should not marry a career woman. The tradition, especially in the Eastern cultures has been transferred from generation to generation but has gradually changed over time due to the economic challenges but some still hold on to it. Gorima who married a Muslim always was faced with this challenge since she was a career woman. A compromise was reached prior to marriage that she would continue working and still attend to her duties at home. She employed a domestic worker to meet this need. In a family each member is responsible for roles and tasks which varies in different cultures. Mostly the husband is regarded as the provider and the wife to take on the nurturing and caring roles. Families are also pressured into bowing to the religious and social norms of society. Esther disclosed from her counselling of new converts that women have to play the role of a "good Indian wife" and rather than a "good Muslim wife" even though she converted to Islam. To be Indian culturally speaking was therefore more important than being a Muslim (cf. also Minuchin 1960: 15; Eshelman 1991: 59; Kephart 1981: 242).

The counsellor should understand the cultural and religious expectations impacting on a couple and direct inter-cultural and inter-religious couples that they do not have to forsake their cultural identity as they conform to certain elements of family expectations. A possible solution is that a compromise should be reached for families where two religions are practiced. Although the counsellor may observe that Sandra (Hindu) is submissive to Adrian (Christian), Adrian should allow Sandra to observe her religious practices – they did agree to celebrate certain religious holidays together. Esther also disclosed that many new converts revealed that they were not

allowed to observe their religious holidays and celebrations and were also not allowed to visit their families during that time or their families to visit them. The counselor should also bring to the attention of someone like Sharon's husband that the Bible is clear that the man leaves his parents and cleave to the wife – the mother should not dictate to the son or gossip about Sharon (cf. also Evans 1974: 64; Hendricks 2002: 61; Ephesians 22-33).

Frame (2000: 91) indicated that counsellors might assist counselees in creating a spiritual genogram that illustrates their religious and spiritual traditions across time. Such a genogram reveals the emotionally charged relationships that result from events and experiences associated with religion and spirituality in the family of origin and the extended family. Using a genogram helps clients and counsellors understand the source of troubling beliefs or practices in the family. *Triangles and triangulation* can also be used with religious couples. Couples can be assisted to have a real and personal relationship with God or the divine and believe that God is stabilizing interpersonal relationships whilst engaging in daily family transactions. To manage the anxiety or tension in a relationship, one or both partners (at the same time or alone) may bring in a third party, in this case God consciousness, to diffuse conflict and to balance the relationship. When each party in the triangle is fairly differentiated, then each of the partners can use their belief system and their relationship with God or the divine to provide support for problem solving efforts. In this ideal state, couples should take responsibility for addressing their issues and enlist God's assistance for reconciliation and problem resolution. When individual partners are not well-differentiated, God becomes triangulated in the couple relationship such that God's presence constrains the development of the problem.

The use of *multigenerational transmission* processes suggest that patterns of behaving interacting, including all the efforts at managing anxiety, are passed along from one generation to another. By analyzing their own family patterns and processes, counsellors can attend to their own differentiation issues and reduce the likelihood of being triangulated by their clients. Counsellors may focus on: clarifying relationships; resisting triangulation; embodying differentiation; teaching clients about emotional systems; managing client emotional reactivity; and remaining neutral. Someone like Sharon should clarify the roles of her mother-in-law in the couple's lives and through the assistance of a counsellor correct this. The spouse should be assertive and protect his wife – he should not entertain gossip but listen to Sharon's side and become more understanding and supportive of the fact that she also works. He should instead move away from

the impact of social norms and become flexible for the relationship and marriage to work (cf. Frame 2000: 92; Butler & Harper 1994: 14; Kerr & Bowan 1988: 221).

The counsellor should also bring out the underlying feelings that are unresolved in someone like Sharon's husband as his father passed away when he was young and he therefore became too attached to his mother. As a result he failed to detach himself from his mother or try to please her more than his wife, even to make a decision to live on their own. Once repressed feelings are uncovered the healing can take place. The counsellor should engage the husband and inform the mother-in-law to refrain from gossiping about Sharon to her husband and the husband should not entertain gossip as it is causing conflict in the family. Sharon also needs to correct her behaviour – she should not sleep immediately she arrives from work. She should be guided by the counsellor to at least assist the mother-in-law to engage in some chores. She should give respect to gain respect. Sharon should develop communication skills to be able to address issues troubling her and also to develop a relationship with the husband – Sharon has the potential and knowledge to do right, set goals and be responsible to change her situation (Reality Therapy). She should forgive her mother-in-law and husband for treating her badly and move forward to create a healthy relationship. Sharon should behave in a rational manner and be open to experiences and become accepting of others to achieve her goals, make progress and pursue her own self-actualization – she should overcome the depression and withdrawal as it is a response to feeling ignored by her spouse. Her compulsive problems should be addressed by self-monitoring and response prevention (modality of Behaviour). Sharon also needs to be guided by the counsellor to work on her tolerance level. Training should be given to be more assertive – with the assistance of relaxation and threshold training (modality Affect) (Adams 1973: 84; Freud 1973: 27; Macmillan 2002: 13; Rogers 1951: 76; Meier 1982: 121; Lazarus 1981: 155-240).

Sharon sought acceptance and approval from her spouse, especially her mother-in-law. Glen also sought for acceptance from his Muslim family as they disowned him. Gorima sought acceptance from her husband that she was a career woman. Macia sought acceptance and approval from her family for converting to Christianity and marrying an Indian. Viola sought acceptance from her parents for marrying a White Afrikaner. The counsellees mentioned experienced *differentiation of self* as they depended on others for acceptance and approval. It is clear that the pressure exerted by families, friends and society affected how the counsellees thought, felt and acted – in the face of demands of conformity. If the counsellee's "self" have not matured to handle the situation or

has not been developed far enough, the greater is the external impact from others on their functioning and also how the individual tries to even control the functioning of others actively or passively. The counsellor should guide the counsellee to recognize the realistic dependence on others and stay calm in order to face conflicts, criticisms and even rejection. The counsellee should become rational in thinking and avoid being clouded by emotions – and cultivate a well differentiated “self.” The pressure to conform to social norms against what one believes destroys the self-confidence in the Individual and affects the self-concept. Sharon felt insecure with the pressure exerted on her by the spouse and mother-in-law to conform to their way of life and also she was always conscious that an “eye” was on her and checking her every move – she was monitored and not free in the home. Gorima and Esther (White) also would not be restricted by their husband as they were modern, “liberated” career women and were not going to allow the Muslim dress code to be forced on them against their freedom to choose. Glen, on the other hand, failed to conform and faced the consequences of rejection from his family and friends – he had to deal with the situation to ensure his own progress and self-actualization.

The counsellor should guide the counsellees into believing that they possess the ability within themselves to regulate, guide and control themselves and the challenges they confront. They have to bring out their own potential to enhance their own self understanding and confront the prevailing conditions constructively. Rogers indicates that due to differentiation of functions and the pressure exerted from external forces to gain control, self-regulation and enhancement is necessary to realize one’s full potential. Counsellees should develop their value system in being open to experience (increases efficient behavior as they make choices and think rationally), take responsibility and develop self-regard (earn people’s respect) – cf. Client-Centered Counselling.

Counsellees like Glen, Gorima and Sharon should not compromise their value systems but find ways of showing love, care and respect. The counsellor should instill self-worth and positive attitude change and move towards practicing responsible behaviour – correct decisions should be taken in this regard. The counsellor should assist individuals to avoid being subjected to negative controlling behaviours from others, even from the partner. However, compromises should be reached and realistic goals set, plans put in place to alter behavior and commitments made to keep to plans. They should be alerted that the past cannot be change but their future can – cf. Reality therapy. Identity change follows a behaviour change. Since thinking affects behavior, the counsellees should also be sensitized in correct processing of thoughts to alleviate

misunderstanding each other. Someone like Glen should be assisted to correct thinking in believing that his family disowned and rejected him only due to his conversion against their “better judgement” and not because they did not love him or that he was unworthy - they were dictated by religious and social norms of Islam. Negative distorted thoughts and irrational beliefs should be identified and changed as this distorted the experiences which lead to negative behaviour that had an impact on Glen’s relationship with his family and Sharon’s relationship with her spouse and mother-in-law (gossip). Desra’s suspicions about the “ashes” can also be resolved through Cognitive behavioural therapy as also discussed earlier. Lazarus’s model can also be integrated, especially in that the counsellor should ensure that Sharon, Glen, Desra, and Gorima interpret information accurately and correctly without looking for reasons to everything to transfer blame that leads to conflict. Counselees should be directed not to jump too quickly to conclusions before finding evidence which result in negative distorted thinking and strange incongruent behavior (Modality of Cognition).

Since it is evident that the above mentioned individuals lack communication and interpersonal skills and they should therefore socialize more with friends and family and communicate their thoughts and feelings and confront the problem to find possible solutions to live in harmony and peace. Also the relationship and intimacy with their spouse should be developed and times should be set aside for getaways or retreats. Their strengths and weaknesses should be identified and worked upon (Modality of the Interpersonal) – not only psychological malfunctioning is aimed at discovering conflicts and forces within the counselee but also interpersonal problems are linked to the psyche. The weaknesses may be present due to misunderstanding and lack of skills to deal with demands of family and society – so ultimately skills training, to rectify misconceptions, positive self-instructions and coping exercises techniques are required (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 95; Rogers 1951: 76; Meier 1982: 70-121, 309; Glasser 1965: 18; Macmillan 2002: 92-95, 171; Beck 1990: 2-4; Lazarus 1992: 244-245, 1981: 22-25, 155; Prochaska 1978: 51).

It is essential to understand the relationship patterns that may cause problems in the inter-religious marriage – an individual’s beliefs, attitudes and behaviour all have a role to play in the relationship patterns as they are part of the family’s emotional system. Family tension and anxiety may lead to marital conflict – shaming and blaming each other for the situation and tries to secure control. One of the couple may yield to pressure just to keep the peace and harmony by submitting to act and think like the other. Hence, the one who submits, may experience an increase in anxiety and

this may lead to family tension – and social dysfunction (cf. the Nuclear Family's Emotional system). Such an unstable emotional relationship between partners may produce emotional distance between the partners. Failure to resolve emotional issues may lead to the reduction of emotional contact with each other (Emotional Cutoff). (Kerr & Bowan 1988: 54; Bowen 1978: 221).

Individuals like Sharon and Desra are part of a nuclear family emotional system. Sharon's mother-in-law controlled her son and manipulated him and the son submitted to his mother instead of listening to his wife – Sharon felt second to the mother-in-law in the house and second to her husband and therefore felt she could not compete. The husband assaulted her after his mother complained and gossiped about Sharon's behaviour. The husband's attitude, beliefs, thinking and behaviour hurt her emotionally and she was affected psychologically and it lowered her self-concept. The spouse was controlling and demanded submission to his mother's instructions. The pressure had overwhelmed her and internalized the tension experienced which increased her anxiety. The relationship was being torn apart and she maintained an emotional distance from her spouse and wanted a divorce in order to reduce her tension and anxiety.

Desra's spouse also felt tension in the relationship not only because he failed to gain control and submission of Desra but also because his family came first. His brothers also always spent time at the house – more attention was given to brothers than the spouse. Desra internalized all these feelings which produced immense tension and anxiety. The relationship weakened not only due to each practicing their own religion in the house but also because the spouse felt neglected. The spouse started coming home late and they slept in separate rooms. The spouse wanted a divorce not only due to the tension, anxiety and dysfunctional family system but also because he found comfort in a new partner.

If the self-concept is weakened and the counselees' awareness is reduced, this has an effect on their experiences. These inter-marriage couples should be directed by the counsellor to expose themselves to experiences and not avoid it. Desra should be made aware that she needed to direct her attention to the spouse and to work on the inter-faith marriage – she should not ignore the dysfunctional state of the family relationship. The problems should be identified, communication lines opened, be open to the experience and find solutions to turning the relationship around. Sharon, on the other hand should not be complacent and a silent partner but become assertive to

develop her self-concept. She should understand that withdrawal is self-defeating and that she should know that her thinking, beliefs and decisions are also valid. It is clear from the above stories that if self-concept is destroyed then to move towards actualization is also prohibited. If misunderstandings and concerns are not cleared it affects the person's cognition and contributes to irrational negative thinking and emotional distortions producing a negative attitude, feelings and behavior. The perception (self-image) of the person impacts on the person's behaviour and moods. The dysfunctional emotional family system has produced negative feelings and emotions, anger, depression, anxiety and tension to the counselees. The multimodal approach (BASIC ID) even the Meaning-centered counselling by Frankl may also be utilized by the counsellor for these counselees who experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, frustrations, and family conflict. All the counselling approaches utilized earlier in the above discussions may be integrated and utilized by the counselor to identify problems that are causes to dysfunctional family systems. They must be directed in dealing with it maturely and responsibly, leading towards realistic thinking and behaviour (cf. Kerr & Bowen 1988: 54; Bowen 1978: 382; Eshelman 1991: 59; Lazarus 1981: 155, 147-149; Walzlawick 1978: 102; Rachman 1978: 88; Foa & Goldstein 1978: 56; Mittleman 1948: 22; Frankl 1983: 1-5,55-75, 255-260, 2006: 110-123).

The state of the emotional system of the family has a huge impact on the inter-religious marriage, as it even affects the partners' functioning and activities (religious or social). It contributes to the well-being, peace and harmony of the relationships and should not be taken lightly by counsellors. It may be noted that spirituality in counselling also plays a role in the healing of a marriage and relationships and won't be overlooked but dealt with next. It should definitely be part of the integrated counselling model.

9.7 COUNSELLING AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality should be incorporated in the integrated counselling model. Just as family counsellors have recognized the importance of inquiring about ethnicity and other aspects of culture, assessments should routinely explore the spiritual dimension of counselees' lives. Counsellors should explore the religious significance that spirituality contributes to the counselees' healing. McGoldrick, Gerson, and Stellenberger (1999: 78) asked the following questions in this regard:

- How important are faith, religious practice, and congregational support in clients' lives?

- To what extent do various family members identify with a religion or spiritual orientation? How are differences handled and accepted?
- How might religious differences within a marriage/family fuel tension, conflict, or estrangement?
- Where there has been inter-marriage and/or conversion, how was the decision made? Has it been supported by the families of origin? Has it been regretted?
- What is the clients' concept of the 'ideal' marriage and family of their faith? How do they judge themselves by comparison? What is their vision for a desired future spirituality?
- How do past or present spiritual beliefs and practices contribute to presenting problems or block healing and growth?
- How might a spiritual void or cut-off from religious roots exacerbate suffering or alienation?
- How can past, current, or potential spiritual resources be identified and drawn on to ease distress, support problem solving, enable clients to accept what cannot be changed, and foster healing and transformation? Explore the following: the role of faith, prayer, meditation and rituals.

Walsh (1999: 181-185) indicated that various forms of suffering are spiritual issues. Adversity and suffering have vastly different meanings in various religious traditions. Christians share the belief that Christ suffered and was crucified for our sins and that one's redemption is found through acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour. The Buddhists believe that life is filled with suffering, rooted in cravings for power, pleasure, or other worldly things. In turn, such cravings condemn us to a cycle of death and rebirth in which our actions (Karma) may prolong our suffering (Smith 1991: 15). Religious texts and traditions also solace and guidance through dark and difficult times, as in the biblical Psalms 23: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and staff they comfort me...". Each faith, in its own ways, fortifies resilience which is the capacity to rebound from adversity and being strengthened and more resourceful. It is an active process of endurance, self-righting, and growth out of crisis or persistent life challenges. The qualities of resilience enable individuals to heal from painful wounds, take charge of their lives, and go on to live and love fully. Counsellors need courage to question constraining beliefs or destructive actions; to support counselees' attempts to move from despair and reach for their hopes and dreams; to learn from

their mistakes and act on their best intentions. When clients lose hope, the counsellor's faith in their potential can restore their faith. Counselees are assisted to seek reconciliation to heal wounded relationships and encourage them to forge more meaningful personal and spiritual bonds (cf. Walsh 1999: 76).

Walsh (1999: 77) also indicated that spirituality involves experiences that people encounter through all aspects of their lives including personal belief system, rituals, and practices. During the close of the 20th century people became interested in religion and spirituality in order to achieve meaning, harmony, and connection in their lives.

With regard to marriage and family life, for many, this has become precarious and challenging as indicated in this research. Due to various forms of the family instability, it has become increasingly common for marriage break-ups and family disintegration. Many of life's challenges and pains are also influenced by family growth, changes in family values, and changes in family roles. In this regard, it is important to research the importance of spirituality for family life, especially with regard to inter-religious marriages.

9.7.1 Spiritual Intimacy

Counsellors should lead counselees into developing a spiritual relationship with the Creator God or the divine. People reach spirituality when they encounter God or the divine. This is an experience which transforms an individual. This spirituality is also evident in practical religious expression (cf. De Villiers et al. 2006: 63; Jinpa 2001: 83). In John 3, Jesus disclosed to the rich leader that he must be "born again" in order to enter the kingdom of God (heaven) and experience eternal life. This is one example of a spiritual experience. The individual forms a relationship with God and the individual's values are no more the same. As such spirituality entails both an understanding of the deepest meaning of their existence and a commitment to realizing the same. It is now more a connection between God or Divinity and the spiritual human being. It also becomes a spiritual journey where the individual gains knowledge of God and experience love and acceptance. The individual is engaged in the observance of religious practices to ensure spiritual growth and to strengthen their relationship with God or the divine (cf. Kourie 2006: 63; Jinpa 2001: 84).

For someone like Desra, since she would not give up her faith and reach a compromise, in order to come out of her depression, she should be guided by the counsellor to seek spiritual fulfillment for peace, harmony and healing to her life. She must put away the past and what has happened in her marriage but focus on new things as she should believe that she is a new creation in Christ and should endeavor to make a fresh start. She should move on with her life. However, she and husband should be tolerant of their religious practices and reach realistic compromises – change of thinking and behaviour.

In Romans (12: 1), the Apostle Paul admonishes believers to “present their bodies to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable ... be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the daily renewal of the mind”. The power of Christ’s love transforms the individual from within. In other words the love of God can change a person’s thinking and their behaviour. Individuals who encounter problems that cause emotional hurt and pain may require counselling that will bring to the surface their inner spiritual need (De Villiers 2006: 64; Jinpa 2001: 85). The Word of God indicates that one is ‘born again’ when one is touched by God’s spirit – a person experiences spiritual change (John 3). The ‘old nature is passed away and all things become new’ (11 Corinthian 5: 17). The word of God heals the broken heart (Psalm 107: 20; Luke 4: 18) – mentally and emotionally. When an individual feels discouraged, hopeless and cast down, there is always hope in God (Psalms 42: 5). An individual will experience mental and emotional healing by being a ‘doer of the Word’ of God James (1: 22). People must meditate and confess the Word of God which will inculcate a strong self-concept and ‘renew our strength’ (Isaiah 40: 30). The Bible teaches us to grow in the ‘fruit of the Spirit’, love, joy peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and faith (Galatians 5: 22-23) – this will promote a healthy relationship between individuals and married couples. Someone like Sharon can experience acceptance by God and feel worthy although her spouse may treat her as less important in comparison to his mother. She should not hide her desire to serve her God but communicate her relationship with God with her spouse and overtly and freely practice her spirituality.

9.7.2 Spiritual Beliefs and Practices

At times of crisis and adversity, spiritual beliefs and practices may produce recovery from suffering. Many who seek help for emotional and interpersonal problems are also in spiritual distress. Therefore, the counsellor needs to attend to spiritual beliefs and practices of the

counselee in order to understand them and assist in their healing and growth. Spiritual beliefs influence ways of coping with adversity, the experience of pain and suffering even that which is experienced in the family and marriage. Marriage often brings religious consideration to the fore. Decisions about the wedding itself set the course of the couple's relationship. Conflict may arise over whether to have a religious or civil ceremony. Partners may differ in their religious observances. Inter-marriage greatly complicates the issues couples ordinarily bring to any relationship. A choice of a partner from a different religious background may express rebellion against parental value and authority. Parental blessings, acceptance or disapproval can have long-lasting ramifications for success or failure of the marriage (cf. Laird & Green 1995: 71; Falicov 1995: 43; Friedman 1985: 67).

Someone like Glen was exposed to rejection and threatened with disownment by his family due to his conversion and failure to comply with the parent's religious traditions. However, through counselling and thirst to learn and practice the new religion, he was able to overcome the rejection and move on with his life and marriage. When the children were born, the parents gradually softened and communication with his parents was established – there was still no compromise with his spiritual beliefs and practices.

In the case of Jay, she was confronted with pressure from her family to also have a Hindu wedding. However, through her conversion prior to the marriage, she realized through counselling that she could not be married in both traditions. She realized that Christianity demanded her to serve one God and therefore be married one way. She also realized that it would have an implication on her family identity, especially when children are born – she made the decision, expressed by action and lived with it with self-confidence and spiritual fulfillment.

Research has found that in surmounting adversity is intertwined with faith in the power of human relationships. Most people who come for counselling are seeking more than symptom reduction, problem solving, communication skills; they yearn for greater meaning and deeper connections with others in their lives. Many are in spiritual distress at the core of the physical and relational problems. In the midst of suffering, as one search deeply within oneself and reach out to others, the hardship endured opens ways for the spirit to grow. In turn, spiritual beliefs and practices (Faith) strengthen the ability to withstand and transcend adversity. Hence, spirituality enhances meaning, hope, courage, perseverance, and connectedness. The counsellor should make room for

spirituality and encourage spiritual connections in family and community life. If a child or young person, from whatever culture, has a belief system that accepts and takes account of a spiritual dimension, a counsellor needs to reflect on how this meaning may be affecting the problem concerned. Children for whom family and faith backgrounds are inseparable may need encouragement and feel comfortable in multi-faith settings. When addressing this dimension, it is imperative to bear in mind the positive and sometimes negative impacts spiritual or religious beliefs might have on people's mental health (Walker 2005: 103; Walsh 1999: 181-185; Higgins 1994: 14).

9.7.3 Techniques for Psycho-Spiritual Integrated Counselling

Since the complexities of human life are controlled by the emotional realm underpinned by body, mind, soul and spirit which is the seat of all thinking, feeling and actions, "it is essential to incorporate concepts and techniques from the action-orientated approaches and counselling models to produce cognitive and behavioural changes" (Corey 2009: 93). As such the use of one model is insufficient to address human behaviour but to introduce and use an integrated counselling approach especially for inter-religious marriage which is dressed and saturated with intricate issues. Therefore the researcher will draw from the theoretical approaches discussed in chapter two and select counselling models that are relevant to integrate for the purpose of this research.

There are many models at our disposal that may be used but a choice of some appropriate models would be utilized in the counselling approach that are discussed below – Client-Centered Therapy; Rational Emotive Therapy; Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; Psychoanalysis; and the Multimodal approach by Lazarus.

9.7.3.1 Process 1: Identify Incongruent Negative Feelings (RET; CCT and Multi-modal)

Counselees normally begin a counselling session by discussing, either, a feeling ("I feel depressed"), an external circumstance, or an incongruent negative behaviour. The initial goal of the counsellor is to pinpoint whatever problem emotions exist. Some counselees may not express their emotions easily although they have been affected. Counsellors should therefore reflect, understand and clarify as soon as the individual shares a negative feeling and emotions, how do

these sensations affect the counsellee's feelings and behaviour. The counsellor should try to understand whether the feeling is anxiety, anger, depression, resentment, guilt, despair, or a vague sense of emptiness. If the individual begins by discussing his or her problem circumstances, the counsellor should ask how he or she feels about these circumstances. Again the goal is to identify which negative feeling seems to be primary. For example, once it becomes evident that the individual is boiling with deep resentment, one needs to look for the obstacles to his or her goal, and then help them define their goals, then examine goal-oriented behaviour, and eventually take a look at the assumptions that started the negative behaviour (cf. Carter 1975: 149; Kirwan 1984: 41; Worthington 1982: 13; Rogers 1951: 76; Ellis 1988: 35; Lazarus 1981: 18).

If the presenting problem is a symptom or a set of negative behaviours, one needs to try to identify what feelings precede or accompany the symptoms. It is important to run through the major areas of life with the counsellee, looking for negative emotions. Once the individual expresses, understands, and accepts his or her deepest emotional experiences he or she will feel together and symptoms will vanish. Feelings are a necessary initial focus in order to help the counsellor trace feelings back to the roots of the problem. The unrecognized stimuli, influences feelings, thoughts and behaviour (cf. Carter 1975: 150; Kirwan 1984: 41; Lazarus 1989: 213).

9.7.3.2 Process 2: Identify Negative Incongruent Behaviour Patterns (CBT, Psychoanalysis, RET Multi-model)

To understand one's own self is often a first step in healing. Many problems are self-imposed, but the one being helped may fail to recognize that he or she has biased perspectives, harmful attitudes, or self-destructive behaviour. Some negative habits become a part of a person's life. This may become an obstacle to people being aware of their own shortfalls and behaviour. Consider, for example, the individual who complains, "nobody likes me," but fails to see that the complaining annoys others and is a major reason for the rejection. An objective, perceptually alert helper is to assist those being helped to get a true picture of what is going on within them and within the world that surrounds them (cf. Carter 1975: 151; Meier 1982: 315; Beck 1990: 2; Lazarus: 1992: 245).

Once problem behaviours are identified, the counsellor must move to goal-oriented behaviours. The question is, what was the person doing when he or she experienced the obstacle which created

the negative behaviours After this step, counselling should move to an exploration of the person's attitudes and beliefs from which behavior arise. Children for instance may have negative feelings when they experience wonder, awe, and mystery, become distressed and fearful. Many religions contain concepts of hell and punishment which could trigger profound feelings of despair that are experienced as completely overwhelming physically and psychologically. Sin is defined as missing the mark and for a young person or child it is failure to be satisfactory. The sense of sin and failure is quickly transformed into guilt and shame resulting in feelings of depression, distress and despair unless there is some balancing influence. A persistent sense of sinfulness or failure will prevent the development of healthy relationships (cf. Crompton 1996: 102; Carter 1975: 51; Meier 1982: 66; Walker 2005: 39; Freud 1973: 141).

Walker (2005: 40) indicated that counsellors can utilize spiritual beliefs in helping people to form positive relationships and behaviour. As such, they can move away from dehumanizing and traumatizing experiences and behavior, and re-connect to positive understandings and behavior.

9.7.3.3 Process 3: Identify Negative Distorted Thinking (CBT 1990; CCT; RET; Multimodal)

Merely identifying the person's wrong or trouble-producing basic thinking and assumptions usually is not very difficult. After the negative thinking and assumptions have been identified, the wrong goal, which the person has been pursuing usually, is fairly obvious. When you know the goal, you can specify a limited range of possible basic assumptions. When this become evident, the counsellor may suggest the various possible assumptions responsible for the selection of goals. The counsellee may also be assisted to indicate which one fits best. It is generally wise for a counsellor to zero in as precisely as possible on what the assumption really is. Comments like: "I really do think that way," or "That certainly is possible" sometimes is the strongest agreement a client will offer (cf. Carter 1975: 52; Meier 1982: 335).

The goal of the counsellor, then, is to assist the counsellee in identifying negative thinking and assumptions. As the counsellor comes to understand the counsellee - the unique components of the needing and rejected self, the unique biological and environmental factors that have contributed to psychological makeup, and individualized solutions for dealing with insecurity (which include developing a particular type of personality and struggling to achieve the idealized

image) indicate that it will be possible to determine which route to follow in order to develop healthy positive thoughts (cf. Kirwan 1984: 41; Meier 1982: 339).

In a simple procedure the counsellor may ask the individual to disclose the earliest related problematic incident in which he or she was involved and that caused negative thinking. Because the brain stores every event in a huge memory bank, there are literally thousands of events from which the individual may. This process is based on the concept that people will remember an event, which has special meaning in their psychological make-up. An event is meaningful to the degree that it is relevant to personal needs. Therefore the events that a person recalls should bear some relevance to what he or she believes is necessary for his or her sense of self-worth and self-esteem – they may require social skills training and also assisted in risk taking. Details of the recollection often suggest the strategy, which the person has adopted to reach the goal of personal worth and how this was not realised. The counsellor must help individuals learn to achieve and maintain one's optimal potential. This is termed "self-actualization" by Client-Centered Therapy and is proposed by some counsellors as a goal for all human beings whether or not they are in counselling. In order to achieve this, positive and focused thinking is imperative (cf. Denny 2006: 2; Meier 1982; Kirwan 1984: 41; Rogers 1951: 76; Beck 1990: 4; Lazarus 1981: 155).

9.7.3.4 Process 4: Encourage Spiritual Thinking

According to Carter (1975: 54), once negative thinking and assumptions have been identified, the next step is to convince the counsellee that his or her thinking is wrong and to present persuasively positive thinking. In this regard spirituality can play an important role. It is important to note that deeply held assumptions do not easily yield to suggested new ways of thinking. Incorrect thinking may lead to misinformation and incorrect functioning. Because the assumptions are believed emotionally, counselling requires far more than simply identifying the wrong assumptions and stating the spiritual alternatives. In changing wrong thinking to positive thinking and to locate where and what caused the thinking may be established through Psychoanalysis (Freud 1913: 62-65, 1976: 771-772), Client-Centred Therapy (Rogers 1951; 76 - self-actualization), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Beck 1990: 2-4), Multimodal Therapy (Lazarus 1981: 147-149) and Rational Emotive Therapy (Ellis 1988: 32-35):

- *Identify where the wrong assumption was learned* – the individual’s circumstances are responsible for his or her change in behaviour as it affected his or her thinking and belief system. The current belief becomes less rigid when the client realizes that the circumstances are responsible for that belief. Most, if not all, of the client’s behaviour is learned. Counselling, therefore, involves helping counselees unlearn ineffective thinking and behaviour and learn more ways of doing things positively. Such learning comes from instruction, imitation of a counsellor or other model, and the experience of trial and error. At times it also will be necessary to analyze what went wrong when there was failure. Then the counsellee should be encouraged to try again.
- *Encourage expression of emotions surrounding the negative emotion and thinking* – The counsellor should encourage the client to express in words how he or she is feeling or what he or she is thinking and listen for whatever feelings or thinking are associated with the assumption. When individuals state, “I need him to treat me better if I am ever to feel loved,” the accompanying emotion may be resentment (“He never will”) or guilt (“What’s wrong with me that no one loves me?”). The sensitive counsellor should tactfully interpret and disclose to the client whatever emotions he or she picks up as the client’s basic assumptions are discussed. As the client feels understood, he or she will relax and react less defensively and consider the validity of his or her thinking.

The counsellor should ensure that the individual understands that they are spiritually at peace – that the “soul” is at peace. The “soul” (Greek word – psyche) is that part of a person which is aware or conscious of himself or herself – self-awareness. It is the center of the ego or personality. The function of the soul is to reflect, explore, interpret, think (perception), create (imagine) and feel (emotion), and make decisions. Therefore, how one thinks and feels about an event or situation will determine what action one will take. Individuals need healing to the “broken soul” that emanated from criticism, rejection, unforgiveness and guilt. The counsellor needs to identify emotional scars. For instance, criticism may cause individuals to lose hope. They live under a cloud of self-doubt and personal insecurity. The counsellor needs to instill hope in the individual. Rejection can cause individuals to suffer from very low self-esteem. The counselor should move individuals to a point where they forgive themselves of their mistakes and failures. If they don’t forgive themselves and others they will not function to their full potential. They will lack confidence to face new challenges that will prepare them for a better position in their lives. For

some who refuse to change their situation and behaviour and fail to outgrow their problems, and carry their painful scar will reflect and affect their present attitudes and action. For some the carry-over may be so intense that they struggle to function in a normal way. This may lead to mental and emotional breakdowns – and may be life-long if there is no intervention. The counsellor should make known to the counsellee that if they don't change their thinking and behavior, then they cannot move forward in life or even experience peace in their marriage. The counselor through the integrative counselling discussed can lead individuals to healing. "The Lord heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds – curing their pains and their sorrows. He also lifts up those who have been put down" as indicted in Psalms (147: 3). The ultimate goal of the counsellor is to move people to a point of realization and self-actualization.

- *Support the individual as he or she considers changing his or her assumptions* – The client knows that if he or she agrees with correct thinking, although the experience was very painful, he or she has to mentally revisit that particular situation. The counsellee may resist which is normal. However, counsellors need to offer encouragement and support. The Apostle Paul talks about, "propping up the weak" in 1 Thessalonians (5:14).

Psychologists call an "inferiority complex" a preoccupation with oneself (negative self-consciousness). It is a view of oneself that says, "I am no good and useless!" This view leads to self-discouragement. The counsellor should lead individuals to overcome such attitude by the word of positive thinking. Whenever individuals feel upset (guilty, resentful, or anxious), they should be advised to be positive and think positively by making positive decisions. In Christianity, this may mean for example, to say with the scriptures, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ" (Romans 3:22), "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Philippians 4: 13), "I am more than a conqueror" (Romans 8: 37) – this creates in an individual self-worth, confidence and security. If an individual desires to change and be emotionally healed, then it is possible. The individual can be restored and experience victory.

Also how the person thinks is paramount as according to Paul's teaching he admonishes an individual to "think on whatsoever things are true, just honest, pure, lovely and of good report"(Philippians 4: 8). After the individual tentatively grasps the new thinking and can at least recognize the error of his or her old assumptions, then commitment must be secured.

9.7.3.5 Process 5: Ensure Commitment

The client should declare commitment to actively participate in the new thinking. The individual should be determined to act consistently with its contents. Even if the client does not feel it, he or she needs to choose to believe it and commit his or herself to act consistently with it even though he or she does not feel like performing the necessary behaviour. Counselling cannot progress past this point until the individual has committed himself or herself, as complete as he or she can, to behave consistently with what he or she has acknowledged to be the decided plan of action regardless of how he or she feels. It is at this point that confession of faults, weakness, hurt, pain, guilt, insecurities, inferiority complex, and anxiety seems most appropriate. But these should then be replaced with positive thinking and behavior.

Spiritually, the counsellor may encourage individuals to cast every anxiety, worry, fear or negative attitude upon the Lord than carrying it themselves as God will sustain them (Psalms 55: 22). Christian counsellors should teach individuals to meditate on the Word as it has a therapeutic value – “God’s Word is health to all our flesh” (Proverbs 4: 20-22)”. The counsellor must move a person from being double-minded (James 1: 4) to being focused and established and through self- reflection realize their potential towards self-actualization.

9.7.3.6 Process 6: Activate and Action Changed Behaviour

According to Carter (1975: 156) the counsellor needs to plan what the individual will do differently now that his or her thinking has changed. The progress of the counsellee not only depends on the acceptance of the truth but also on behaving consistently with the truth. In Christnity Jesus promised that He would make Himself known in a rich, full, personal way to those who knew His teachings and obeyed them: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, it is he that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14: 21).

9.7.3.7 Process 7: Submit to Spirit-controlled feelings

This is simply the identification of the presence of Godly feelings that should replace painful emotions and negative thinking. The experience of quietness, togetherness, and peacefulness are

gratifying for individuals. The counsellor should look for this spiritual evidence in his or her client's life and make sure that it is noticed and enjoyed. Many Christians have had the experience of feeling really joyful when they are consciously abiding in Christ and the experience of feeling that something is wrong when they are out of fellowship with Christ. Process 7 reflects upon that wonderful sense of improved adjustment, which follows upon a *renewed mind* (process 4), *commitment* (process 5), and *change* (process 6) (cf. Carter 1975: 157-160; Meier 1982: 244; Macmillan 2002: 99-123).

It goes without saying that Christians who convert or even remain in their faith in inter-religious marriages, experience challenges and are also faced with inter-religious issues. This may require spiritual intervention and Biblical based counselling. It is clear that there should be no condemnation but counselling available to produce healing in counsellees. Problems and issues should be uncovered by using the counselling models discussed in this research, which should include spiritual counselling. This should assist the counsellee to come in line with their spiritual beliefs. In Christianity this would mean that they commit to live as God would want them to live. God-consciousness produces self-worth, peace, harmony and hope in a relationship as the counsellees understand their challenges and are guided in changing their thinking to alternative attitudes and behavior – spiritual goals are set to achieve self-actualization.

9.8 COPING STRATEGIES

The following discussion focuses on coping skills and strategies. Thereafter coping strategies for inter-religious marriages will be examined.

9.8.1 Research on Coping Skills

Of all the research done on inter-religious marriages, there is not much on coping skills (Gaines & Ickes 1997: 20). Therefore, it is not clear from the existing research what coping skills could be employed by couples in inter-religious marriages. In this regard, the research by Sung (1990) may be helpful. He worked with 50 inter-cultural married Chinese couples in New York (Sung 1990: 47). He discovered from his research that being confronted with foreign cultures, the couples have strong commitments to the relationships. In this context, they have had to nevertheless be willing to make changes to cope with differences. This resulted in his research

on coping skills in a multi-cultural context. For inter-religious marriage counselling, we may learn from this research.

Inter-cultural and inter-religious couples are aware of the conflicts they experience. They have a choice to focus on differences or on shared interests. It is in this regard that inter-religious married couples can learn coping skills and how to make the marriage work – from the findings Sung's research. Sung focused on commitment, tolerance, adapting to change and flexibility. These are practices that should be practiced by inter-religious couples.

The understanding of each others's faith including the social and cultural aspects can surely contribute to successful relationships (<http://www.intermarriage.htm/2007>). For instance Stritof (2007: 2) says.

In order to overcome conflicts of the language barrier, differences in values, religious conflicts, sex role expectations (gender roles), economic adjustments, fear of abandonment by family, friends, and spouse, political issues and legal complications, the inter-cultural couples must learn about each other's cultures, communicate well in at least one language, be open and honest with their families, accept that people and cultural change is not easy, focus on what is common.

These are issues that must be discussed in inter-religious counselling. They will affect the marriage and by addressing them couples will learn coping skills. Through such discussion couples will develop understanding, respect, tolerance and patience (cf. <http://www.marriage.about.com.htm/2007>). The key is to tackle the inter-faith issues directly prior to marriage (<http://www.inter-faithshaadi.org/2007>).

Inter-religious married couples should be strong and firm when dealing with pressure from and interference of the family, especially decisions pertaining to the raising of children, worship practices and holiday celebrations as indicated earlier in this research. In order to build and to stimulate growth towards realizing full potential, peace and harmony some compromises must be decided upon and adjustments made to accommodate each other as well as children. For example decisions on merging of religious traditions should be considered or which religious

services should be attended to together or separately or whether a neutral faith should be chosen. In other words it is recommended that decisions should be accepted before marriage rather than when already married. The couples must not avoid counselling and positive support after marriage though (<http://www.aimee-larsen-stoddard.suite.com/2009>).

9.8.2 Coping Skills and Counselling

Coping skills related to inter-religious marriages are least understood and researched as compared to other areas of counselling. What are the basic issues that the couple has to cope with? Couples are always astonished when the counsellor confronts them with the question as to who is going to convert or whether they have decided on a religion to follow. They respond to questions about children by saying that when they are faced with the issue, they would then discuss the choice of religion for the child. The mistake the couple make is to focus mainly on the present and their love for each other, instead of also considering issues of the inter-religious marriage (<http://www.inter-faithfamily.com/2012>). Family, religious and cultural issues contribute to the challenges of raising children, and especially acquiring support and acceptance from extended families. Another concern is that the extended families usually pressure the couple on deciding whose religious traditions and beliefs the child would observe (<http://psychcentral.com/2011>).

According to Crohn (1995: 47) counselling inter-religious couples should consider the following: they must face the issues and not deny that tensions if they actually exist; clarify cultural codes since people have trouble in separating cultural codes – identify it and discuss it; clarify identities through self exploration (consider religious and cultural identity) – also consider the children's identity; practice unconditional experimentation – exposed to partner's religious practices increases understanding of the partner and the partner's religion; couples should share their histories with each other – cultural and religious experiences; they should also consider courses in inter-religious skills development; and view therapy or counselling in a positive light.

In order to make inter-religious marriages work, compromises have to be agreed upon, especially for holiday celebrations, family roles, food and the children's upbringing. The counsellor should focus on the following:

- Acknowledge and discuss differences – discuss expectations in pertaining to family life, religious observances, the child rearing patterns and holiday celebrations. Which faith should the children be nurtured in or should both faiths be practiced and how to deal with identity confusion? Consider in-laws' response and how it would affect them. Commitment levels of each partner of inter-religious marriage to faith.
- Consider pre-marital counselling – build a framework for shared expectations. The couples should not be blinded by love and thus suppress their differences and expectations as to not spend time to resolve conflicts before the wedding.
- Be respectful of the differences – there may be many values and dreams shared though the couples may not submit or practice some of each other's religious beliefs.
- Learn about each other's faith and traditions.
- Couples should consider each one's traditional views of inter-religious marriage – how can communal activities be shared and will the religious society welcome the partner of another religion. Is the expectation on the upbringing of the children flexible with the couple and their extended families.
- Learn from other couple's experiences and how they coped with similar challenges.
- Negotiations will continue throughout the marriage as the couple grows together.
(<http://psychcentral.com/2011>).

The couples of an inter-religious marriage should also consider support groups and counselors. There are registered Muslim, Hindu and Christian counsellors who are registered counsellors and psychotherapists and are aware of not only cultural and religious issues but also know that they have to be understanding, and sensitive to each person's inter-religious traditions and belief system (Carolan, et al 2000: 67). However, the Muslim may not consult a secular non-Muslim therapist but may consult the Molana at the Mosque; likewise a Christian would consult a Christian counsellor, especially when the issues are more religious in nature. It is important that the therapists and counsellors should first develop trust with couples, prior to rushing with probing questions and failing to be sensitive concerning religious issues. No pressure should be exerted on the inter-religious married couples, especially to retrieve information on issues that are painful. Therefore, the therapist should understand the religious dynamics and how the religious value system and practices would affect the inter-religious marriage. Hence, the counsellor's suggestions to possible solutions would be accepted without any resistance from the couples. It is also important for counsellors not to overlook the history of the couples, if any, that would impact the relationship or

marriage, especially unresolved psychological trauma; grief, repressed guilt feelings and shame; anxiety, inferiority complex and negative self-concept; and conflicts, even issues that relate to spirituality (cf. Abi-Hashem 2008: 165).

9.8.3 Strategies to Solve Problems of Inter-religious Marriage

Some keys to revive a negative inter-religious marriage (cf. <http://foxnews.com/2010>):

- Self-reflection – this practice identifies the element that one contributed to the breakdown in marriage: the wife failed to communicate to husband her wants, thoughts, feelings and how his actions or inaction affected her – the husband do likewise.
- Make the first move – don't think about who is fair. Just be more affectionate and do all the right things.
- Be a problem solver – stop complaining and take action. Identify what is wrong and solve it with an open mind.
- No flash back – forgive and forget about old issues. Move focus to current issues. Don't hold grudges but be prepared to forgive for the sake of healing. Entertaining negative feelings within oneself and not releasing them would only impact on self and not the partner.
- Focus on foreplay and not anti-play – practice positive comments (compliments, hugs and kisses, listening and support). Stop using sarcasm, criticism, ignoring, finding faults, manipulation, controlling and putting things off.
- Communicate assertively without blame – ask for things or even for a favour politely, discreetly, lovingly and not rashly or stimulating an argument or a fight.

In addition the following skills may also be established in married couples to cope with inter-religious relationship. Macmillan (2002: 98) listed the following:

- The couple should choose behaviours and the way in which they control their environment - awareness.
- Take responsibility for making choices that work for them.
- To identify and understand their needs in respect of survival, power, belonging, freedom and fun.

- To develop realistic pictures in their heads to satisfy their basic needs.
- To evaluate how effective their actions are in achieving their desires and goals and to nurture and inculcate new behaviours in areas of weakness.
- To develop and engage in behaviours that will help them to satisfy their current needs and in the future.
- To avoid being controlled by the negative controlling behaviour of others.

Many couples have built invisible walls that are responsible for the breakdown in communication not only emotionally, but spiritually. Galatians (6:2) says that, “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ,” which also includes all relationships, even inter-religious marriage relationships. Thus, one has to open up and share issues and problems through dialogue and not by being silent. Husbands and wives have to disclose to one another the issues that require attention to improve the marriage relationship. Overlooking, placing aside or taking problems lightly may be far more detrimental to the relationship. In Galatians (2: 11-14), Paul withstood Peter to the face. Couples should practice face to face frankness with the right spirit. Suppressing negative feelings and emotions, even guilt may cause enormous pain – hidden resentment, silent bitterness and hypocrisy produce more harmful results. Jesus said in Matthew (18: 15-17), if one has been wronged by another, then one should go directly and discuss with the offender – this is relevant to marriage relationships too. In order to solve grievances, “be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (James 1: 19). James (5: 16) also instructed on “confessing faults one to another” and this relevant to all relationships even inter-religious marriage relationships. This verse also motivates couples to talk freely about weakness, failures and even shortcomings. Ephesians 4 shows us how to behave in a relationship, “be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...”. Couples should practice acceptance and unconditional love – this increases meaningful growth and strength in a relationship, especially dialogue. A blessed, intimate, harmonious and satisfying relationship would self-actualize to full potential if the couple practices loyalty, trust and integrity by communicating their issues with husband and wife towards a resolution (<http://www.patheos.com/2013>).

9.8.4 Coping Skills for New Converts of Inter-religious Marriages

Religious differences of inter-religious marriages, especially in relation to new converts cannot be ignored. It has been noticed that new converts take incorrect stances by the following: They may

ignore religious differences; a partner's religious requirements are taken lightly without; believing that love conquers all; thinking that converting to a partner's faith would alleviate challenges; ignoring the family concerns related to inter-religious marriages; and becoming adamant that counselling is not necessary and the hurdles would eventually smooth out (<http://www.bryanwood.co.za/2012>). They should be helped to not do this.

There are at least six identified patterns of coping with inter-religious marriage challenges that new converts should follow (cf. Ata 2003: 200-209):

- *Conversion or annexation*: This is where one party converts to the faith of the other. This was reported as either a positive and a progressive choice or a kind of co-operation or annexation.
- *Ignoring or withdrawing*: Here both parties withdrew from organized religious activities and enacted a de facto policy of ignoring – literally not speaking about – the question of religious difference.
- *An active policy espousing a plurality of faiths*: Some couples adopted an explicit policy of religious pluralism, perhaps attending services in turn or adopting both pattern.
- *Compromising and negotiating*: This is a radical pattern where both parties leave their religion of origin and take up an 'in-between' allegiance.
- *Pastoral/ecumenical yielding*: Some couples actively attempted to 'merge' the rites and practices of their different faiths in the home. This may be done to a greater or lesser extent.
- *Respect for 'otherness'*: Unlike (3) above, some parties worked to practice a respect for difference, neither attempting to co-opt, nor minimize differences.

9.9 CONCLUSION

Without any doubt inter-religious relationships and marriages have issues that require intervention through counselling. However, due to the complex nature of challenges and problems no single method of counselling would suffice. Therefore, an Integrated Psych-Spiritual Counselling Model was developed to deal with the intricate relational human issues experienced by inter-religious married couples in integrative ways.

A distinction was drawn between Pastoral counselling and psychotherapy. Counselees experience healing, learning, and personal spiritual growth through Pastoral counselling. Pastoral psychotherapy is a long-term, in depth helping process that attempts to bring fundamental changes in the counselees personality, spiritual values, and ways of thinking – a work of a specialist. An interface was accomplished with the Christian counselling and psychotherapy approaches in order to produce a Psycho-Spiritual counselling model to accommodate inter-religious marriages. It was also disclosed that Secular counselling or psychological counselling after identifying hidden negative thought patterns and behaviour (introspection), sought to find strategies to deal with the challenges. The section on Christian counselling addressed the challenges and the issue of intimacy with God. Christian counselling is based on the authority of the Bible and the Holy Spirit which empower individuals to a point of making choices to change behaviour in order to experience spiritual and emotional healing.

Coping strategies for marriage in crises, pre-marital, conflict, and cross-cultural counselling were discussed since these counselling approaches are needed in inter-religious marriages. Moving clients to a point of forgiveness is essential in all forms of client counselling and therapy. Therefore, forgiveness in Hinduism, Christianity and Islam were examined since forgiveness is essential in the healing process, especially if it is needed in inter-religious relationships. In order for clients to move on with their lives and marriage and towards nurturing their self-concept, to realize self-actualization and to build a harmonious family relationship, inner healing should take place in each individual's life – forgiving others and oneself aided by spirituality.

In Clinebell's marriage growth counselling, the *human potential approach* is disclosed. The individuals are guided into tapping into their strengths and rich unused abilities (intellectually, spiritually, interpersonally and creatively) for a better future. Individuals may utilize their potential by better communication, developing new skills, making constructive responsible decisions, turn their challenges into growth opportunities and in nurturing their spiritual faith to maturity. The counselling injects reality-based hope in marriages as the counselees are taught techniques to deal constructively with pain, problems and conflicts by utilizing their strengths and abilities. In the intentional marriage model, the couple has the power within themselves to change and improve the relationship intentionally through negotiation – to also make a good marriage better. In instances of failure to optimize the true potential for a better marriage relationship,

intervention through counselling and psychotherapy including spirituality are necessary to stimulate the growth.

In order to avoid crisis situations in marriage, especially in an inter-religious marriage, prevention is better than a cure. Therefore, pre-marital counselling is imperative in order to ensure that the counsellee makes the correct decision and have no regrets later in marriage. The issues of repressed feelings of guilt, identity confusion, self-concept and Disassociation were the main focus areas of pre-marital counselling covered, although there are other issues. If underlying negative emotions and feelings are not discovered and confronted by the counsellee with the help of a counsellor, it would negatively impact on the relationship and even be carried into the marriage unresolved. Everyone possesses an innate desire to belong and have an identity and therefore counsellees need to understand where they come from, who they are and what they want, even the search for meaning to life. Identity confusion contributes to a person having a low self-esteem and insecurity which restricts self-actualization. Family of a certain religion, mostly Islam, often disown and disassociate themselves from their child when the child converts to another religion.

The problems and issues carried over into the inter-religious marriage unresolved, not only adds to the other challenges that come with an inter-religious marriage relationship, but also cause further complications and produce anxiety, tension, stress and guilt feelings. Without counselling, these relationships may not work as conflict experienced in the marriage would cause couples to gradually move apart – this is not normal counselling but it takes an integrated counselling model. It has been discovered that inter-religious marriage relationships are exposed to many challenges. However, this research has identified six main challenges for inter-religious marriage relationships that require counselling, especially from an integrated counselling model approach. The lack of self-worth, identity confusion, insecurity, and no purpose and meaning in life hinder growth and *self-actualization* of couples. *Repressed emotional feelings* are responsible for the anxiety couples experience. Some inter-religious marriages experienced the *inability to solve problems* – this research attempted to address these issues. Bowens's theory was used to understand the dynamics of a family, family structures, the functioning and what causes the *family to be dysfunctional* before counselling intervention models were used to find solutions. Examples were drawn from couples' experiences in this research, especially with regard to emotions and thinking and how these impact behavior. It was discovered that *distorted emotions and cognitions*

were responsible for the negative behavior and the that the counsellor should work towards assisting couples to change perceptions and alter behaviour patterns. It was discovered throughout that, from the interviews and case studies, the above challenges were most of the time linked and that there were evidence of overlaps. Therefore, a single counselling model is not sufficient – a linkage and interface of counselling techniques and models is necessary when counselling inter-religious couples.

In this chapter, the goal was also to point to an integrated counselling model to be used to counsel couples mainly of problematic inter-religious marriage relationships. The Psychoanalysis by Freud, Client-Centered Therapy by Rogers, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy discussed by Beck, Rational Emotive Therapy disclosed by Ellis, and the Multimodal approach by Lazarus were used in conjunction and interfaced to produce an integrated counselling model that may be used to counsel couples. This may be helpful, since it appears that inter-religious, inter-faith, and inter-cultural marriages are on the increase. Spirituality also has a genuine role to play in counselling for all religion. Examples were mainly drawn from Christianity (the Bible), which would be mainly relevant to couples of the Christian faith. The beliefs and practices of an individual play an integral part in shaping and fashioning a person's life, especially one's spiritual life. The spiritual intimacy with God of Divinity brings healing to a person who lacks hope and peace. Therefore, spirituality is also used with the above model, and Biblically-based principles cannot be ignored in counselling when counselling Christian couples from a multi-cultural background or if one partner of the couple is from a Christian background.

Finally this chapter also zoomed in on the strategies to solve problems of inter-religious marriage as well the coping skills for new conversions. It was recommended that negative behaviours could be identified through self-reflection and changed or controlled – choose positive behavior and become responsible. Make the first move, forget about old issues of the past, make positive comments, communicate assertively without shifting blame, and become a problem solver in order to move towards repairing the inter-religious marriage relationship – think, feel and act.

The new converts should acknowledge and discuss differences – discuss expectations in pertaining to family life, religious observances, the child rearing patterns and holiday celebrations. Which faith should the children be nurtured in or should both faith be practiced and how to deal with identity confusion? Consider in-laws' response and how it would affect them. To ascertain

commitment levels of each partner of an inter-religious marriage to faith is also important. A blessed, intimate, harmonious and satisfying relationship would self-actualize to full potential if the new converted couple practices loyalty, trust and integrity by communicating their issues with husband and wife towards a resolution.

This chapter then focused on the developing and use of an integrated Psycho-Spiritual counselling model. It drew on the work in earlier chapters that dealt with the counselling theories and models as well as the empirical research. I hope this may be of assistance to counsellors counselling inter-religious couples.. This integrated model is suitable for all counsellors to employ in counselling inter-religious married couples, including pre-marital couples.

The next Chapter provides a summary of recommendations and conclusions to the research.

CHAPTER TEN

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This research endeavoured to disclose that inter-religious marriage relationships are prevalent in our multi-cultural society. The couples of such relationships are definitely confronted with challenges related to religion and culture. However, these marriages can be successful if the couples are taught basic techniques and problem solving skills to overcome those challenges.

An integrated counselling model has been developed and is available for counsellors. Suggestions and recommendations have been listed to assist counsellors to intervene in inter-religious marital problems.

10.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

The findings of this research revealed that, although Christianity in principle does not support inter-religious marriages, it has become inevitable that inter-religious marriages take place and exist, especially between people of the Christian faith, Hinduism and Islam. In view of the enormous challenges inter-religious couples face, there was a need for this research to create an integrated counselling model that could be utilized in counselling inter-religious couples and pre-marital couples.

This research exposed explicitly that the three most important things to know about religious, cultural and racial differences, issues and influences are as follows.

- Problems and conflicts often involve assumptions and expectations that are so much a part of the fabric of one's background and identity that you aren't even consciously aware of them. Inter-religious partners must explore their core beliefs and first get clarity about their own identity before deciding how these beliefs will mesh with those of a partner. Two individuals from two different families form a new identity and must choose what traditions, beliefs and habits to bring into their marriage. This process is more complex for couples who are from different religions, cultures and races.

- Successful inter-religious relationships have special challenges, but also special rewards for those who are willing to manage differences in core beliefs not only with their partners, but also with their families, communities and society at large. This doesn't happen automatically. It will take work and sensitivity to self and others.
- Whatever decisions and choices a couple makes about resolving and managing religious and cultural differences will affect the children. Their reactions to these issues and the reactions of others to them will need their parent's attention throughout their childhood. While our society is becoming increasingly multi-cultural and mixed, children are sometimes much more confused and less tolerant of differences than adults are.

It was discovered that inter-religious marriage involves commitment, intimacy, effectiveness and forgiveness. Troubled marriages have problems in one or more of those areas, while the constructive engagement of each of these areas provide fulfillment and a happy marriage. The marriage counsellor must understand the ideal, normal and problematic operation of marriages in each of the four aspects so that an accurate assessment can be made and powerful interventions can be designed to correct difficulties in each area.

This research has shown that marriage and also an inter-religious relationship is each characterized by difficulties in intimacy, communication problems, possible unresolved and increasingly hurtful conflict, waning or nonexistent commitment to the relationship. Religious issues may compound the complexity of the relationship, and absorption into a troubled relationship may cause partners to be drawn away from their spiritual and cultural roots.

This research also revealed that all therapies covered have applicability to counselling inter-religious couples. All therapies believe that there are deep causes for stresses in relationships and provide techniques for constructive interventions. The therapist or as indicated in this dissertation, the Christian counsellor is seen as an active participant with the couples in helping them to solve their problems. It is important to utilize a suitable counselling model or approach when counselling couples of inter-religious marriages.

This research has also disclosed that no single counselling model will suffice to deal with such complex problems as found especially in inter-religious marriage relationships. Hence, this

research, after investigating the dynamics of the family, culture, religion, marriage, inter-religious marriage and its challenges, theories of counselling, diverse counselling models, together with empirical research, has produced an integrated model for the counselling of inter-religious marriages.

10.3 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the global community becomes ever more connected, the number of inter-religious and inter-cultural marriages increases. This can be a great blessing for the children, who will have the opportunity to be bi-lingual or even fully bi-cultural. For inter-religious marriage to be harmonious the following suggestions should be considered.

- Decide with the spouse which religion or culture will be emphasized (or practiced equally) in the home, including which language the children will speak and which religion/customs they will be expected to practice.
- Consider giving the children an academic boost by having a spouse speak his or her own native language to them. Small children will not become confused, but will learn both languages quickly and well.
- It is recommended that the inter-religious couple and family practice a single religion. This will bring peace and harmony in the home.
- Inter-religious couples should avoid religious disputes, but respect each one's religion.
- Religious views must be explicit.
- Be fair.
- Beware of making compromises you will not be able to keep.
- Avoid making negative comparisons of the spouse's religion and culture in presence of the relatives and the children.

It is suggested to pastors of the churches to put structures in place for pre-marital counselling and to make guidelines available to the young adults pertaining to dating and mate selection. The Church must make provision for the counselling of families of inter-religious marriages. The counsellor must ensure that a support system is available for inter-religious marriage couples. Inter-religious couples must not be in anyway exposed to prejudice or discrimination.

It is recommended that counselors examine the couple's degree of commitment to God and to each other. Decisions need to be made on the basis of commitment, not emotions. Commitment means that one is willing to accept each other, recognizing that no one is perfect. Counselors must help inter-religious married couples and couples contemplating marriage to learn good techniques for communication.

Finally, it is recommended, that the Integrated Psych-Spiritual Counselling Model as developed in this research, be utilized by counsellors in the counselling of inter-religious marriages or relationships.

10.4 CONCLUSION

This research has clearly indicated that inter-religious marriage relationships are in existence and is on the increase. These relationships are faced with enormous challenges. Hence, it is inevitable for conflicts and problems to arise. In view of this scenario, counselling models are essential in solving problems pertaining to inter-religious marriage relationships. The counsellor who knows, understands and masters the techniques and approaches of the integrated counselling model, is sufficiently equipped to help inter-religious couples to come together in marriage, or live together in harmony regardless of their cultural background. Counselors should not shy away from preparing inter-religious and inter-cultural couples for marriage. They should be honest regarding the challenges they will face. The same applies to the counselling of inter-religious couples. However, the fruits and effectiveness of the inter-religious counselling model will only be experienced when implemented.

10.5 THESIS CONCLUSION

The findings of this research reveal that inter-religious marriages are a reality. As such, the couples of inter-religious marriages are confronted with many challenges. It cannot be denied that these couples desperately require assistance and guidelines to overcome these challenges. In view of this and from a Christian perspective, this research has unveiled the counselling models that may be used in inter-religious marriage counselling.

The scholarly literature review and research also clearly indicated that inter-religious marriages are prevalent and the couples are confronted with many challenging issues pertaining to religious

traditions and beliefs. Hence, the endeavour of this research was to develop an integrated counselling model for inter-religious marriages, namely a Psycho-Spiritual counselling model. In view of this, scholarly literature disclosed views pertaining to Psycho-Spiritual approaches and also the research examined the different available counselling theories and approaches including Christian spirituality.

It has become clear that not only was the transformation process from apartheid to a democratic South Africa responsible for the increase in inter-religious marriage relationships but also the changes to the marriage acts. The new constitution of South Africa also expressed freedom of religion. In order to live in harmony, the people of a multi-religious and -cultural South Africa have to learn to exercise religious and cultural tolerance.

The research discloses that religion and culture is inevitably linked with marriage, especially inter-religious marriages. Durkheim (1969: 43) defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.” All the religious groups are involved in cultural and religious practices. Inter-religious marriages are challenged by these practices.

The marriage customs are sacred in most societies and therefore observed very strictly. The religious norms and values play an important role in legitimating marriages. Hence the challenges are greater in inter-religious marriages.

Inter-religious marriage has been defined as one in which the marital partners are of two different religions. The religions expose people to diverse cultures as religion comes with culture, which includes customs, ceremonies, beliefs, behaviour and practices. Since culture and religion are inter-linked, in inter-religious marriages the couples are exposed to inter-cultural experiences. Although inter-marriage rates seem to be rising for all major religious groups, most people continue to marry within their own faith. However, the Bible declares clearly that a Christian is not to marry an unbeliever. Despite this instruction Christians still engage in inter-faith marriage relationships. When individuals find themselves in this situation, they often encounter extreme difficulties in developing a satisfactory marriage relationship.

Inter-faith marriages are thought to have a higher failure rate than marriages, in which couples share religious beliefs. This is not altogether conclusive. Most South Africans select mates of the same religious background. There are however, no simple answers to the question of why people defy tradition and marry outside of their own cultural or religious group. There is seldom a single motive, but a range of motives, which lay behind two people's choice of each other across religious and cultural barriers.

The interviews conducted in this research revealed that all inter-religious marriages encountered a variety of challenges. Many issues, conflicts and discontent may arise from these marriages. When couples have different religious beliefs they often experience miscommunication, misunderstanding, resentment, and even guilt. Some strategies to overcome challenges of inter-faith marriages have been disclosed and the main focus is commitment to the marriage; to learn conflict skills; respect the spouse; respect religious differences; reach a compromise and common ground; choose a religion in which the children will grow up; and select the religious holidays to celebrate. Even though it is recommended that inter-religious couples follow one religion, the conversion to one of the religions of a couple or the decision to practice a neutral religion brings along identity issues and possible identity confusions. This makes it important that such couples be counselled constructively.

Most individuals and married couples possess a limited ability to find solutions to inter-personal challenges. They are less able to produce new ideas and think flexibly or to consider alternatives and they may persist in ineffective problem solving even when more effective strategies are presented to them. They are also less able to generate active coping strategies in the face of stressful life events. In view of the above, it has been discovered that many of these inter-religiously married couples who experience problems which are beyond their control require outside intervention and counselling. Therefore, many counselling theories and models have been investigated in order to formulate an integrated Psycho-Spiritual counselling model for inter-religious marriages.

It was also important to draw a distinction between Pastoral Christian counselling and psychotherapy as an interface was to be accomplished to develop a Psycho-Spiritual inter-religious marriage counselling model.

It was with no uncertain terms emphasized that forgiveness holds the key to repairing any marriage relationship and without forgiveness no marriage could experience emotional healing. This practice undoubtedly produces self-actualization and also the nurturing of a harmonious inter-religious marriage relationship. However, spirituality to finding meaning in the couple's lives played a major role. Clinebell's person centered approach, especially the *Human Potential Approach* was introduced – marriage growth counselling. Through negotiations a couple is able to utilize their strengths and hidden potential to improve their relationship towards a better marriage – the couple is able to optimize their true potential through psychotherapy and spirituality.

From the many different models examined in this research, the researcher has chosen to use a combined counselling model (Psychoanalysis, the Client-Centered Model, Cognitive Behavioural (Rational Emotive) therapy and Logotherapy) to create an integrated counselling model suitable for inter-religious marriage counselling. Since this research has chosen a Biblical perspective, the Bible and Spirituality must be used with this Psycho-Spiritual counselling model. The models are relevant to guide counselees to self-actualization, to deal with repressed emotions and feelings, inability to analyze and solve problems in relationships, distorted cognitions and behaviour and dysfunctional families. The main focus of this model was:

- *To identify the root problem.*
- *To identify incorrect thinking, distorted emotions and behaviour.*
- *To change irrational thinking to a more rational one.*
- *Set goals and change behaviour – to ensure that the counsellee is able to choose correct alternatives to enable optimal functioning to reach self-actualization.*

Finally, although the present study has tentatively established a counselling model for inter-religious marriages, in-depth research must continue in the areas not covered by this research. Extensive empirical research emanating from the actual counselling of inter-religious couples as well as empirical research involving inter-religious couples who have been together for some time, need to be done. In South Africa, however, we are only at the beginnings of studying this important development in our communities and society.

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Interview with Muslim Community Counsellor

Annexure A

Questionnaire:

INTERVIEW WITH MUSLIM COMMUNITY COUNSELLOR

I am Jezreel Govender and currently busy with my PhD thesis in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

My research includes an empirical component of which this questionnaire is one of the research instruments used for data gathering.

The questionnaire has been developed for you as community counsellor on inter-religious marriages.

I shall appreciate it if you assist the project by providing your views or opinions in the questionnaire.

- Please note:
 - * This is an anonymous qualitative research questionnaire, but you may provide your personal details at the bottom of this page. If you do, I shall nevertheless keep it confidential.
 - * For the completion of the questionnaire, you have two choices:
 - 1) You may complete the questionnaire on your own. In this case, if there is not enough space for your responses, please write or type out your responses more fully and attach them to the questionnaire.
 - 2) I can take down your views in a personal interview. Please inform me what you would prefer.

Date of submission/ completion of the questionnaire
.....

Jezreel Govender: Private: 0843940554
Manager: Ndwedwe local office
South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Office: 0810156165
E-mail: jezreelg@sassa.gov.za

*** I hereby give my permission to use the information I supply, with reference to my surname and name in the research. Yes:..... No:.....**

*** I agree that my response can be used as part of the archive being developed by the School of Religion and Culture, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Yes:..... No:.....**

Personal details (optional if you want to submit it anonymously):

Surname: Initials:
Address: Tel:
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Supervisor: Prof JA Smit: School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, Private Bag X10, Dalbridge, DURBAN, 4041, South Africa.
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Interview with Muslim Community Counsellor

Question one: What is the main purpose of ‘Islamic Guidance’?

Question two: Briefly disclose the fundamental truth that you observed from the women’s group relative to inter-religious marriage.

Question three: Does the generation gap between parents and children have any influence on inter-religious marriage?

Question four: Describe some challenges (issues) related to rituals and cultural practices in inter-religious marriages.

Question five: How do Muslim Husbands react to family celebrations of significant annual ceremonies and rituals in the spouse’s religion?

Question six: How does inter-religious marriage impact on children?

Question seven: What were your observations on women marrying Muslim men and converting to Islam?

Question eight: Your comments on Hindu-Muslim relations compared to Christian- Muslim relations.

Question nine: What are your views on the caste system?

Question ten: Is gossip prevalent and does it have any significance?

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Annexure B

Questionnaire:

INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE COUNSELLING IN SOUTH AFRICA

I am Jezreel Govender and currently busy with my PhD thesis in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

My research includes an empirical component of which this questionnaire is one of the research instruments used for data gathering.

The questionnaire has been developed for individuals in inter-religious marriages. It may include only one person from a couple or both. The questionnaire is designed in such a way that each individual is given the opportunity to reflect on the relationship, elements in the relations from past and present experience, perspectives on the future of the marriage or relationship, and possible input for guidance to other inter-religious marriage couples.

I shall appreciate it if you assist the project by providing your views or opinions in the questionnaire.

- Please note:
 - * This is an anonymous qualitative research questionnaire, but you may provide your personal details at the bottom of this page. If you do, I shall nevertheless keep it confidential.
 - * For the completion of the questionnaire, you have two choices:
 - 1) You may complete the questionnaire on your own. In this case, if there is not enough space for your responses, please write or type out your responses more fully and attach them to the questionnaire.
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Date of submission/ completion of the questionnaire

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Personal details (optional if you want to submit it anonymously):

Surname: Initials:
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INTER-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE COUNSELLING IN SOUTH AFRICA EMPIRICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Kindly note that all information is of a confidential nature and as such no information received from this research questionnaire will be divulged to any source, except in this thesis which is confined to the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

General Personal Details

(Please tick the appropriate box, or fill in the relevant information.)

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: My partner's age:
3. Age you and your partner met: My partner's age:
4. Age you and your partner married: My partner's age:
5. Current marital status: Single Married Divorced Separated
6. Ethnic group: Asian Black Coloured Indian White Other
7. Your religion: Your partner's religion:
Amadlozi/ African Religion Christianity
Christianity & Amadlozi Islam
Islam & Amadlozi Hinduism Another Religion
8. What influence did the new transformed South Africa (especially the dismantling of the Apartheid system) have on your interfaith and// or inter-cultural marriage or relationship?
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9. Do you think age plays a role in your relationship, e.g. when you met, married or currently? Why do you say so?
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10. Did you consider family and culture before entering into an inter-religious or inter-cultural relationship?
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11. Do you think ethnic background plays a role in your relationship? Why do you say so?

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12. Do you think religion plays a role in your relationship? Why do you say so?

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13. If religion plays a role in your marriage, how would you describe it?

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14. When you and your partner decided to get married, was the fact that you are from different religious or cultural backgrounds, a consideration in your plans to get married? Please explain your answer?

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15. Did your families and friends have views on this matter? Please explain your answer?

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15. Does your family or your partner's family have an influence on your marriage? If yes, how would you describe the influence? Do they for instance influence you religiously? If yes, how?

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17. What agreements do you and your partner have with regard to your different religious backgrounds?

Did one convert to the other's religion? If yes, how did this happen and how do you feel about this?

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18. Did you have views on religion – your own or your partner's – that have changed since you got married? Please explain.

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19. Did you or your partner engage in religious (and cultural) practices prior to marriage that have since changed or stopped?

Please explain your answer.

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20. Do you worship together? Please explain your answer.

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21. Do you participate in one another's religious ceremonies, rituals and festivals? Please explain your answer.

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22. How many children do you have and how old are they now?

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23. What are your arrangements with regard to your children's relationships to religion, the role of religion in their upbringing, and are they religious?

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24. Do you think you as a couple together with your children have a religious identity? If yes, how would you describe it, and can you give reasons why you would recommend it to other people (including children?)

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25. Do you think you could improve in any of the areas we have addressed above? Which are the three most important issues or areas, and why do you think it is important to improve on these experiences?

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26. Do you think that single religion marriages have advantages to inter-religious marriages? Why do you say so?

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27. What do you think are the most important challenges married couples face?

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28. How could one constructively deal with them?

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29. How did you cope in your relationship and how have you managed to stay together and build a satisfying relationship?

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30. Have you, your partner, your children or your family need counselling or support with regard to your marriage before? Could you explain?

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31. Do you think that counselling and/ or support groups can help couples and children from inter-religious marriages? Please explain your answer.

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32. What advice would you give to a newly-wed inter-religious couple who are wondering how to make their marriage last?

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33. Should a person marry outside their faith? What is your view, taking personal experience into consideration?

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Thank you very much for your co-operation.
Jezreel Govender

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE