PASTORAL MINISTRY TO SINGLE WOMEN IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA, GIGIRING REGIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL, JOS, NIGERIA

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DECLARATION

I,Rahila Leng Jakawa, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced

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As Supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission to be examined.

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As Co-supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission to be examined.

Abstract

Beginning with the assumption that the church is a liberative space where everyone, single women in particular, can experience wholeness, this thesis investigates the extent to which the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) executes pastoral ministry to single women. The hypothesis of the study is that the concept of women in the COCIN, the COCIN's pastoral training and its inability to appropriate the shepherding and facilitatory model of Jesus, have not enabled an effective pastoral ministry to single women. This thesis therefore proceeds to assess the COCIN's theology of marriage and singleness, the role of women in the COCIN, marriage and family life in Jos today, the theological education and pastors' training of the church and the execution of pastoral ministry to single women. This is to ascertain how these have impacted on the way the COCIN offers pastoral care to single women.

This work is a combination of insights from social analyses, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care and communal contextual pastoral care frameworks. While establishing that culture has had a strong influence on the pastoral ministry practice of the COCIN, methods were identified from the ideas generated by participants as well as relevant literature on the subject, that could be used for the execution of pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN Regional Church Council, Gigiring, Jos.

The data for the study was collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. Participants were categorised into church leaders, clergy, seminary lecturers, magistrates, adult children from divorced marriages and single,never married women and men and divorced women. The findings of the study indicate that with respect to ministry to single women, pastoral ministry in the COCIN has not been liberative, empowering and transformative. Most of the participants indicate that the lack of an effective pastoral ministry to single women is a result of inadequate preparation for dealing with gender complexities in the pastoral training of the church. Although the study has significant implications for the overall pastoral ministry of the church,the findings of this study highlight the necessity of a gender-inclusive pastoral ministry in the COCIN for single women and for the entire church. The study underscores the need for the COCIN to utilise the communal care practice characteristic of African culture for effective pastoral ministry to the different categories of people, particularly the single,never married and divorced women in its congregations.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband Dawuda and my children for their love and sacrifice and to the many single women who yearn to experience the Church as a community and space for healing and wholeness.

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AACC –All African Christian Churches

CC –Church Committee, Church Congregation

CCDP–COCINCommunity Development Programme

CCFN –Corpers' Fellowship of Nigeria

CCM –COCIN Community Mission

COCIN –Church of Christ in Nigeria

CMF –COCIN Men Fellowship

CMS –Church Missionary Society

CPE –Clinical Pastoral Education

CRI –Centres of Religious Instruction

CWF –COCIN Women Fellowship

CYF –COCIN Youth Fellowship

DBS–District Bible School

DGS –Deputy General Secretary

EBS –Extension Bible School

EC –Executive

ECWA –Evangelical Church Winning All

ETC –Extension Theological College

FCS –Fellowship of Christian Students

GCC –General Church Council

GCE –General Certificate Education

GS –General Secretary

GTS –Gindiri Theological Seminary

HAPSTA –Humanist Association for Peace and Social Tolerance Advancement

JIBWIS –Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah Wa Ikamatus Sunnah

LCC –Local Church Council

LCCN –Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria

NAJC – National Association of Japanese Canadians

NCE –National Certificate of Education

NIFES –Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students

NIPSS –NationalInstitute for Policy and Strategic Studies

NVRI –NationalVeterinary Research Institute

PCC –Provincial Church Council

RBC – Regional Bible School

RCC –Regional Church Council

SORAT –School of Religion and Theology

SSCE –Senior School Certificate of Education

STF –Special task force

SUM –Sudan United Mission

TCNN –Theological College of Northern Nigeria

TEE – Theological Education by Extension

TEEMS –Theological Education by Extension Mission School

TEKAN –Tarayar Ekklesiya Kristi a Nigeria (Fellowship of the churches of Christ in Nigeria)

UKZN –University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNFPA –United Nation Food and Population

VP –Vice President

WAATI –WestAfrican Association of Theological Institutions

WCC –World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER ONE

Setting the scene

> To ask the entire Church to be in solidarity with women is to ask for identification with the hopes and fears women live in church and society. The …call assumes an undivided Church and asks the Church to mind the totality of its membership. It is a call for inclusiveness in all aspects of church life. It addresses the Church with a view that it must operate in such a way as to demonstrate that its interests are those of the whole community. If the interests of any sector are overlooked a Church ceases to function as one community (Mercy Oduyoye, 1993:116).

1.1 Introduction

This study, pastoral ministry to single women in the Church of Christ in Nigerian (the COCIN)[1] was undertaken to establish how the COCIN has executed pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women. Marriage is a universal phenomenon, but the past decades have witnessed some changes. The institution of marriage and family is one of the social institutions that has been greatly affected by social change, leading to change in family structures and dynamics. People living in Jos, one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria, have a patriarchal society. Therefore, in Jos, marriage is considered the ideal and the single life as a deficit (Reynolds, Wetherell and Taylor, 2007). However, singleness seems to be part of the life of some women in Jos due to certain social forces such as labour movements, poverty, individual choice, westernisation and urbanisation.

The COCIN seems to be experiencing difficulty in dealing with the problems arising from the clash between culture, religion and social change. For the most part, singleness is seen as one of those trends in social change that has come to disrupt the society. As Waruta rightly observes, "...marriage in traditional African society was not an option, everyone was expected to get married" (2000:107). Marriage was the ideal life and the "focus of existence" (Mbiti, 1999:130). It was believed to be the instrument that ensured the continuity of life and society. To maintain the institution of marriage, even today, females in most Nigerian societies are trained along domestic lines to enable them to take care of their husbands, and raise their children (Okome, 2002). Furthermore, they are socialised to accept marriage as the essence of life and believe that an individual, especially a woman, is not complete outside

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[1] In this study the Church of Christ in Nigerian or its acronym COCIN will be used interchangeably.

marriage. Consequently, a girl is brought up with the consciousness that she will one day grow up to become a wife and a mother. Furthermore, parents in Jos are eager to give their daughters away as a sign of having brought them up well.The failure of adult children to marry is seen as an extension of the parents' failure. Therefore, parents are anxious to give their daughters away in marriage. This eagerness of parents to give their daughters in marriage seems to be a global tension. According to Dell:

> Parents of single adults often feel like they have failed as parents when their single offspring do not marry....all too often marriage is the parameter both parents and single adults use or believe as the measure of adult maturity and responsibility (2000:317).

AsOduyoyeobserves, a marital relationship is a priority for African women, because marriage "locates a woman in a socially validated relationship" (1995:134). Thus, many young women look forward to this day as a sign of great achievement. Although recent social trends have inspired a growing number of programmes aimed at promoting marriage and healthy family living, the growing number of approximately 23% of single women and 4% of disfunctional familiesand marriages in the RCC Gigiring in Jos (one of the regional church councils in the COCIN)that end in divorce require attention.

Jos provides an ideal setting for studying pastoral ministry. It is in the urban areas that human existence often finds itself under serious strain. Casiño describes the urban context in which churches carry out ministry as an environment that has many opportunities for ministries because cities are "home to a myriad of social needs, crises situations, and problems" (2004:140). The disappointment of many single women in the church has become a serious challenge to the overall mission of thechurch as a liberating agent that is "meant to bring life, not death, healing rather than suffering, freedom rather than bondage" (Masenya, 2005:55). The church's inability to allow scripture to transform culture appears to be a hindrance to effective ministry to women, especially single women in the COCIN, RCC Gigiring, in Jos. Therefore an attempt was made to conduct a critical analysis of the pastoral ministry of the church to single, never married and divorced women, with the view to identifyhelpful and benign practices,so as to transform the COCINpastoral ministry to benefitsingle women. The key areas dealt with in this research are related to what has informed the transition of Jos from a society in which adult women naturally get married, to one where the presence of single women is visible. Additionally, this study also focused on how the dynamics of this transition have impacted on the institution of marriage. Unfortunately, there are no recorded figures on the divorce rateand singleness in the RCC Gigiring, which makes it difficult to

determine the actual statistics of divorce and single women in the area. However, some statistics were obtained from ten congregations, which indicate the presence of divorcedand single women in the RCC Gigiring that presents a pastoral challenge to the ministry of the church. The statistic indicates a total number of 6572 adult congregants with men forming 34.9% (2294) and women 65.1% (4278) of the membership. Out of the total number of women, 2833 (66.2%) are married and 1445 (33.8%) are single. 267 (6.2%) are widows, 155 (3.6%) are divorced and 1023 (23.9%) have never married.[2]

In this study social analyses and feminist and communal contextual frameworks of thought were used to understand and assess the role of religion and culture in the marginalisation of single women in pastoral ministry. Social analysis is a useful tool in understanding change (Holland and Henriot, 1984). It assisted in obtaining a clearer picture of singleness asa social situation and to also explorethe historical and structural dynamics in the pastoral ministry of the COCIN. Feminists' ideas have assisted in obtaining a better understanding of single women's individual experiences, and their experiences in community, which necessitates pastoral ministry. As DeMarinis points out, "feminist thinking challenges us to recognise the need for nurture, sustenance, growth and the development of the whole person…" (1993:18). This is particularly applicable in the context of pastoral ministry of the COCIN to single, never married and divorced women. The communal contextual framework assisted in suggesting the way forward for pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN RCC Gigiring.

This chapter provides an overview of the study, which is structured around the following sub-headings: introduction, motivation for study, research problem and objectives, significance of the study, locating the study within existing literature, methodology of the study, Confidentiality, theoretical frameworks, research design and methodology, definition of key terms and closing remarks and structure of the study.

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[2] This statistic was obtained through telephone calls and SMS's to the pastors of Dashik, Fwol-Vorok, Kambel, Sabon Gari, Guran-Dok, Dadin Kowa, Kangang, Chamber, Longwa and Kunfang. In the course of this research I discovered that there was need for some statistics. This gives a picture of what marriage and singleness in the RCC Gigiring Jos is, in terms of figures.

1.2 Motivation for undertaking the study

1.2.1 Personal motivation

The primary motivation for this study comes from my experience and interactions with single women, particularly those in the church and the theological institution I teach. Those interactions enabled me to form my own perception of single women's experiences. However, the images that emerged from my interviews and focus group discussion differed from those initially formed. My initial understanding related the challenges of singleness to sociocultural and religious factors. However, I discovered that the factors involved are socio-cultural and religious as much as they are psychological.

Anecdotal accounts and popular discourses in the public domain suggest thatsingle, never married and divorced women have been side-lined, ignored and neglected in the pastoral care practices of the COCIN (cf. Pattison, 1997:241). It is my conviction that pastoral ministry challenges the need for the participation of every Christian both as giver and receiver of care. The ministry of the church is incomplete when one of its parts is neglected. For the ministry of the church to be meaningful, the church must have a holistic and broad-based understanding of pastoral issues. Pastoral ministry must be seen as a major aspect of the life of the church as it promotes and upholds the values of human dignity and mutual respect.

1.2.2 Academic motivation

While there is a growing research interest in the area of women and the church in Nigeria, few of these interests address the concerns of single women. The need to discover the social, cultural and religious values that shape life around single women and the church's attitude towards them is imperative. In line with African traditional values and practice of care (Ndossi, 2008) the findings of this study compel a contextual communal pastoral ministry in the COCIN for single, never married anddivorced women. Feminist theologian Miller-McLemore suggests that instead of relying on the one-on-one ministry and expertise of the pastor, ministry must be focused on how congregations can team with the "clergy as the facilitator of networks of care rather than the chief source of care" (1996:14). To provide care that encourages and promotes wholeness, the entire community of believers must be involved. Supporting this argument, it is suggested that pastoral ministry is the responsibility

of all members of the community of believers, that is, clergy and laity. In doing this it has given pastoral ministry abroader meaning, which agrees with both the biblical and African concepts of service and care.

Similarly, this work does not in any way undermine the place of marriage. Rather, it underscores marriage and family as an ideal environment for the formation of Christian life and the transmission of genuine Christian values (Hunter, 2010). However, this study advocates for a broader perspective of what it means to have fullness of life. It is an attempt to deconstruct negative conceptions of singleness and single women embedded in the minds of pastors and congregational members in the COCIN. It also desires to create a framework of thought and action that encourages single people towards a wholeness of life as God intended for everyone regardless of their status. Single people are assumed to be outside the sphere of the fullness of life because they have not found marriage, that is, that which completes them. Apparently, this perception is flawed and unbiblical.

1.3 Problem statement and objectives of study

1.3.1 Research problem and questions

This research addresses a ministry issue in the area of pastoral theology. Therefore, it is approached from a pastoral care perspective. This is because a "significant responsibility and privilege of ministry is to nurture hope and confront despair" (Lester, 1995:1) in the lives of people. The inability of the COCIN to address the need to nurture hope and confront despair in the lives of single, never married and divorced women is what I find as a serious lacuna in its pastoral ministry.

Pastoral care is a core element of the pastoral ministry of the church. However, the practice of care in the church is sometimes lopsided in favour of some groups above others. The research problem this study attempts to address is the absence of specific pastoral care to single, never married and divorced women in the Church Christ in Nigeria. The cultural environment and the family oriented nature of the COCIN have promoted a disregard for the spiritual, social and financial well-being of single people. Thus, in the COCIN, misconceptions and culturally biased understanding of marriage and singleness have hampered appropriate pastoral care of single, never married and divorced women. Therefore, the research question the study seeks to answer is: What has been the degree to which the COCIN pastors have offered pastoral

ministry to single, never married and divorced women?The following questions are vital to addressing the key question:

- How have the Nigerian culture, westernisation and urbanisation impacted upon marriage and singleness in RCC Gigiring in Jos?
- How have the church structure and the exclusion of women impacted on their contribution to pastoral ministry in the COCIN?
- What is the nature of pastoral training the COCIN pastors receive? Does this training equip them to deal with gender related complexities and ministry to single, never married and divorced?
- What is the nature of pastoral ministry rendered by the COCIN pastors to its female members, particularly single, never married and women?

A research question is the question that the study attempts to answer.It has to do with the phenomenon under investigation. According to Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim, sources of research question include: extant literature on the problem, an exploratory investigation on what to study (particularly where there is insufficient research or an undocumented social life on the subject) and personal speculation and experience (2010:540). The above statement forms the basis on how the sub-questions and focus group and individual participant questions were formulated.

1.3.2 Research objectives

The main objective of this research is to investigate the degree to which the COCIN executes pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women.Other focus areas include:
- Assessing the impact of the Nigerian culture, westernisation and urbanisation upon marriage and singleness in RCC Gigiring in Jos
- Examining the impact of the church structure and the exclusion of women on their contribution to pastoral ministry in the COCIN.
- Analysing the nature of pastoral training the COCIN pastors receive and whether it equips them to deal with gender related complexities and ministry to single, never married and divorced women.
- Evaluating the nature of pastoral ministry rendered by the COCIN pastors to its female members, particularly single, never married and women.

1.4 Significance of the study

Various aspects of the experiences of single women have been studied and documented especially in developed countries (Reynolds, 2008; Reilly, 1996; Schwartzberg,Berliner and Jacob1995; Reynolds and Wetherell, 2003). In Africa, such literature is very sparse. Even so, few of these studies are concerned with the socio-cultural, psychological and religious factors in single, never married and divorced women's experiences. It is important that the effects of socio-cultural and religious influences on the pastoral ministry of the church are analysed. It is also vital to consider the impact of these influences on single women, especially single, never married and divorced women.

One can argue that there is a lack of knowledge in understanding the experiences of single women as a minority within women group.Moreover, there is no literature that has linked the exercise of pastoral ministry with the issue of gender and status. This study is an attempt to bridge the gap by exposing the reason for the absence of pastoral ministry of the COCIN to single women. In addition, the study is an attempt to suggest how the church as a community can engage with the concrete needs of single women within the framework of its biblical call to serve and bear one another's burden (Galatians 6:2).

This study provides valuable information on how single, never married and divorced women in the RCC Gigiring, in Jos experience and interprete singleness in a context in which marriage is seen as the destination of every adult. It also provides information on the relationship between culture and religion, and how this has influenced peoples' perception and attitude towards single women. The study is a step in deconstructing negative attitudes towards single women in the church and society.

Significantly, the findings of the study could motivate the COCIN to make a concerted effort towards providing pastoral ministry to single women. Moving beyond the ordained pastoral ministry office, which characterises the COCIN pastoral practice, this study may help to empower the COCIN leaders to involve its lay members in pastoral ministry, particularly to single women and families of divorced marriages. Considering the importance of theological education and training for ministry in the COCIN, the findings could also encourage the church's theological institutions to develop and construct a curriculum of theological studies

that prepares students adequately for ministry to different categories of people in their congregations.

Lastly, although this study was conducted using a particular church denomination and social context, it may shed some light on the common experiences shared by other single, never married and divorced women who are struggling to find identity and acceptance in both the church and the larger Nigerian society.

1.5 Locating the research within existing literature

There is a great deal of literature on women issues but none addresses the plight of single, never married anddivorced women from a pastoral ministry perspective. Although some work has been done on gender reforms, the researcher concurs with Nyegele that "gender issues are still peripheral in the life of the church, especially in African pastoral theological publications" (2004:1). In this section an attempt is made to review works on women in areas related to status of marriage and family, the pastoral concerns of women and women and the church in Africa.

1.5.1 Marriage and family in Nigeria today

It is noteworthy that published materials in book form on the subject are scarce. However, there is a growing volume of literature in form of articles and presented papers. The nature of marriage and family life in Nigeria is changing rapidly. This is particularly noted by Umoh and Adeyemi in their assertionthat "the influence of industrialisation and urbanisation has affected the social system of the country, a part of which is the marriage system" (1990:5). This has brought about the disorganisation of the family as an institution and the resulting effects among many others listed are physical separation and sometimes divorce. With regard to the rapid growth in the rate of divorces, they suggest that because divorce is a source of "psychological, social and educational problems in the society" there is need for "serious therapeutic attention" (1990:6).

Previous studies on divorce indicate that age at marriage (Thornton, 1985), unhealthy and inadequate communication (Olayinka, 1987), extra-marital sex and discrepancy in mate traits (Ezeukwu, 1988)are factors in marital instability leading to divorce. This material provides a

valuable source of information on the causes of divorce, but its interpretation of the educational and financial preparedness of the male as a factor in marriage success affects the way marriage is presented. Marriage is not presented as a mutual relationship in which each partner contributes to its success and enjoyment. The scope of the study merits a wider coverage as divorce incidences are prevalent in other parts of the country, not just Kwara state. The study has not considered the consequences of divorce and its impact on the individuals and family members, a concern in this research work.

A number of studies of Nigerian socio-cultural and religious structures reveal that women face diverse forms of discrimination and oppression in Nigeria (Enwereji;2008; Ojobo, 2008; Odejide, 2006). This is because the image of the woman is very low and many traditional beliefs and practices serve to promote this negative conception of the woman. In many Nigerian communities the woman is the property of the family and not the wife of one member of the family.Fundamentally, in patriarchal societies the dignity of the woman is linked to her relationship to a man. The male, first as father, therefore she is the daughter of so-and-so, the male as husband, hence she is the wife of so-and-so and the male as son, therefore she is mother of so-and-so. The implication is that a woman is secure when she is still under the age of marriage and under the protection of her father. Once a woman reaches adulthood she is no longer viewed in her role as a daughter, but as the wife of her husband. Therefore, if she is not married, the question arises, with whom she should be identified with. Consequently, she loses the respect, identity and dignity that these positions accord her. If she is married and the husband dies, she loses this identity once again. This becomes worse if she does not have a son, a male figure which ensures her access to power and resources such as land and property; she becomes a non-entity in the society. This among other things makes her life as a woman very difficult. This conception of women's identity is also biblical as the Bible identifies women as the daughter of, wife of and mother of. This notion does not only show the complicity between African culture and biblical teaching on the identity of women, but places marriage at the core, thereby making marriage highly problematic. The findings of a study, *The quest for women's liberation: a Nigerian Christian perspective*(Jakawa, 2003) corroborates this. According to Jakawa, male participants indicated serious scepticism even at the mention of the topic. The traditional notion that women were their husbands' property (2003:95) was very much reflected in the responses of male participants. Although women were working at changing this image,they have encountered resistance. The study indicated that the *Beijing Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women* was

interpreted as a strategy to set women against men. The idea of liberation for women was perceived as a move against tradition and against the women's subordination to their husbands. The traditional norm is to keep women in subjugation, especially to their husbands in marriage (2003:48). Although this study looked at broad issues relating to women's need for liberation, things have change over the last decade and new issues need to be explored. Furthermore, the study did not explore in depth the religious and psychological factors involved in women's experiences. The study did not challenged the church to action even though it was conducted from a Christian perspective.

Some studies have focused on social change and its impact on women's attitude towards marriage. For example, Bahemuka (2006) in her study of social change and women's attitude towards marriage in East Africa, discovered that the perception of women was a factor in their attitude. She points out that marriage in East Africa is a union of individuals, families and clans. She identifies African marital unions found in East Africa as monogamy, polygyny, ghost marriage, child marriage and woman-woman marriage (2006:121-123). Using the case of polygyny, she argues that women's attitude towards the practice of polygamy is like a double-edged sword. Women tend to loathe polygamy but create an environment for its perpetration through their involvement with married men. However, she observes that "women who are economically independent are less prone to become victims of polygyny" (2006:132).

1.5.2 Pastoral care and concerns of women

One of the key issues in this study isfailed marriages. In her study of the perceptions of family counselling in Nigeria, using literate families, Nwachuku (1987) discovered that education is a factor in the "choice of counselling as appropriate help in family crisis resolution" (1987:58). She lists church weddings, procreation, gender of children, and number of children as the sources of conflict in Nigerian families (60-62). She concludes that there is a "dire need of professionals to synthesise techniques towards contextualising counselling in African setting" (1987:70). Waruta (2000)makes a similar call when he asserts that pastoral counsellors need to work at enhancing the positive aspects of marriage and family. He emphasises that counselling must be focused on the disease and not the symptoms and that the church must "minister to the African family in the context of the African world" (2000:118). Other studies have argued that marital crises leading to divorce are on the rise in

Africa (Adegoke, 2010; Enwereji, 2008; Mwangi, 1998; Nwachuku, 1987). For instance, Nwachuku observes that "Although the rate of divorce among Africans is still low compared with the Western world, yet viewed in the light of African traditional society, divorce or separation is on the increase" (1987:60).She argues that despite this situation, only 35% of couples would seek the help of a counsellor, while 65% would rather opt for the assistance of a significant other who is closely linked to the family (1987:63). Nwachuku narrows the scope of the experiences of African women when she uses the experience of educated and socialised women to represent the African woman. An important factor such as religion was not explored. Nwachuku's work was done two decades ago and there is no doubt that new factors and changes have occured, which necessitates another study in this area.

In her discussion of past and present Nigerian family life patterns, Nwachuku observes that there has been a technological awakening which challenges "family patterns, roles, power and authority in the contemporary African family..." (1991:118). She further observes that in the wake of all this historical and social change, there have been many attempts to offer counselling using different methods. In order to avoid doing damage to individuals, Nwachukwu arguesthat there must be a clear definition and understanding of the stance, authority and mode of operation of Christian counselling, stressing that counsellors must adopt strategies that recognise "the transforming power of Jesus Christ to change lives…" (1991:122). Nwachuku's study shows the crisis individuals and families experience in a changing social context, but more study needs to be carried out in terms of the integration of positive values from culture and the Bible, which will signify a shift from what Msomi describes as "a phenomenological analysis to a pastoral diagnosis and eventually to a relevant pastoral act" (2008:14).

Western ideologies and methods have dominated all spheres of theology, including practical theology. Thus the need for a contextual pastoral ministry that addresses the needs of Christians in various African cultures has become an area of concern to theologians in the pastoral field. This has engaged a handful of theologians making valuable contributions, especially in the Southern part of Africa to address this need (Msomi, 2008; Mucherera, 2005; Waruta, 2000; Lartey, 1991). It is also believed that this is facilitated by the positive relations existing between pastoral theology and other disciplines(Mpolo and Nwachuku, 1991).

Msomi argues for a contextual approach to pastoral ministry. He maintains that appropriate pastoral care and counselling continually takes "seriously the cultural, social, religious and political factors in the context of its operation" (2008:205). In his critique of western influence on pastoral counselling, Msomi makes three observations: firstly, the denominational emphasis on introspection and inner life in North America led to the privatisation of religion. He argues that although personal responsibility is part of religious experience, privatisation blocks the participation of others "within the established communal relationship" (2008: 209). Secondly, the initial emphasis of the model of clinical pastoral education (CPE) on learning in community is in agreement with African belief in personal and community interest. However, Msomi also observes that the shift from the social dimension to a focus on the individual and on therapy (which characterises later developments in CPE) is a weakness of the method, especially when applied in a cross-cultural context. He argues that such a shift tends to "lead to the danger of becoming overly individualistic and thus fail to counteract narcissistic tendencies and attitude" (2008:211). Thirdly, Msomi acclaims the Rogerian person-centred therapy[3] for being a model drawn from the active involvement of people. This is because it agrees with the African holistic view of life as well as shares striking similarities with procedures of African traditional healing. Similarly, its core element of respect for and acceptance of the reality of the other person finds support in African world-view. Nevertheless, Msomi observes that the person-centred approach with its emphasis on the individual makes it difficult to fit into the African context. Furthermore, the approach tends to be non-directive, which makes it value-free. He argues that "the pastor is a messenger of the Word of God. Sometimes within the ministry of the Word there is a challenge to proclaim the Word. But this does not justify throwing it way in toto" (2008:216).

Pastoral challenges, especially for urban settlers, are more complex because of the multidiversity of life in the cities. Mucherera argues in support of pastors to be trained to

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[3]Carl Rogers was an American psychologist who through being influenced by Abraham Maslow's ideas developed the client-centred therapy which is also known as the person-centred, non-directive or Rogerian therapy. In his book, *Way of Being (1980)* he argued that "Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts" (1980:115). In the person-centred approach to counseling the client is the catalyst of personal healing and growth. This approach to therapy marked a shift from the traditional approach in which the therapy was focused on the counselor as the catalyst of change. However the overemphasis on the individuality of the client has been criticised for promoting humanistic values and undermining biblical authority (Gareth Crossley, 1992:23).

handle integrative methods of caregiving. He stresses the "need for new and relevant paradigms in pastoral theology of care to address problems experienced by people living in such a context" (2005:3).Consequently, he suggests an integrative pastoral theology of care as a remedy to the problem of the conflict that exists between religious and cultural values people living in urban settings face. Mucherera's study is relevant to this research as it helps in the understanding of interpersonal relations, and the conflict people living in an urban area such as Jos, experience. More over, there is a great deal of commonality in urban life in Africa which makes it relevant for this study.

However, it is apparent from the above literature that most of the pastoral issues treated have not taken into consideration gender concerns that inspire effective pastoral ministry to single women. Women's pastoral needs must be viewed in relation to the world they live (Nueger, 1991). Two articles from African pastoral theologians address this point. Violence against women, which is closely tied to familial relationships, accounts for a large number of dysfunctional marriages and families. The need to address the issue from a pastoral angle is observed by Kimilike (2008).Kimilike observes that violence against women pervades the African society; however, his focus is domestic violence against women, which poses a great challenge to the church. He observes that most of the literature on pastoral care and counselling in Africa have been written by men and reflect western values and patterns. As a result, they have failed to take into account the difference in the life experience of men and women and the way they are to be addressed. He states that "in Africa the female voice in pastoral care and counselling has been suppressed, made inferior, neglected and silenced by the dominant Westernised male perspectives reinforced with biblical and African patriarchal culture" (2008:64).

To address the problem of the lack of women's voices in pastoral ministry in Africa, Kimilike suggests the integration of female perspective into models of pastoral care. He states that issues of pastoral care and counselling in an African context have to take into consideration "the African female perspective and the general African perspective" (2008:63). To achieve this task Kimilike suggests the utilisation of two core values of African traditional life. First, the use of traditional collaborative activities and social networks among women. Second, the application of the virtue of the spirit of caring and hospitality that reflect African women's role of being primary care givers. He concludes that with the inclusion of women in pastoral ministry, "the dominant male- biased practice and theories of pastoral care and counselling in

African will be informed with female experiences and perspectives. As a result many harmful misinterpretations on or about women issues will be eradicated" (2008:67).

In the collection of work, *Restoring life in Christ: dialogues of care in Christian communities: an African perspective* by African pastoral theologians, Ndossi addresses a similar concern - the need to recognise the significance of the female perspective in the pastoral enterprise in Africa. According to Ndossi the culture differentiations between men and women in Africa necessitates the inclusion of women's perspective. She observes that traditional African communities afforded women the status as providers of care and counselling. This situation was changed with the introduction of modern culture and education. She asserts that "the exclusion of the female perspective is a tragedy, not only for women, but for the whole society" (2008:38). Ndossi argues that care and counselling must not be based on one gender because the experiences of men vary from those of women. She suggests three reasons, (which concur with Kimilike's arguments above) why female perspective in pastoral care is necessary. Firstly, women have always served as the primary care givers in the family and community. This cultural expectation and role assigned to women has socialised women to develop character and skills in care giving. Secondly, the role of women in communal support systems. Care giving in Africa is not limited to the nuclear family. Instead, it includes the extended family and the entire community. Thirdly, the difference in responsibilities of men and women in administering care. This implies that women are able to address issues that are peculiar to themselves. She maintains that in Africa traditional care "roles might vary but men and women have an equal chance to share their perspective in a crisis" (2008:41). These two contributions are vital to this study because of the significance placed on women's experiences and the values of communal living. The argument in favour of the inclusion of women's perspective was echoed two decades ago in Scott's assertion that despite the increasing sensitivity to androcentrism there is still difficulty in determining what women think and feel. He states that this silence of women's voices in history "prevents us from hearing the heartbeat of …women (1993:42).

Single women sometimes face problems in the area of spirituality and may feel a desperate need for care. This need is addressed in a collection of works by a group of female pastoral counsellors in America. In her introduction to this collaborative work, Moessner argues that viewing issues through the lenses of the woman offers a new perspective to view the self and problems surrounding human life. It provides "a map to the territory of women's

experiences" (1996:2). Although discussed from awestern framework of thought, Liebert's contribution is particularly helpful when considering the spiritual well-being of women. It provides to a certain degree, a common context of women's experiences as well as brings to light the universality of certain norms and values associated with the experiences of women. Liebert explores the possibilities for nourishing women's spiritual lives in the church. She asserts that assisting women to become in touch with reality, to move toward self-transcendance and the realisation of their place as "creative, autonomous and life-giving members of human communities" (1996:265) is a task of women's spiritual care. Liebert argues that because silence and structural inequality characterised women's lives, their stories and the structure must be engaged in pastoral care to address their spiritual needs. She maintains that the starting point would be to create an awareness of patriarchy and its connection with the issues women articulate; to create "an egalitarian relationship that is characterised by empowerment, advocacy and appropriate self-disclosure" and exploring "the benefits of group context as a source of empowerment" (1996:266).

Other studies in the pastoral field have been concerned with the dynamics of human life and the pastoral ministry. The image of the *living human document* articulated by Boisen was used to argue that the context, that is, people's life situation, not just the written text was important in accessing people's experiences (Moore, 2002:2; Boisen 1951:21). Boisen's metaphor of the living human document has become a powerful vehicle in pastoral theology for the understanding and interpretion of the dynamics of human suffering, salvation and the pastoral ministry (Graham, 2009:139). However, in recent time there have been shifts in the metaphors that conceptualise the subject of pastoral theology. With the shift to a wider understanding of care to include 'a wide cultural, social and religious context', the concept of the 'living human web' has become an appropriate metaphor for the interrogation and interpretation of people's experiences (Miller-McLemore, 2005:40; 2001:194; 1996:16).

1.5.3 Women and the Church

The fact that women form the majority of church membership (Phiri, 2005:32; Rakoczy, 2004:198) has not made much difference in a male dominated church, particularly in leadership. The church has done very little to ease the burden of oppression women face in Africa; rather, it has contributed to their burden by avoiding gender issues or preventing any attempt at changing the culturally constructed socio-cultural and religious norms. Any

form of injustice meted out against women is seen as a private matter (Hadabe, 1999:41). Despite significant changes that have been achieved in recent times, gender issues are still very sensitive, especially when this concerns the female gender. This is particularly noted by Tietcheu's assertion that men adopt a defensive stance towards gender issues because they see it as a ploy to overtake them. Thus gender becomes synonymous to women who seek power and societal control. Tietcheu argues that because men do not want to lose their "long-established historical privilege" (2006:116) over women, they refer to biblical texts alleging the superiority of men over women and the subservient role of women. Therefore, gender discussions are seen as an "instrumental tool aimed at destroying African culture" (2006:116) and Biblical norms. However, he rightly observes that this stance is faulty because gender deals with the search for justice in societal structures. Tietcheu argues that gender is more a 'social construct" than a "biological nature" (2006:118).

One of the challenges women face as members of the church is in the area of theology. Rakoczyexplores different issues in women doing theology. She argues that feminist theology is a liberating theology because "all liberation theologies begin with experience" (2004:20). Rakoczy observes that men have named, defined and allocated an inferior position to women. She argues that Christian tradition contain both 'bad news' and 'good news' for women. She refers to Jesus's relationship with women, women as disciples, woman truly as God's image and baptismal dignity as 'good news' for women (2004:40-44).The 'bad news' is the Greek dichotomy between body and soul, a Greek ideology embraced in Christian tradition. She argues that this soul-body dualism "has proven to be immensely harmful to women" (2004:45).

In her discussion of church, women and ministry, Rakoczy asserts that women are both included and excluded. She argues that the early church portrays the partnership of women with men in the Christian community. Women were apostles and prophets, presided at the Eucharist, were preachers and evangelists and served as deacons (2004:202-207). However, as the church aligned itself with the tradition and practice of the day, women were given a subordinate role. Household codes were adopted in the church, and "social mores proved more powerful than the equality of all men and women baptised into the new life of Christ" (2004:211). Rakoczy argues that women have a right to be included in ministry of the church on the understanding that the church is characterised by a discipleship of equals (2004:16).

The concept of the discipleship of equal which concurs with the African focus on the communal is relevant to the discussion on the role of women in Chapter Three and the need for engendering theological education in Chapter Four of this study. Though Rakoczy has argued for the completeness of the woman outside marriage because of the image of God, nothing has been said on how the church can address the issue of singleness in the context of Africa where marriage is the ideal. This is an aspect which this research will attempt to investigate.

Gnanadason states that the concern of African women theologians is examining "issues of gender in church and society" and spoke of "their longing for a Church that would live out more fully the gospel values of justice and peace" (2005:7). Phiridescribes the patriachal nature of African societies which results in the oppression of women and children. She argues that although the image Idowu (1965),in his argument envisioned of an indigenous church was appealing to Africans in their search for spiritual identity, it only assumes that visions and experiences of women are included. Yet, what the church needs is to examine the vision of the African women, that of an inclusive church, a true church in Africa. Although women are the church, they are treated as visitors in the church. If the church is to be a healing community, it must address the issues of language of God, theological education, taboos, liturgy and work in solidarity with women (2005:32-40).Phiri concludes that "a liberated church in Africa is one that acknowledges that God calls both women and men into full time ministry. The community of women and men, working together needs to validate this call of God to all" (2005:40). Although Phiri rightly suggests solidarity between women and men in fashioning a liberating church in Africa, other aspects of this solidarity have not been explored in this article.

Men and women are united in a common humanity, thus women, like men, have equal status before God, yet they have been denied full participation in the ministry of the church. This was an issue of concern to participants at the 1998 West African Association Theological Institutions (WATTI) Biennial Conference, with its central theme *Women, Culture And Theological Education*. During his address, Prof Adekunle Alalade affirmed women's important role in the "salvation enterprise" in the assertion, "without women, there can be no gospel....the gospel began with a woman and ended with a woman" (1998:11). He called on the church to examine women's role in theological education because theological education was 'christocentric' and grounded on 'sola scriptura' and "has the dual purpose of preparing

people for this world and the world to come" (1998:112). According to Akintonde, women's role in society is "a primodial function central to the very survival of the society" (1998:13). Therefore, there is need to "fashion out programmes that would put women at vantage points in society" (1998:15) considering the fact also that any investment on a woman has the "desired multiplier effect" (1998:15). This work is concerned with women's theological education, which is still reserved for a minority especially in Nigeria.

Many of the issues on women in ministry are designed to portray the image of a woman as a good wife and a supporter of men's ministry in the church. Although many women are involved in ministry,issues of discrimination in leadership are evident, as decisions concerning ministry, even when it concerns women, are still in the hands of men and this is an area that needs transformation. God's call to ministryhas no boundaries of social structures, gender or status.In a review of the papers presented at a consultation jointly organised by the World Council of Churches and the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, Nadar reflects on three broad aspects, namely women, church and ministry; women, church and theology; and women, church and society. She argues that the presence of patriarchy in the church is insidious and renders the task of transformation seemingly impossible (2005:16-17). She argues further that to achieve the objective of crafting a new church in which the equality of both men and women is recognised, women have to use what she calls the 'hammer and axe' and the dialogical approach. She maintains that the church that Christ designs is one that "provides space for children, women and men to express their gifts and live out their calling to the full" (2005:19). She points out that education is needed "to liberate the church from the destructive and unproductive practices that befall women" (2005:20). She therefore suggests that new models of engaging the Bible must be developed to make the scripture more holistic and liberating, as well as enabling gender justice and equality. Understanding patriarchy's multifaceted dimensions, Nadar emphasises the need for "a re-envisioning of African culture and a concomitant cultural hermeneutic as an essential mode of discourse" (2005:22). Elsewhere, Nadar argues strongly that:

> The patriarchal and oppressive culture in which the Bible was written provides opportunity for people to use it for their own oppressive purposes. What we need to do is to draw out the liberating norms which the Bible set for us and use them as a basis to counter the oppression that people justify (2000:28).

Hogan has been concerned with critiquing and interpreting patriarchal theories and traditions. She focuses her discourses on women's experience and praxis as the primary resources for

feminist theological engagements. According to Hogan "critique and interpretation of patriarchal theories and traditions is …essential, since it enables us to understand the lives and works of women under patriarchy" (1997:9). She maintains that it is not necessary for feminist engagements to step out of patriarchal traditions because patriarchy is the context which women live and work. However, she observes that feminist theologians have effected a paradigm shift in which women's experiences and praxis have been used "to reconstruct and create new religious forms" (1997:10) thus, affirming women's dignity. The discourse on women's experience is relevant to this study because appropriate pastoral ministry to single women must stem from understanding their experiences.

Male domination and marginalisation of women in both church and society have been attributed to patriarchal ideologies (Rakcozy, 2004; Neuger, 1996; Goviden, 1991). According to Niebuhr, dealing with issues of patriarchy and discrimination against women in Christian ministrydemands that the church leadership allows Christ to transform culture.He maintains that ministers can recognise that we all have one goal, directing people to the abundant life Christ has planned for everyone regardless of their gender (1975:190-218). Dreyer argues that "constructs and social patterns are human creations, not God-given structures" (2011:5). As a result they have the potential to affect in a negative way both the powerful and those with less power. Graham pointed out that "within a discipline dominated by an androcentric (male-dominated) clerical paradigm, women were offered little opportunity as non-male, non-ordained persons to be recognised as agents or client of pastoral ministry" (1999:185). Although the picture Graham painted has changed significantly in many regards, the same cannot be said of the COCIN because pastoral ministry is still the sole prerogative of males.

In some works women's experience of church has been described as 'frustrating' (Bons-Storm, 1996; Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen, 1991). Riley points out, the growing participation of women in public and religious life which is indicative of a breaking away from the historical belief that men by virtue of being male hold the unreserved right to lead and control all dimensions of society while women remain subordinate to them (2005:193). However, it can be inferred from this that women have made some progress in the secular sphere than the religious. Feminist theologian Bons-Storm argues that the voices of women have been ignored in the church, and they suffer even more when their experiences, thoughts, emotions and feelings are ignored. She maintains that although the experiences of women

cannot be generalised, many women suffer in different ways through the sexism that permeates both the church and society (1996:16).

A number of feminist, liberationist, postmodernist and post-colonialist theologians have criticised the clericalisation of ministry on the premise that it emphasises the person and activity of the clergy over Christian practice as well as ignores important voices in the church(Lartey, 2006, 2003; Graham, 1996;Gill-Auster, 1996). In the COCIN one such voice is that of the single women. Men have been privileged over women and the married over the single, with single women being the most affected. According to Clinebell, patriarchal theology has been responsible for the privileging of some over others and numerous biblical passages have been used "to maintain the privilege and power of men in family, church and society" (1995:116). Feminist theologians Cooper-White (2008) and Neuger (1991) argue that the church might have been embedded in patriarchy but it still remains a place of hope. According to Cooper-White, in spite of the church's flawed, human history, it still remains a space of hope and redemption. What women need to do is to challenge the church and its pastoral ministry to deal with the issues of the socio-political and power realities of women (2008:20). For Neuger, not only has the church provided an environment for women to find healing, refuge and empowerment, it has also provided leadership and community. She argues that "the power of God's spirit to empower, even in the midst of oppression, is a clear beacon of hope. The church and its representatives must work to dismantle patriarchy and to bring justice and wholeness to the women and men in its midst" (1991:155).

Sadly, the church in Nigeria has has supported the dominant system of powerand the ideologies that keep women in perpetual subordination to men (Goviden, 1994:296). The inability of the church to oppose oppressive systems has not justified the centrality of the Gospel message of liberation (Luke 4:18-19). As is rightly argued by Tappa, the challenge before the church is to dismantle structures and powers that impede peoples' attainment of wholeness (1987:106).

The above literatures have shown that women are marginalised in the church and their concerns are not properly addressed in the pastoral ministry of the church. As a result, the church is not able to address women's deepest concerns. However, many of these authors seldom address specific challenges that face single, never married and divorced women,

especially in an African context, and Jos in particular, and how it is for this reason that this study becomes relevant and necessary.

1.6 Principal theories underpinning the study

No study is independent in itself. Having a theoritical framework is important because it holds together the assumptions one works with and how one engages with the text and context. It is also significant because theories help to clarify and specify relationships between variables in order to explain and predict given phenomena or events (Mouton and Marais, 1990). According to Silverman, theory aids our understanding of the world. It "provides both a framework for critically understanding phenomena and a basis for considering how what is unknown might be organized" (2010:110). This study employed social analyses, feminist cultural hermeunetic and feminist pastoral care and the communal contextual pastoral care frameworks of thought to investigate and engage the pastoral ministry of the COCIN to single women.

1.6.1 Social analysis

The social analysis theory propounded by Holland and Henriot advocates for the use of social analysis as a tool for pastoral action. Their "pastoral circle" presents a model of integrating "pastoral praxis, hermeunetics and theological reflection in the life of the church" (Holland and Henriot, 1984:xiv). The task of social analysis is to investigate the history of a social situation and the structural relationship involved so that a complete picture is obtained (Holland and Henriot, 1984), even as it focuses on the systems at work (Paver, 2006). As a tool for pastoral action, it approaches social issues from the point of view of reality and historical stance and discerns appropriate action (Holland and Henriot, 1984:7). Approaching pastoral ministry using the tools of social analysis brings clarity: firstly, the significance of understanding the history and structural relationship operating in the given context. This will enable the integration of the past and present for the sustenance of what gives the people their identity. Secondly, it will also underline the need to identify resources that enable pastors to plan a programme of ministry to the various categories of people in their congregations.

Given that "the church is both a religious and social community, subject to social and cultural condition" (Wilson, Evans, Evans, Mofokeng and Poerwowidagdo, 2005:171), the social analysis framework of thought is helpful because it advocates for addressing issues in their

context, a view that is supported by Glaz and Meossner when they assert that the"pastoral concern of the church is related to social and cultural norms" (1991:189). Msomi attests to the relevance of social analysis to the pastoral ministry in his assertion that when consideration is given to a people's traditional background,it creates a betterunderstanding and provides adequate preparation forimproved communication and counselling (2008:157).

A basic assumption of the social analysis is that faith is only relevant if it addresses the issues of social injustice, human well-being and liberation in the society (Holland and Henriot, 1984). This is the major contribution of this theory. Authentic ministry involves coming to terms with the reality of the victims of injustice which manifests in marginalisation, discrimination, oppression and exploitation. Social analysis focuses on investigating the conditions that contribute to the marginalisation of certain groups of people is relevant to this study. Two major gaps identified in this theory relating to this study are the lack of gender and contextual analyses. As Riley rightly observes, the authors have developed a social analysis without addressing the gender aspect (2005:185). In spite of these weaknesses, the social analysis framework used in this research has assisted in the understanding of "both social realities and religious dimension" (Henriot, 1983:104) of the pastoral ministry of the COCIN to single women in the RCC Gigiring, Jos. This gender gap identified in the social analysis is bridged by feminist theories. The absence of the African perspective in this theory is a gap that hopefully has been bridged by the communal contextual paradigm.

Furthermore, although Holland and Henriot wrote within the context of America in the eighties, and had economics and politics as their focus, the value-laden (social justice) and action oriented (individuals and groups response to social problems) approaches of this theory are relevant to this study. The interface of pastoral ministry in the COCIN with social analysis will expand its scope from its concentration on therapeutic pastoral practice to what Lassiter describes as "social-political and policy driven practices of intervention and caring" (2012:xii).

1.6.2 Feminist theories

According to Doherty, "feminism is many things–a social movement, an epistemology, a political stance, an approach to therapy–at its heart is also a moral enterprise, a naming of what is unjust and a call to redress inequity"(2001:152).Riley states that feminism "defines a particular perspective concerning gender relations that is important to recognize" (2005:184).

She observes that the growing participation of women in public and religious life reflects a defiance of the historical belief that men, by virtue of being male, hold the unreserved right to lead and control all dimensions of society, while women remain subordinate to them (2005:193). Feminist theories and discourses have helped in exposing the myths and practices that have been used to dehumanise women. Neuger notes that diversity, power analysis and social location are critical categories of feminist discourses (1996:90).

1.6.2.1 African feminist cultural hermeneutics

Feminist cultural hermeneutics, a method developed by African women theologians, is used in this research as a theoretical framework because it is "a tool used to analyse a variety of issues within African culture" (Phiri and Nadar, 2006a:12).This focus on religion and culture provides a paradigm through which the plight of single women and pastoral response of the church is 'analysed using a gendered framework' (Siwila, 2011:24). African feminist hermeneutics contain features of inculturation and liberation hermeneutics, because it focuses on religion and culture, and uses the social analytical tools of liberation hermeneutics, particularly in its suspicion of patriarchal ideologies (West, 2008). This supports Mncube's argument that "feminist theology is a liberation theology" (1991:358). Phiri and Nadar see the task of African women theologians as undergirded by "a hermeneutics and theology of liberation" (2006b:3). African feminist cultural hermeneutics scrutinises culture to test its liberative potential and sifts culture to affirm the good and reject the bad, while advocating for continuity and change. It also argues that "a theology of liberation can never be based on non-liberating cultural practices" (Lindorfer, 2007:116). These arguements have been approached indepth in the works of African feminist theologians such as Phiri (2000), Oduyoye (2001), Kanyoro (2002), Rakoczy (2004), Nadar (2005) and other African female theologians such as the C*ircle* members.

Although African women theologicans demonstrate different approaches and emphasis in their work, central to their theological engagements is the interrogation of patriarchal cultures and their effect on women. Since women's experience serve as a theological source, African women theologians have utilised the narrative method to critiques oppressive African religio-cultural practices. By telling their stories African women point out aspects of culture and religion that demonise and oppress women (Phiri and Nadar, 2006b:8). I agree with these theologians and locate the thrust of this study with their ideologies and methodologies of

liberation. Moreover, feminist cultural hermeneutics provides a platform for the voices of participants in pastoral ministry to be heard.

1.6.2.2 Feminist pastoral care and counselling theories

A community's beliefs inform the value it places on people and the practices that reflect this value (Moore, 2002). According to Graham:

> [The] challenge of gender issues to Pastoral Care does not simply involve the inclusion of women into traditions and models of ministry which otherwise remain unchanged. Instead, it is a programme for reconstituting the very values and assumptions which underpin Christian practice(2006:851).

Elsewhere she argues that pastoral care is not just about therapy but a task that "necessitates a critical engagement with theological language, church structures and ministerial practice" (Graham, 1999:198). This suggests that pastoral ministry has both therapeutic and prophetic dimensions. The pastoral and prophetic nature of feminist pastoral care and counselling is affirmed by feminist pastoral theologians (Lassiter, 2012; Moore, 2002; Miller-McLemore, 1999; Bons-Storm, 1996). Hence, feminist pastoral care tends to share similar principles and approaches to social concerns with liberationists. For instance, Lynn (1992) and Cooper-White (2008) have argued that liberation and not just equality should be the goal of children, men, and women. DeMarinis' points out that a pastoral feminist perspective works on the premise that "each human being is entitled to care, respect and dignity by the fact of their humanity"(1993:17). It has been noted that feminist pastoral care is concerned with the well-being and liberation of people from all forms of oppression, marginalisation and exclusion(Graham, 1999). Therefore, the goal of feminist pastoral pursuit is "empowerment and transformation through pastoral practices" (Miller-McLemore 2001:189). This point also reflects the principle of social analysis and is relevant to this study particularly in the area of the execution of pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN.

On the negative side, feminism lacks a unifying voice in addressing women's concerns as women are divided along divergent interests. Critics of feminism have also observed some errors and excesses, that is, the tendency towards being opposed to males and the elevation of women's interests above that of men (Sommers, 1994:24). In the field of theology, it has been criticised for making women's experiences a norm in the pursuit of liberation (Bjorkgren, 2004:35; Jakawa, 2003:41). In Africa, it has been accused of being against nature and the Bible, traditional culture and a form of western imperialism (Kretzschmar, 1991, 111-

114). One can also argue that radicalfeminist ideologies can pose a big challenge to both men and women and the purpose for which the church exists. In spite of these weaknesses identified in feminist theories, the components of liberation which are context, praxis and experience, are relevant to this study. A feminist perspective will help to gain a better understanding of women's concerns and to remedy the problem of exclusion of women in the pastoral ministry of the church, in addition to helping pastors address gender problems in their context.

1.6.3 Communal contextual pastoral care

The communal contextual pastoral paradigm is attributed to John Patton. Patton identifies three paradigm shifts in pastoral care: classical, clinical and communal contextual. According to Patton these paradigms are marked by their different emphasis. The classic paradigm shift stresses the message of pastoral care, the clinical emphasis the person, while the communal contextual emphasises the communal dimension of care (1993:3-5). He argues that although each of these is vital to pastoral care, ministry is a communal and collegial engagement that is nurtured and facilitated by the pastor (1993:99).

A number of African pastoral theologians have given this paradigm an African contextual approach (Kimilike; 2008; Lartey, 2003; Msomi, 2008; Ndossi, 2008). Msomi points out that it is appropriate for pastoral ministry to pay close attention to the cultural, social, religious and political dynamics in its operation(2008:205). The communal contextual paradigm of pastoral care is a holistic approach to ministry in the context of community living.A strong desire for an inclusive, just and caring community where all voices are heard (Hunter, 2008:par.8)is a major emphasis of this model. It aims to carry pastoral care beyond 'individualistic healing' (Lyu, 2009), which characterises the clinical model, and expand the image of the 'human document' to include the 'living human web' (Miller-McLemore, 1996). The communal contextual pastoral paradigm is a framework based on the assumption that wholeness for individuals is best attained within the context of faith and practice in the community of faith (Patton, 1993:5). An urban area such as Jos provides an appropriate setting for the application of the communal contextual paradigm, because many people have moved away from the extended family relations which characterise life in the village.Its application in the Jos will bridge the gap created by the absence of the support network provided by family, relations and the community. The social analysis and communal contextual theories are both interested in social context.A major contribution of Patton's

communal paradigm to pastoral ministry is that it has provided a broad base approach to pastoral ministry. In addition, the moral dimension, that is, the issue of social justice, is taken into account in the execution of pastoral ministry.

This paradigm is used in this study because it emphasises the partnership of humanity with God in the context of the community of faith (Lyu, 2009:22) and concerns itself with the "historical, social and cultural contexts of the communities that mediate pastoral care" (Lartey, 2006:124). In addition, it is essential to explore another dimension of approaching pastoral ministry.In the COCIN, given its western missionary legacy, western theories of psychotherapy have influenced the training and practice of pastoral care. Thus, the classical and clinical models are more pronounced. When utilised properly the communal-contextual paradigm of pastoral ministry can combine the theological dimension, a strength of the classical, and the concern for the individual, a strength of the clinical model to its advantage. This is what this study aims to achieve. However, this theory is not without its weaknesses. For instance when idealised, community can become an end in itself.

The choice of these three frameworks is informed by the recognition that first, they all share the core element of human dignity, liberation and concern for the well-being of the human person.Second, they affirm that personal needs that require pastoral responses are embedded in the social, cultural, economic, religious and political contexts. Furthermore, social analysis and feminist theories take into consideration the influence of socio-political history on cultures (Holland and Henriot, 1984; Snorton, 2010). For example, Snorton argues that socio-political history of a given culture dictates the level of condoning, support, tolerance, ignorance andchallenge of structures of oppression within a particular culture (2010:1). Both the social analysis and the feminist theories are used as diagnostic instruments, while the communal contextual pastoral care theory is used as a prescription or treatment strategy for the problems that arise from the pastoral ministy to single women in the COCIN.

For social analysis, feminist theories and communal contextual pastoral care theory, human experience is vital to interpreting the society and religion (Cochrane et, al. 1991: Jeong and Dreyer, 2012). Key questions that both social analysis and African feminists ask are: who benefits from certain interpretations of social or cultural phenomena ? Who benefits from the perpetuation of oppressive systems or structures that favour some and not others? While the social analysis framework is used to identify the history and structures involved in the social,

economic, cultural and political forces at work, the feminist framework is used to examine the dynamics of social transformation and society's response towards this.

1.7 Research design and methodology

A research design is a plan which contains the research paradigm, the purpose of study, techniques to be used and the context of observation the researcher develops to conduct the research. This research is a qualitative empirical study which seeks to present the observed behaviours and attitudes and the spoken and written words obtained from the interactions of the researcher with existing literature, participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Qualitative study is concerned with providing a depth of understanding of the phenomenon which the researcher investigates rather than measuring the level of occurrence. Thus, "theknowledge gained through qualitative investigations is more informative, richer and offers enhanced understandings compared to that which can be obtained [statistically] via quantitative research" (Tewksbury, 2009:38). According to Reynolds, "qualitative research also allows for new theological integrations that can help the researcher to go beyond initial preconceptions and frameworks (2013:15).The integration of qualitative research can provide insight into the interpretive, contextual nature of practical theology. In their exploration of the 'mutual critical correlation' and 'mutual critical conversation' models of integrating theology and qualitative research, Swinton and Mowat propose the use of qualitative research methods in practical theological research (2006:79). It is this 'mutual critical correlation' of practical theology and qualitative research that makes the qualitative research a useful methodology for this study.

In order to investigatepeople's lived experiences this study employs the qualitative research methodology. The descriptive method of interpreting research data was used to understand the ways people make sense of the world and human experiences and to "understand the meanings people ascribe to phenomena and experiences" (Smith, 2010:90).The research design and methodology consist of the research question, methods and process of data collection through existing literature, in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion, research site, research sample, methods and process of data analysis, methodological limitations and confidentiality and ethical considerations. These sub-headings are extensively discussed in Chapter Five.

1.8 Defining key concepts

1.8.1 Divorce

Solis, Stagg and Gasteazoro define divorce as "the legal separation of spouses, effected by the judgment or decree of a court, either totally dissolving the marriage relation or suspending its effects so far as concerns the cohabitation of the parties" (1992:112). Contextually, people in Jos understand divorce to mean when a man decides to send his wife away or a woman no longer lives in her matrimonial home due to the termination of a marital relationship. Divorce involves a range of religious, socio-cultural, psychological, economical and legal processes. Ohlschlager and Clinton define divorce as "a legal act that permanently ends a marriage" (2011:283). They argue that divorce is a costly and painful journey because it marks the end of a relationship that has already been "forsaken morally, emotionally, physically, or sexually" (2011:283). Kot and Shoemaker argue that although marriage as an institution is expected to last over time, "the bonds holding it together are not always secure" (1999:162).

1.8.2 Marriage

Marriage means the consensual union of a man and woman, which is governed by the social and religious norms of the society in which they live. According to Gallagher:

> marriage is that public act which creates recognizable public ties between a man and a woman and their offspring, and which also creates recognizable public legal, bond between that nuclear couple, their children, and the kin of both families (2000, par.4).

Taylor upholds that marriage should be viewed from its cultural context. He maintains that societies differ in their emphasis on different aspects of marriage. Therefore, "marriage cannot just be 'fitted into' or extracted from the cultural situation" (1992:171-172). Browning corroborates this in his acknowledgement of the multidimentional realities of marriage (2007:201). According to Siwila, "marriage is still a developing process that is evolving according to time, location and events" (2011:85).Although some studies have recorded arguments supporting the redefining of marriage to include other forms of marital relationships, other than the traditional notion of marriage as a monogamous union between a man and a woman(Feinberg, 2012; Stewart, 2008), this study locates itself in the perception of marriage as a heterosexual relationship involving a man and a woman. In order to have a definition that locates marriage within the context of the study, marriage is defined as a moral

reality and a social contract between a man and a woman that unites them legally, sexually, emotionally and economically (Nwogugu, 2011). In addition, it creates kinship obligations, which enables the children produced in it to be raised together.

1.8.3 Ministry

The word ministry means service. It is the service which is expressed in activities aimed at the demonstration of love and care for another person, which resonates with God's love and care for humanity. All believers, whether they are ordained or not, are called into ministry, thereby being involved in what some pastoral theologians like Kilmartin (1985) and O'Meara (1999) describeas proclaiming, serving and realising the kingdom of God. Thus, ministry entails service as it relates to diversity of functions in the church. However, this study also affirms that pastoral ministry is a special call to individuals whom the church may designate pastors or clergy. The church's ministry, therefore, is both a corporate and individual vocation.

1.8.4 Pastoral

The word "pastoral" is a metaphorical term describing the shepherding activity of care. In this research it is used broadly to include "the expression of the unity of persons and work in Christ" (Ward, 2001:85) and the context of care for the believing community, which defines what ministry is about. Hopewell argues that although the lists of ministries in 1Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11 distinguish pastors from the others, the pastoral mode underscores the integrative and corporate nature of ministry(1990:827). This means that believers have a corporate task in the ministry of the church. Ward asserts that the metaphor of the "shepherd" has come to be associated with leading, healing, and nurturing(2001:vi). The implication is that the task of the church, and what it exists for must be interpreted in the context of the corporate nature of the church as a nurturing agent, which is the essence of pastoral ministry.

1.8.5 Pastoral Care

Pastoral care, also known as ministry of the cure of soul (Clebsch and Jaekle, 1975:1) is the practical aspect of pastoral theology. It is an on-going, life-long relationship. It is the aspect of ministry that demonstrates helping acts that include, but is not limited to, counselling, preaching, teaching and visitation. Ross defines pastoral care as "the activities of an

individual or a group acting (as an expression of their religious beliefs) in a way that helps others, from outside as well as from within their own faith community" (2003:3). Hunter defines pastoral care as "a broad and inclusive, all pastoral work concerned with support and nurturance of persons and relationships, including everyday expressions of care and concerns that may occur in the midst of various pastoral activities and relationships" (2005:845). This definition is useful because its concern with support and nurturing underpins and provides scope to this research.

1.8.6 Pastoral counselling

Counselling simply means help given to a person or group of persons facing problems. It is the act of responding to another person(s)' need for physical, emotional and spiritual support. Waruta and Kinoti assert that pastoral counselling is a religiously oriented approach to counselling which is founded on theological views, and evokes biblical language and ethos. Furthermore, it works on the presupposition that the universe has a Creator even as it affirms that human beings have dignity,therefore must be supported and enhanced.They state that human problems have a spiritual dimension that can be overcome by meeting the spiritual yearning of the human being(2000:5-6). Similarly, Lartey asserts that the dignity, worth and uniqueness of the individual lies at the core of the counselling theory and practice. Pastoral counselling reflects the Christian tradition of cure of soul and values of clinical practices that facilitate the expression and exploration of thought, feelings and behavioural patterns (Lartey, 2003:81). Thus, wholeness, well-being and growth are key focus areas of pastoral counselling.

1.8.7 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is the rule of a male over his household. It is a system in which power and control is disproportionately shared to favour particularly the adult male. According to Gruber and Szoltysek:

> patriarchy include many different elements, such as the dominance of patrilineal descent, patrilocal or patrivirilocal residence after marriage, power relations that favour the domination of men over women and of the older generation over the younger generation, customary laws that sanctioned these patterns, the absence of an interfering state that could mitigate their influence, and an inert traditional society that emanated from these conditions (2012:3).

From this one can infer that patriarchy is about supremacy and subordination. A closer look at the structure and policy of the COCIN with regards to women indicates that patriarchal

ideologies of male dominance inform the exclusion of women from full participation in pastoral ministry.

1.8.8 Single women

This is a term which refers to a heterogenous group made up of nevermarried and evermarried (divorced, separated or widowed) women. In household and living situations it refers to women that are not married but may be living with their parents, siblings, alone, cohabitating etc (Ibrahim and Hassan, 2009:397; Bennet, 2008:84). They are adult women who live alone without a partner. In this study single women refers to nevermarried and divorced women of 25 years and above. This category of women would include those who are not married by choice, circumstances or those who consider their singleness as a temporary state such as those who have not found a spouse or are prohibited from marriage because someone else has paid their bride price. The definition of a woman of marriageable age in the Nigerian context would be eighteen years. However, while many parents do not expect their daughters to marry by the age of eighteen most would want to see their daughters marry before the age of thirty.

1.9 Conclusion and structure of the study

This chapter has discoursed on the motivation for undertaking the study, the problem statement and objectives, significance of the study, locating the research within existing literature, methodology of research, methodological limitations, confidentiality, the principal theories undergirding the study, definition of key terms and the outline of chapter structure.

The study comprises seven chapters that are divided into two sections. The first part comprises chapters two to four and deals with the context of the study. These chapters reflect the judicious use of literature together with some data from the responses of participants, to examine issues of the transition of marriage and family life, the historical overview of the COCIN, its theology of marriage and the role of women and the theological education and pastors' training of the COCIN. The second part comprises chapters five to seven and provides detailed presentation on the discussion and interpretation of the data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions.

Chapter Two provides a discussion on marriage and family life in Jos, the factors militating singleness, and the impact of education, westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and family in Jos.

Chapter Three concerns the historical background of COCIN, its doctrinal beliefs, and structure. Thechurch's theology of marriage and the role of women were examined to determine whether or not they have promoted or discouraged positive attitude toward single women. The analysis indicates that issues relating to single women in the COCIN are greatly influenced by social and cultural attitudes. Since the COCIN uses religious sanctions to reinforce socio-cultural roles assigned to women, women are unable to participant in pastoral ministry.

The ministerial training of the COCIN was analysed in Chapter Four to ascertain how adequate it has prepared pastors for ministry to different categories of people in the church, particularly single women. The results indicate that the COCIN pastoral training lacks a gender dimension which is necessary for equipping pastors to deal with the practical application of theories and principles learned in their exercise of ministry.

Chapter Six contains the pastoral themes that emerged from the study of ministry of the church to single women. Seven themes were drawn and discussed. These evolve around: the belief that marriage has a moral and social significance, marriage is good for children's development, the collaboration of culture and the church against women, belief in the involvement of spiritual forces in human affairs, self-perception and self-image of single women, pastoral ministry as a male prerogative and gender based discrimination and stereotypes.

Chapter Six contains the analysis of the pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN RCC Gigiring. In this Chapter, Six, an attempt is made to use the field data to assess the needs of single women and to discuss participants' suggestion on the strategies that can be utilise for an effective pastoral ministry to single women. The same chapter suggests a preventive approach to marital issues to reduce divorce and strengthen marriage and family relationships.

Chapter Seven, the final chapter, provides the concluding summary and identifies areas for further research and indicates to what extent the objectives of the research have been achieved. It also suggests the use of communal effort, that is, the partnership of both clergy and lay members as an effective and appropriate pastoral ministry to single women.

CHAPTER TWO

Analysis of marriage and singleness in the RCC Gigiring Jos

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter thecontext of the study is addressed. The focus is on exploring the status of marriage in Jos. This includes the factors that have led to the transition of the marriage institution from its traditional form to what it is today.The discussion in this chapter will reflect on the diversity of marriage traditions in Nigeria. This is because, as mentioned in Chapter One, Jos is a representation of most of the ethnic groups in Nigeria. Marriage is a major focus in this study becauseone of the areas of research is divorced women. Moreover, singleness is always viewed through the lenses of marriage. The objective is to examine the socio-cultural concept of marriage in Jos, the impact of western education and urbanisation on marriage and singleness and on societalperception and attitudes towards single women. This chapter therefore, is an attempt to answer the questions, how do people in Jos perceive marriage and singleness? What are the factors that militate singleness in Jos? How have they impacted on the perception and attitudes of people towards single, never marriedand divorced women?To achieve this objective,the social analysis and African feminist cultural hermeneutics frameworks will be used. While the social analysis framework is used to identify the history and structures involved in the social, economic, cultural and religious forces at work, the feminist framework is used to examine the dynamics of social transformation that are gender related.

2.2 A historical overview of marriage and family patterns in Nigeria

This section deals with the discussion of traditional marriage practices in Nigeria, contemporary marriage types, factors militating singlehood and the impact of western education and urbanisation on the marriage and singleness in the study area.

2.2.1 Contextual meaning of marriage

Marriage means the consensual union of a man and woman, which is "governed by the social and religious norms of the society"(Nwogugu, 2011: Lxxviii) in which they live. Although

there are different marriage forms in Nigeria, commonality in marriage practices is evident from both historic and present day. In Jos marriage is recognised as a monogamous-heterosexual unionor relationship that has social and financial motivation. No marriage is recognised if traditional requirements are not met. Thus marriages contracted without fulfilling the necessary traditional customs are essentially fragile because they lack both societal and religious recognition. Individuals may get into marriage as a fulfilment of a societal norm or religious obligation or achievement of a life-time goal. Kisembo, Lauret and Shorter,affirm the social and moral role of marriage in their assertion that:

> Marriage acts as a healing agent in human society. It brings the community into being, both through procreation and through the alliances it creates....human society, therefore, has a right and a duty to safeguard marriage and to make laws concerning it (2010:43).

Although some studies have recorded arguments supporting the redefining of marriage to include other forms of marital relationships other than the traditional notion of marriage as a monogamous union between a man and a woman(Feinberg, 2012; Stewart, 2008),marriage in Jos is viewed as a heterosexual relationship involving a man and a woman. It is understood as a moral reality, a covenant and a social contract between a man and a woman that unites them legally, sexually, emotionally, spirituallyand economically. In addition, it creates kinship obligations, which enables children produced in it to be raised together.Thus, pregnancy outside marriage is frowned upon and children born outside the marriage are viewed as illegitimate. Marriage is highly valued because it provides the foundation on which families and communities are built. Despite the change in values related to marriage and family, marriage is still an essential component that gives individuals a sense of identity and status in the society.

2.2.2The act of marriage

2.2.2.1 Mate selection

The process of choosing a marriage partner varies from cutlture to culture. In the past, this process began in some societies, as early as in infancy or even before birth while in others it was later(Harunah, 2004; Abaronye, 1997; Okojie, 1994). These marriage practices of mate selection ensured that husbands were provided for women. No girl grew up without a husband. Aspects and qualities that were sought for in the selection of a partner in most Nigerian societies include: character, family history, hardwork, fertility (Kyalo, 2012). As thefirst step taken in preparation for marriage, this process could be complex or

simple,depending on the society or tribal group within a given society. The opinions of parents and other senior members of the family were valued over those of the intending couple (Hasting, 1974). Arranged marriages were a common practice because of the view that marriage unites not just the individuals but their families. In some cases, marriage was seen as a forum to form alliances hence the interest of the larger family was considered above that of the individuals. The question of who a person couldor could not marry was also addressed. Persons were, and still are not allowed to marry their blood relations or persons known to have a hereditary disease (Rotimi, 2005, Mbiti, 1981).

A common practice among most Nigerian societies, especially in the central and southern parts of the country, was wife capture. Reasons that informed this practice of mate selection range from economic to social. In some instances, when a young man discovered that he could not meet up with the demands of the girl's parents, an abduction was arranged and once the girl had slept at the man's house her parents had no option but to accept the relationship. In other cases, parents may disapprove of a relationship their daughter desired so a capture was arranged and spending the night in the man's house meant the parents were obliged to accept the relationship.[4]

According to Mbiti, methods such as arranged marriages, partial individual choice and sole individual choice were three major customs regarding the selection of a mate in most African societies. He states that a period of engagement and preparation followed the selection of a mate with gifts of animals and food items and in some societies simple rites were performed. Some societies required the girl to start dressing in a particular way as an indication that she belonged to somebody, and consequently, social relations were adjusted. Mbiti maintains that the customary practice of gifts-giving symbolised the marriage covenant(1981: 50-51). The significance of gifts transfer amongst traditional cultures is also acknowledged in Copet-Rougier's assertion that this practice "signifies in legal terms the passage of a woman from one group to another, with all the concommitant consequences for the social membership of the children resulting from the union" (2008:482).

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[4]This is a practice that was very common among our people the Berom even in the late 1980s. I know some girls who got married through this method. Though some of the girls young as 16 or 17 went with their own consent. Since they knew their parents were not in support they aligned with the boys' plan.

2.2.2.2 Gender roles

Universally, gender role differentiation has an important place in marriage, but this differs across cultures.White and Klein argue that "the idea of females and males is socially constructed..." (2002:182). In an earlier study, Scanzoni and Scanzoni have argued that society often defines what is unacceptable for men and for women. Traditional societies are characterised by "rigid sex-role socialisation" (1981:313).Gender roles in marriage were clearly defined, and these specifications were strictly followed. Among Nigerian ethnic groups the roles of men and women are sharply defined in terms of gender (Omadjohwoefe,2011:67). Consequently, a woman who does what the society has apportioned to men is seen as being too tough and even not suitable for marriage.Girls are forced to appear less intelligent than men and behave in certain ways towards men. According to Yusuf and Booth,girls in Nigeria are raised to see marriage as the ultimate goal and submission as the mark of a good wife. Therefore, girls are expected to appear less intelligent to achieve the dreams of their spouse. In order to reinforce the notion of the man's superiority and woman's inferiority, "women are described as having a small brain in comparison to men's, being deficient in logic, analytical abilities and critical thinking" (2006:756). In traditional societies gender roles, which involve power relations and power domination,often favour the male gender. In most cultures of Nigeria, the woman held and still holds a subservient role in marriage. The role of a woman was subservient and a successful marriage was evaluated from a woman's ability to perform this role efficiently(Enwereji, 2008:167-168).

The above situation is mirrored in most African traditional societies, where masculinity is an inextricable part of patriarchy. Marriage is percieved as a means of redeeming a man's masculinity (Siwila, 2011:41). The male and female are socialised to acquire gender specific roles and statuses that place the male in the position to lead and the female in the position to follow. Thus, it can be argued that masculinity is a strong factor in the negative perception of and attitude towards single women. One cannot but argue along with Kamau that this form of socialisation is harmful to both men and women. He maintains that the way African societies socialise girls to be subordinate and weak, paradoxically places a strain on the male because it implies that men "must be strong, masculine and be the heads of households in all ways, even when life presents them with other challenges" (2012:3). In order for the church and

society to deconstruct such harmful prevailing perceptions of women, Kamau suggests what he calls "the construction of a new man" through adopting "more gender equitable values" (2012:8).

 A major objective of the process of socialisation of girls was to prepare them for marriage. This situation has not changed, as females are still socialised along this line. Thus, as Oduyoye argues, this process of socialisation has come to mean that "women are programmed to live for others" and they pride themselves in the idea of "being the providers of continuity and carriers of tradition" (2001:31). She continues that the subsevient role of women is evident in sayings such as '"there is no woman as beautiful as the obedient one"' (2001:31). Thus, the worth of the woman was always defined in relation to her submission to a man, who is either her father, guardian or husband. Kamau has argued that however positive the socialisation of women to develop feminine traits such as caring and nurturing may be, in some instances it has been the cause of violence against women, where they are unable to provide this care, especially to the extended family (2012:6).

The stereotyping of the role of women is not peculiar to Nigerian cultures. According to Surtees, in Cambodia the primary role of a woman is that of a wife and mother. Thus, "marriage and parenthood are important signifiers of status within Cambodian society" (2007:57). Attending to the needs of the husband was an obligation of the wife and this became a natural way to express her subordinate role. If she were to be a successful wife and mother, then her own needs were to remain invisible. Any attempt on her part to consider her own needs was deemed an expression of failure as a wife and mother. The marriage relationship demands much sacrifice on the part of the woman as all her energy was channeled towards being a successful wife and mother. Hence, a successful marriage and family relationship was measure by the woman's capitulation to societal expectations.

Concerning the definition of gender roles in marriage, some studies have shown that in pre-colonial Nigeria women contributed to the economic life of both family and society. The idea of the husband as the sole provider of the family had been introduced into Nigerian cultures by colonialism (Lindsay, 2003; Okome 2002; Amadiume 1987). Linsay asserts that:

> [Wage] earning men increasingly came to be defined as family providers for three overlapping reasons: male wage labor contributed to new domestic patterns both because of changing conditions of work and because of pre-existing notions linking money to gender and status; wives of wage earners actively participated in the creation of male breadwinner ideal as part of their own financial strategies; and workers used discourse of breadwinners

instrumentally, to advance wage and benefits claims in disputes with their colonial employers(2003:139).

However, the above argument can be contested on the premise that although colonial rule introduced wage earning and promoted the role of the man as sole breadwinner, African societies had already adopted this stance by promoting the notion that the man was the main provider of his family through such means as farming, fishing and hunting. Colonialism merely added another dimension (wage earning), to the concept of the man as the sole breadwinner. Although this new dimension undermined some complementary elements in marriage practices, it cannot be solely to blame for women being financially dependent on their husbands. Patriarchal practices in the society ensured that women were kept under the control of men.

2.2.2.3Taboos

Taboos have to do with things that are socially and culturally unacceptable in a society. Premarital sex was and is still higly discouraged in Nigerian cultures. Pregnancy outside marriage was strongly condemned so that nosympathywas shown even to rape victims. Daniel states that women who were raped during the Nigerian civil war of 1967 and fell pregnant as a result faced stigmatisation. In addition, children and families of rape victims were likely to experience hatred from the community(2009:n.p). Having children outside marriage was strongly frowned uponand the stigma that came with itcomplicated finding potential suitors. This is not endemic to Nigeria, as among the Chewa of Malawi, the punishment for pregnacy outside wedlock was severe. According to Phiri, as punishment for embarrasing her lineage and as a deterent to other girls, a girl who became pregnant outside marriage went through an humiliating initiation which involved wearing of necklace made from dog intestines, in addition to verbal abuse(2000:40).

The Yoruba attach much importance to female virginity. It was a thing of pride to the family when their daughter was discovered to be a virgin on the first night which signified the consumation of her marriage. Studies of the Ekiti of Ondo indicate that virginity was highly valued, so much so that two women monitored the first night to break the good news to the girl's parents. Among some groups, a white bed sheet is spread for signs of blood, which would serve as evidence that the bride was avirgin(Bello, Yusuf and Oyebola, 2004:761). In traditional cultures, marriage had as its objective the perpetuation of a man's lineage and bestowing social status on him. Hence, pre-marital sex was condemned since it did not serve

this purpose. Yet, the administration of punishment reflect a gender bias in favour of the man (Familusi, 2012:304; Bishai and Grossbard, 2007).

Sexual taboos were also to be observed by those who were married. Both men and women were prohibited from having culturally unacceptable sexual relationships. In most Nigerian cultures incest was and still is a very serious taboo. White and Kliendescribe it thus, "the incest taboo is a strong and pervasive social rule forbidding mating between certain family members" (2002:96). Incest is viewed as a betrayal and violation of trust. It violates the role of the family as primary provider of relationships and protection as well as exploits the naïve, immature, dependent and less powerful family members (Courtois, n.d :6). Punishment for incest was severe and in some cultures incest attracted the death penalty (Dash, 2004:51).

Adultery was also seen as a serious crime and carried a severe penalty for offenders. According to Adewale, traditional African societies perceive adultery as "a breach of societal and religious norms and it breeds an unhealthy and unwholesome relationship in society, a relationship that can ruin the total well-being of the people" (1994: par.5). However, because it was culturally assumed that a man's sexual drive was higher than that of women (Yusuf and Booth, 2004),extra-marital affairs on the side of the man received little social condemnation.[5] Punishment for a wife's infidelity varies from one society to the other. But in many cultures, as Raday points out, both culture and religion have often imposed on women harsher punishment for adultery (2003). In Nigeria a husband may, among other things, send her away or beat her.[6]

In many groups culture forbids even those who are betrothed from having sexual intercourse before the formal consumation of marriage. Evidence shows, however, that this is not the case in some societies. Some societies use it to test the woman's fertility. In some cultures suitors cohabit with their betrothed for a set period and in some cases even bear children in the process. No stigma is attached to women who have children outside marriage in cultures

[5]This reminds me of the story of this woman who came to me with a complaint about her husband's extra-marital exploits and the response of her mother in-law. The woman narrated that she caught her husband with another woman and reported this to her mother in-law, but the mother in-law told her that he was a man so she should not expect him to stick to her alone. Prior to this it had been argued during one of our women fellowship meetings that as women, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law ought to be the best of friends. The arguement was that the relationship between a son and a mother is entirely a different relationship from that of a husband and wife, so there was no point mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law fighting over a man who means different things to both of them.

[6]Wife beating was (and still is) an acceptable practice as the woman was viewed as a child who needed to be disciplined by the husband. It was done to put the woman in her supposed inferior position. It was not uncommon to see husbands beating their wives over trivial issues like burning of food, forgetting to carry out her husband's instruction, leaving a child to cry unattended, misplacing an item given to her to keep, forgetting to inform her husband of someone who had visited in his absence, supposedly wasting food that has been rationed out by her husband, extending the time allowed to go for a visit, the reasons are as numerous as they are trivial. I grew up in a village and saw this act of abuse many times, but for many of us children it was like a movie we watched mostly in the evenings. My father was a pastor and many of the women who were beaten by their husbands ran to our house to take refuge at the Church. I thought this was acceptable and only when I was older did I understand that it was an act of abuse and domestic violence.

that permit the practice of cohabitation between the betrotheds. In the state of Plateau, the Ron, among other tribes, allowed cohabitation between girls and their suitors, but it was the man who went to stay with the woman.

Another taboo relates to food prohibition which puts both women and children at a disadvantaged position. Meyer-Rochow argues that among some tribes in Ika women were not permitted to eat porcupine because it was thought to cause delayed labour during childbirth. In some parts, young women were prohibited from taking oil or fresh meat thirty days after delivery; and others forbade the consumption of palmnut soup after child birth(2009).Many of these restrictions were a strategy to protect the foetus rather than promote the welfare of the woman. The woman was the soil in which the man deposited life. Therefore, to argue along with Nasimiyu-Wasike, a woman's procreative power was vital for strengthening the husband's power, immortality and prestigious status in the society (2006:102).

2.2.3 Divorce

Although divorce did take place in traditional African societies, it was rare because the kinship ties allowed kindred to intervene in marital squabbles. Moreover, there were practical answers to problems that could lead to the dissolution of a marriage. One such is the institution of polygamy which provided a remedy for childless marriages (Kisembo et al., 1977; Hasting, 1974). Nevertheless, this was not always the case, because childlessness seemed to be one of the major causesof divorce in most cultures of Nigeria because of the value that was and still is placed on children. According to Ola, women always take the blame for childlessness because of the erroneous assumption that men cannot be infertile (2009:208). This view is supported by the argument put forth by Oforchukwu (2010) and Ibisomi and Mudege (2013). According to Oforchukwu among other things childlessness can result in the disintegration of a Christian marriage (2010:8). For Ibisomi and Mudege, in Africa, a woman may suffer divorce as a result of childless (2013:1).

2.3 Types of marriages in traditional societies

2.2.1 Wife inheritance

The societal perception of the wife as the property of the husband informed the practice of wife inheritance in traditional cultures across Nigerian societies. Since marriage is not just between two individuals but involved the entire family and even the clan, the wife still belonged to her husband's kin even after his death. Wife inheritance was a common practice amongst almost all Nigerian cultures. The woman was required to become the wife of her late husband's brother, first son (by another woman), or a close relative (Rotimi, 2005).

Describing the marriage custom of wife inheritance amongst the Ngwas of Imo, the Ibibio and Annangs of Cross River and the delta region of Bendel state, Nwachuku, states that where the man was survived by many wives, these were distributed together with his property as the elders deemed fit. The pattern of match developed voluntarily and the woman freely chose a man from the immediate and extended family. She argues that wife inheritance was a social device to forestall any remarriage of young widows. Yet, this was not without complications. In some instances problems arose as to the lineage of children born within the structure(1991:120).In an earlier study, Mair states that widows had the right to choose from their husband's kinsmen or remarry even outside the deceased family. She adds that in some societies wife inheritance or what is also known as levirate marriage was only allowed where the widow was still young, but for some, a young widow was not allowed to stay in her husband's home unless she was a breastfeeding mother (1953:145).

Some scholars have argued that the practice of wifeinheritance was a traditional provision that gave widows legitimacy and solved the problem of singleness among women (Mwiti and Dueck, 2006; Nwachuwku, 1991). It ensured that widows were catered for even after the death of their husbands.Such conception of the woman as someone who needs to be kept under the control of a husband has been criticised for denying the woman the right to be an autonomous person (Rakoczy, 2004; Oduyoye, 1995).The practice of wife inheritance challenges the very principle of gender equality and infringes on the fundamental right of the woman (Okioma, 2004:207; Aduba, 2002:111). In a study conducted on the Igbo, Tiv, Idoma and Berom of Nigeria, Aduba argued that wife inheritance was and is a practice that infringed on the rights of the woman as well as ignores her humanity and feelings. He concludes that wife inheritance is a practice that "is against natural justice, equity and good conscience..." (2002:51). According to Bamgbose the practice of wife inheritance is "denigrating and harmful" (2002:13).

2.2.2 Polygamy

Polygamy is practice in every community in Nigeria (Alewo and Olong, 2012:138). This marriage of one man to many women was a common practice in most cultures of Nigeria. It was a socio-economic booster that benefitted mostly the man (Oforchukwu, 2010:37). Children and wives provided additional labour; thereby increasing the man's earning capacity. The practice of polygamyprovided for the sexual needs of men who were forbidden from having sex with their pregnant or breastfeeding wives (Kisembo, et al., 2010). Early studies have shown that polygamy was a common, valid and acceptable marriage practice in Africa(Kisembo, et al.,2010; Wurata, 2000; Ware, 1979). According to Wurata, polygamy might have been a preferred form of marriage as it symbolised success, whereas monogamy was associated with people of lower status. He disagreed with the notion that polygamy was "merely a selfish and primitive form of marriage" (2000:105)because it provided children, a solution to the problem of immortality in the family.

It has been argued that polygamy had well- defined social benefits such as stability of the marriage institution, integration of family with society, solving the problem of divorce and childlessness and minimising promiscuity and prostitution (Kisembo, et al., 2010). Okome suggests that polygamy had its benefits as it was a social arrangement which "enabled women to make concrete contributions to society" (2002:40). She argues that although polygamy did not give women the benefit of being the sole nurturer of their husbands and children as is the case with monogamy, it freed women to pursue trade, politics and religious leadership. She asserts that the intrusion of colonialism and foreign religions into the Nigerian cultural system reduced women's involvement in leadership. However, Meekers and Franklin had argued that "in many instances women disapprove of polygynous unions" (1995:315), suggesting that women did not support polygamy but merely tolerated it.

The practice of polygamy has been criticised for not considering the feelings of the women involved and favouring men. Oduyoye criticised it for being a 'double standard' game, applying monotheist standards for women and polytheist standards for men. She argues that when viewed from a religious angle, polygamy arrogates freedom for men to 'worship the bodies' of the number of women they chose(2006:22). However, some studies have argued

that polygamy is not as bad as it has been made out to be.[7] For instance, a study of women in polygamous marriages in western Nigeria reveals that contrary to the popular notion that co-wives in polygamous marriage saw themselves as unfortunnate, many of them were comfortable with the arrangement(Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981:298-299). A similar argument indicate that some women supported polygamy even to the point of financingthe acquisition of another wife for their husbands to secure their position in the marriage and maintain their control over the other women as the first wife (Nwogugu, 2011; Uchendu, 1965).

2.2.3 Female-husband and male-wife system

In some Nigerian societies the practice of female-husbands and male-wives was adopted to solve the problem of the absence of an heir(s) who ensures the preservation of the genealogy and lineage of a man. According to Nwoko, among the Igbo of Nigeria "the most significant reason for the practice of female husband was the improvisation of the male child personality with the inherent functions and responsibilities thereon" (2012:75). He maintains that the rituals performed marked the woman's passage from femalehood to malehood. Consequently, after the payment of the bride price and other traditional rituals, the woman "assumed the traditional status of a man and a husband before society and the gods" (2012:75).

Among the Ibibio, Igbo, Edo, Urhobo and Yoruba, a woman who had no children of her own acquired them through marrying a woman and giving her to her husband to produce children for the female husband. Children born in this marriage arrangement were seen as belonging to the female husband. Daughters could also marry wives to produce children that were to carry the family name. Under this arrangement the choice of a consort rested with the female-husband and the wife had no right to reject the choice of a man who would sleep with her. In some cases the wives chose the man.Considering the fact that the woman's worth was defined by her ability to produce children for her husband, this practice gave barren women a certain status in their marital homes. This practice varied from one society to the other. Male children born in this arragement inherited the deceased father's property (Ikpe, 2004:10).

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[7]When I was growing up I saw co-wives who were very close and loved each other very much . I remember people in the village used to refer to them as twins. We saw them go to the bush to fetch fire wood, to the stream, the farm and even the weekly market together. We never knew which woman was the biological mother of which child, as the children were either with one or the other. In another family the women happen to give birth at the interval of less than a month and they breastfed any of the children that needed to be breastfed. I also know two cases of barren women who married wives for their husbands. The third case happened when I was still a small girl. Initially many of us younger children thought two of the second wife's children were the biological children of the first wife until we later learnt that she was their step- mother. We grew up seeing her do everything for them and saw them living in her own part of the house.

Ultimately, this practice is to ensure the production of children for the man. Central to a man's worth is his children who will ensure the contiuity of his lineage.

Amadiume argues that among the Nnobi of Anambra State, a daughter could assume the role of male and become a son or husband. This practice enabled a man's inheritance, particularly land and trees, to be passed to his daughter who had gone through the ritual of sons. She points out that the practice of *igba ohu* –woman-to-woman marriage among the Igbo, enabled the 'female husband'to play the role of a mother to the wife she has given her male-wife. Women who partook in this practice were wealthy and had control over the services of others which enabled them to acquire more wealth. The sons of a wealthy woman could inherit their mother's wives and custom demanded that sons born are given equal status to those born to her sons(1987: 32, 42, 129).

Before colonialism many Nigerian societies were structured in such a way that women exercise power and control. For instance, Okome argues that the institution of female husbands and male daughters as practiced among the Igbo of Nnobi allowed women to gain "power and control over resources, including children" (2002:41). This position is consistent with Amadiume's arguement that the traditional custom of 'male daughters' was a "flexible gender-system which allowed females to play male roles and acquire land which was an instrument of power (Amadiume, 1987:34).

The practice of female husbands and male daughters was not peculiar to Nigeria as similar practices were evident in other parts of Africa. Among the Kuria of Tanzania and Kenya, the Nandi and Kikuyu of Kenya, the Nuer of Sudan and the Lovedu of South Africa, a widow may pay the bride price to acquire a wife to keep her husband's lineage (Starace, 2009:7).In some Kenyan cultures, women acquire wives (some form of surrogate mothers) who produce children for them(Bahemuka, 2006; Oboler, 1980). According to Oboler,the practice of female husbands among the Nandi of Kenya was to provide male heirs for an elderly woman who failed to bear a son. Female husbands were accepted as men in male economic roles and not as sexual partners.She pointed out that a female husband pays bride wealth for another woman and assumes a male status "but does not have sexual intercourse with her" (1980:69; 1985:32).

2.4 Types of marriages and family structures in Nigeria today

2.4.1 Customary marriage

The customary type of marriage is the most common in all Nigerian cultures. It has a set of requirements which vary from one group to the other. But on the overall there are broad principles which cut across most, if not all, Nigerian cultures. Basic to all is the consent of the parents (and in modern day practice, of parties), payment of the bride price and the wedding celebration. In most Nigerian cultures there is no prescribed age for marriage. However, Nwogugu has observed that this non-prescription of age encourages incidences of child marriages and the evil associated with it. He adds that child betrothal is still a customary marriage practice in some localities in Nigeria, but where such practices prevail, marriage is delayed until the parties attain puberty. He asserts that legislation has fixed the age for customary-law marriage in some parts of the country, but this varies from the eastern parts to the northern. The east prescribes above sixteen years of age for both male and females, but the north prescribes twelve years of age for girls (Nwogugu, 2011:43-44).

An integral part of customary marriage is the payment of a bride price.[8]Some literature have shown that the bride price which refers to the the payment of material items, money or services is an indispensable requirement for the contraction of marriage in Africa(Jakawa 2010; Phiri, 2000; Wurata, 2000; Amadiume, 1987; Phillips, 1953). In some cases a marriage has been postponed or cancelled as a result of the non payment of the bride price. Variation in the payment of the bride price can even be found within the same ethnic groups. Among the Berom it is as little as twenty- five Naira(Nigerian currency), while in others it runs into thousands of Naira.

Payment of the bride price demonstrates the legality of the marriage union. In the past it took the form of goods and labour rendered to parents of the bride, but with the introduction of the cash economy, payment in form of property became rare. The quantum (quantity) of a bride price varies. In some areas thebride price is so high that legislationhas to be put in place to curtail the excess.However, the validity of a marriage does not rest on the full payment of the bride price agreed upon before marriage (Nwogugu, 2011:52-55).

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[8]This is also discussed in chapter three in the contexts of the application of the COCIN's marriage practices.

The customary practice of the bride price in Africa has received criticisms from the West and even among younger generations of Africans. Some have viewed the practice as an act of selling the girl and in some cultures the bride price has assumed a socio-economic dimension that the value and status of the woman is determined by a high bride price (Copet-Rougier, 2008). But Waruta disagrees with this view when he suggests that the practice was not regarded as a commercial transaction but as an essential element for the sealing of a marriage. He argues that it was an act which "gave the institution of marriage a measure of seriousness and dignity"(2000:104-105). Concuring with this view Goody argues that the payment of the bride price accomplishes that process of the transfer of the woman's sexuality, fertility and domestic service(1973). Yet, in practice the payment of the bride price has been abused by men, who believe they have purchased their wives.[9]

Some have called for the abolition of this practice because of the financial burden involved and the potential of social ills resulting from the inability to get married. However, Nwogugu argues that abolishing the practice of the bride price is not a solution to the socio-economic problem evident in the practice. Moreover, those who call for its abolition have not provided answers to the practical problems that may arise from stopping this age-old traditional practice. He concludes that "it is not advisable to sweep off in one stroke such an important and fundamental aspect of the social and cultural life of the people" (2011:57). Rather than abolishing it the quantum and incidents of bride price should be controlled.

A general criticism of customary marriage is that it is potentially polygamous, which tends to render the man as 'the centre of attraction' in the marriage relationship. For instance, to enlarge their work force for financial gains and to satisfy their sexual needs men could marry as many wives as they wanted. Many of these critics suggest that most of the women in polygamous marriages were not aware of their oppressive situation. However, a study by Ware suggests that women in polygamous marriages are more likely to have greater autonomy since they invest less in the marriage because "in losing part of their husband's economic and moral support, they gain independence"(1979:194).

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[9]In December 2011 a man beat his wife mercilessly and threatened to kill her if she dared to leave. When neighbours came to rescue her, he asked them to mind their business because he has already paid her bride price so she is his and he can do what he wanted. He claimed that even if he killed her it was nobody's business.

2.4.2 Statutory marriage

The statutory or civil marriage is a monogamous form of marriage recognised by Nigerian law. It is governed and protected by the Marital Causes Act of 1970 and the Marriage Act of the Federation of Nigeria 1990. According to Nwogugu the statutory marriage ordinance has its origin in British colonial marriage law, particularly in the Settlement of Lagos of 1863. Because Lagos was part of the Colony of the Gold Coast, the 1884 Marriage Ordinance was applied and with the merger of the Southern Protectorate it became a marriage law that applied to the entire country with the exception of the Northern Protectorate. However, by 1907, the North acquired the provision of a statutory marriage law. With the amalgamation of the North and South in 1914, the Marriage Ordinance became applicable to all. A basic principle of the Marriage Ordinance is monogamy, and parties have the right to observe any religious ceremony they choose(2011:22-27).

Under the Marriage Act, Chapter 218 of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, the legal age for marriage is twenty one. Any marriage to be contracted below this age requires parental consent because such a person is considered a minor. Under the Marriage Act a marriage that has been conducted for persons under customary marriage law is invalid, therefore under customary law no marriage is to be conducted other than with that person. According to Nwogugu the statutory marriage involves stages such as the filing of the marriage notice, oath taking and the celebration of the marriage. A marriage may be rendered invalid if it was not conducted in a licensed place of worship and by a recognised minister of a religious denomination or a registrar of marriages. Prohibitions to a statutory marriage include intending marriage to a blood relation; persons already married to another, inability to obtain parental consent for personsunder twenty one years of age;the parties consent and insanity. He attests to the gender inequality existing in Nigerian marriage law where "an adult male may contract a valid marriage without the consent of his parents", but the same cannot be said of an adult female (Nwogugu, 2011:47).

Under the statutory marriage law divorce is granted on the grounds of wilful and persistent refusal to consumate the marriage; adultery and intolerability; conduct exhibited in behaviour as rape, sodomy or bestiality; habitual drunkenness or intoxication; frequent convictions; habitually leaving the spouse without support; imprisonment; attempt to murder and assault; habitual and wilful failure to support; insanity and cruelty; desertion; separation

and participants consent to dissolution; three year separation; failure to comply with a decree of restitution of conjugal rights; presumption of death (Nwogugu, 2011:155-195).

2.4.3 Religious marriage

2.4.3.1 Christian marriage

It is not easy to pinpoint one definition to coverthe Christian understanding of marriage. However, central to the Christian concept of marriage is that it is a divine institution for the purpose of mutual intimacy and the propagation of the human race. Most Christians also affirm the secular, moral and religious aspects of marriage, thus viewing marriage as both a public and private affair. Hence, in Nigeria it is difficult to say that marriage is strictly a cultural or religious affair. Yet, the average Nigerian Christian understands a Christian marriage to be one which takes place in the church with an ordained minister or pastor who administers the marriage vows to the bride and groom in the presence of witnesses. These witnesses would include parents and relations, friends, neighbours, colleagues, church members and other well wishers. Thus, making it a convenant relationship that goes beyond the two individuals to include the families and community at large.

The missionaries who came to Africa were guided by Christian doctrines and practice and western culture with regard to marriage. The application of these doctrines in the context of the diversity of marriage practices was a great challenge, but priority was given to Christian doctrine and practice. According to Harries:

> [O]fficial action by missions in promoting the Christian ideals of marriage has never been initially or directly related in principle to what missions have learned about African indigenous marriages. The primary relationship of principle has always been to the Christian ideal itself. The function of customary marriage within the tribal context...has always been irrelevant to the missionary aim....any missionary study of African social institution has primarily been concerned with their relevance with the context of the Christian religion(1953:332).

This missionary position which was also influenced by the western concept of marriage has created a problem in terms of understanding the principle and practice of marriage for African Christians. The Christian missions condemned some customary marriage practices, in particular child marriage, the bride price and polygamy (Harries, 1953; Siwila, 2011) without providing tangible and practical solutions. The problem is compounded by the inability of the missions to clearly differentiate between a Christian marriage and the western form of

marriage, which was itself a result of a mixture of both Christian and secular traditions.[10] The condemnation of most aspects of African customary marriage raised the question of what constituted a valid marriage in the church. The Catholic missions offered some form of solution by accepting the validity of the traditional or customary marriage, the dissolution of marriage under certain circumstances and the baptism of polygamists on the grounds that they retained only one wife, and that marriages of baptised members must be performed before a priest and two witnesses (Hasting, 1974:9-10).

Many Christians are still ignorant of what a Christian marriage is. There has not been any clear distinction between a church marriage and a customary marriage in Nigeria. Rather, to some extent there has been a synchronisation of customary and Christian marriage practices.Churches require their members to fulfil the requirements of their tradition before their marriages will be blessed, solemnised or sanctified (this will be discussed further in the context of the COCIN in Chapter Three). Nevertheless, in some ways the church does not recognise the validity of a customary marriage that has not been solemnised or sanctified in the church. Many churches (the COCIN inclusive) in Nigeria have the practice of solemnising or sactifying a marriage in the church before members can be allowed to participate in communion fellowship. This practice may have arisen because of the missionary mindset that customary marriage has the potential of being polygamous and is dissoluble (Kisembo, et al, 2010). Solemnising a marriage in the church ensures that the man will not take another wife. However, Philips argues that the potentiality of polygamy in customary marriage arises from the belief that there are no legal impediments on the husband from taking another wife or wives, thus, making it more of a legal issue(1953:xiv).

However, the observation is made that church weddings in Nigeria today are very expensive and filled with luxurious feasting. Thus, the church marriage is becoming obscure and losing its meaning and value. It has been a general observation that weddingpreparation often eclipsed marriage, as many people spend more time preparing for the wedding than for the marriage(Jakawa, 2010:21).

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[10]Erwin Haeberle believes that the western form of marriage had itself been shaped by three major external religious and social forces, that is, Medieval Church doctrines and policies, the Protestant Reformation and the Industrial Revolution, because prior to this western marriage was typical characteristics of a traditional marriage. They were arranged, the involved more than two individuals, economic benefit was considered, little room was given for romantic love and procreation was an essential duty in the marital relationship. Erwin J. Haeberle, "History of Marriage in Western Civilization", in *The Sex Atlas New Popular Reference Edition. Revised andExpanded* (Magnus Hirschfield Archive for Sociology, 1983) <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/sexology/ATLAS-EN/hmtl/history-of-marriage-in-western.html/> accessed 21/03/2012.

2.4.3.2 Islamic marriage

Like the statutory and customary marriages, parental consent is necessary for a valid marriage under Islamic marriage law. The law stipulates that both parties in this marriage law must consent to the arrangement, but in practice this is not always feasible. Nwogugu states that the Maliki School of Islamic law allows a father to make marriage arrangement for his infant son or virgin daughter. But this can be altered because the child has the right to repudiate the contract if he or she so wishes at the attainment of the age of puberty(2011:59).

Ciroma, a journalist with *Leadership Newspaper*, states that in Q:2, V:232 the Quaran allows a woman a substantial right in the choice of her spouse. Malik,however, gives a restrictive interpretation of the verse, giving the father or guardian power to choose a spouse for his daughter. The argument is that this is done in the interest of the girl, because immaturity and over-zealousness could make a girl choose a worthless man for a husband(2009:n.p). The Islamic marriage law does not permit a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim, but allows a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim (Nwogugu, 2011:60), on the grounds that children born into the marriage must be Muslims. It also prohibits the marriage of close affinity. In Nigeria, like most patriarchal societies, the headship of the male automatically determines the religion of the child. Technically, children are most likely to practice their father's religion than their mother's.

Payment of a bride price and dowry are important aspects of Islamic marriage practice. Under the Islamic marriage law, the dowry, though given through the parent or guardian, is the entitlement of the woman. Marital and family issues such as contracting a marriage, divorce, the rights, roles, and duties of spouses, parents, children and marital inheritance are clearly spelt out (Ladan, 2003). Divorce is permitted in the Islamic marriage law in the event that a marriage cannot be salvaged. Although Islamic law also gives a woman the right to divorce her husband, in practice only men enjoy this right (Nayyeri, 2013:11).Yusuf observes that there are conflicting reports regarding who initiates divorce in an Islamic marriage in Nigeria. She cited the report of the Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission, (2005:69) which claimed that Islam does not allow a woman to divorce her husband. However, other sources such as Ladan (2003), Orire (2003) and Yusuf (2005) do not concur with this report. According to these sources, certain conditions such as physical and mental cruelty, desertion, denial of conjugal relations, intolerable disease (Ladan, 2003:35) and maltreatment, missing

husband, denial of shelter and material support (Orire, 2003:251), can allow a woman to initiate divorce in Islam.

2.5 Factors militating singlehood

This section will focus on the issue of singlehood, mitigating factors, the effects on women and how single women navigate through it.

2.5.1 Patriarchal factors

Patriarchy is a social structure which arrogates power and control to males while placing women at a subordinate position. It legitimises the power of men over women, defines women in relation to men and has a pervasive influence on how women are treated (Asiyanbola, 2005; Rakoczy, 2004). Patriarchy is a force and an ideology that permeates all structures and dimensions of life. It extends beyond the territory of the family as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The representation of women in Jos can be said to be a product of gender socialisation. Patriarchal ideologies have not only been used as justification for men's control over women (Kambarami, 2006), but for parents' control over their children. Jos is characterised by a system of patriarchal and gender hierarchies that portray the male as a model of power, authority and dominance. In Jos, the family structure (which also extends to the larger society) is such that there is a clear distinction between men, women and children. Since power and control are assigned to parents, especially the father, parents may tend to exercise this control through denying their children the choice of marriage partners. Consequently, this prolongs singleness and even the chances of marriage. A girl is free to marry only if and when her parents agree. In this case, one can say that for the girl freedom is allowed rather than afforded as a basic human right (Monagan, 2010). Furthermore, it is traditionally unacceptable for a girl to openly show interest or initiate any step in the selection of a spouse. This patriarchal belief that women cannot take the initiative in the choice of a marriage partner limits their opportunity to freely choose whom they want to marry. It means that women have to wait for an offer of marriage (Reynolds, et al., 2007).

According Clifford, patriarchal culture is "initiated by men in position of power, continues to be maintained primarily by men, and has men as its principal beneficiaries" (Clifford,

2001:18). Although this argument portrays patriarchy as a male initiative, in Jos women have been known to be the key sustainers of patriarchal structures. Because women are the traditional custodians of culture, they tend to perpetrate and sustain patriarchal cultures to nurture and maintain "larger relational units" (Acolatse, 2010:227). In order to maintain larger relations in the family many women have supported the decision of the family against their daughters' choice of marriage partners. In other cases the woman may want to exercise her own control over her daughter by initiating the opposition or siding with other family members. The discussion in Chapter Six elaborates on women seeing themselves as custodians of tradition.

Patriarchy has also been associated with age difference in marriage (Cain, 1988; Cain, Khanam, Nahar, 1979). The patriarchal belief in the superiority of the man over the woman is also used in determining the marital age of men and women in Jos. In most patriarchal settings husbands are almost always older than their wives. This notion operates on the assumption that age symbolises power and authority. The age gap between husband and wife often reinforces the man's dominance and woman's subordination. There is an underlying fear that if the wife is older she would use the power and authority that age gives her over her husband. It has accounted for instances of parents opposing their son marrying an older woman or their daughter marrying a younger man. According to a participant, Talatu Gada, "both the Nigerian legal system and traditional customs require the consent of parents for a marriage to be contracted. Therefore,one can say that the consent of parents and other relations is essential for the health and stability of a marriage" (2012). However, this could be used by parents to exercise undue control over their children. Gruber and Szołtysek state that under strict patriarchy the headship of a household goes to the senior male. Since patriarchy is associated with gender inequality, age differences between men and women in marriage can be used to foster and maintain male domination (2012:15, 18). Therefore a number of women who have not married and have now reached a mature age experience difficulty in finding partners because most men of their age are already married and the younger ones are afraid and discouraged by family from marrying them.

2.5.2 Educational factors

Education is associated with economic development. Conversely, economic development leads to educational expansion, which all lead to structural change. A number of studies have

linked education to such factors as age at marriage, delayed marriage and even singleness (Mensch, Susheela Singh and John Casterline, 2005; Ikamari, 2005; Teachman, Polonko and Scanzoni, 1999). For example, Berg-Cross, Scholz, Long, Grzeszcyk and Roy argue that the status of single educated women makes it more difficult for them to find a spouse as men have a preference for less educated women (2004:39).

Some studies have also indicated a correlation between singleness and education (Gubernskaya, 2010; Ikamari, 2005; Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981).According to Scanzoni and Scanzoni, singleness is higher among women who have access to education, jobs and other socio-economic alternatives to marriage. They argue that education offers women the opportunity to pursue individualistic rewards and greater autonomy and independence.Consequently, it plays a major role in delayed marriages, and even the choice of single life, particularly among Westerners. They argue further that although people eventually marry, the more marriage is postponed, the greater the chance of a lifetime of single life (1981:360). This is corroborated by Mensch, Singh and Casterline when they assert that with the achievement of greater economic and social equality,women's incentive to marry decreases (2005:8). Others found that by comparison, educated women are more likely to delay marriage than the less educated (Gubernskaya, 2010; Ikamari, 2005; Becker, 1973). The discussion of education as a factor in singleness among women will be elaborated in the discussion of the impact of education on marriage and family in Nigeria further on in this chapter.

2.5.3Financial factors

There are quite a number of opportunities for women in Jos to be engaged in the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Being an urban area, Jos offers women opportunity for income- generating activities. Many women have taken the opportunity to be financially independent in such business as hairdressing, dress making, operating restaurants, teaching in private schools, giving private lessons or home lessons and serving as sales girls. In economic terms marriage has been described as a utility. Thus, marriage is no longer an economic motivated goal. Mensch, et al., drawing on Becker (1973) state that "marriage is a manifestation of utility-maximizing behaviour: people wed when the utility of being married exceeds that of being single" (Mensch, et al., 2005:8). Gubernskaya argues thatfinancial security provides individuals with opportunity to pursue self-realisation and liberates from

the normative constraints of dependence on others (2009). Marriage as an institution of privilege offers women economic privileges (Byrne and Carr, 2005:88). However, with many women acquiring financial independence, marriage may become a self-actualising goal and not an essential economic relationship.

Education is constantly associated with economic improvement. Women today have a greater opportunity to pursue higher education. This provides them with good pay which enables them to financially support themselves. Some literature have cited the economic and financial freedom of women and the easing of social stigma on divorced women as factors militating singlehood for women (Carr, 2002). Thus, one can argue that in the case of divorce, financial independence provides women with a practical option to remaining in an abusive or difficult marriage.

Marriages in Jos are fast becoming the 'privilege' of the financially privileged and weddings a mark of success and individual achievement. The high cost of the bride price and wedding celebrations accounts for a substantial number of delayed marriages (Jakawa, 2010). Young people who are not yet financially stable may temporarily postpone marriage. "Until the economy improves", is a common saying that people use in Jos to state that their financial circumstances are working against their achieving a desired goal. The responses to the question on factors that inform singleness in Jos indicate that values about marriage are changing and parents are not allowing their children to get married without jobs as was the case in the past. Consequently, marriage is postponed. One participant simply stated this point, "I donot have a stable job or what it takes to keep a family. At my age I cannot expect my parents to take care of my family for me" (Single Man B, 2012).

2.5.4 Socio-cultural factors

Singleness may be seen as an abnormal lifestyle and "thus open to re-reading and interpretation" (Reynolds, 2008:13), but it is also apparent that there has been a shift in views about marriage. Beliefs, values, goals, lifestyles, and even priorities related to family have changed. Many people in Jos are experiencing a change in attitude towards marriage and the single life. Society has become less intolerant of such socio-cultural prohibitions as non-marital sex, non-marital births, cohabitation before marriage and young women living alone. Similarly, dominant ideologies of marriage and family and conceptions of the woman are

being challenged. The belief that 'every woman needs a man' is questioned ideologically and behaviourally (Jakawa, 2010). A statement such as "I am staying in this marriage because of my children" is no longer seen as a valid reason for remaining in a dysfunctional marriage.Many women are opposing the societal pressures to keep up appearances in a dysfunctional marital union. Similarly, parents seem to pressurise their children less to get married. Instead, parents encourage their children's educational and vocational pursuits.

In the cities cohabitation has provided an alternative to marital relationship. In Jos, cohabitation may be associated with such factors as unemployment, high bride price, opposition of a relationship by family and differences in religion or religious beliefs. Thus, for many, especially girls that agree to cohabit it is not a free choice or the choice of a modern independent lifestyle, but the result of a financial handicap.The rising trend of cohabitation before marriage, which Ogunsola describes as "an alteration in marital pattern" (2011:16) has been observed in some studies (Budinski and Trovato, 2005; Mattox, 1998). Ogunsola states that in cohabitation unmarried persons live as husband and wife. Thus, such basic components of marriage like the sharing of home and economic resources, carrying out marital duties (including sexual relationships) and bearing children can be identified in a cohabitating relationship(2011:17-18). However, like other studies (Ambert, 2005; Thornton,Axinn and Teachman, 1995), Olujideobserves that because cohabitation lacks legal imposition of duties partners are less committed to each other. It can likewise be argued that because cohabitors are less certain of a marital future together, they tend to invest less in the relationship. This is also the point that Cherlin makes in his argument that because marriage holds a significant place individuals are able to "invest in the partnership with less fear of abandonment" (Cherlin, 2004:855).

The practice of cohabitating promotes singleness because in the context of Jos it is never accepted or accorded the recognition of a marital relationship. Some researches on cohabitation indicate that cohabitators are less likely to marry the people they cohabited with and those who marry are at high risk of divorce (Ambert, 2005). Many cohabitors choose different partners when they want to contract a legally accepted marriage. This, to a certain extent has the support of the church. For instance, the COCIN does not recognise any marital relationship that is not solemnised in the church or registry; therefore men find it convenient to choose their marriage partners outside their cohabitators. This also suggests that cohabitators view themselves as single people.

Today, because women, to a certain degree, are allowed to make decisions that affect them personally, a woman has to consider many factors in her choice of a spouse. Paradoxically, this independence has been the cause of singleness and marriage for some women. While it has made some women make unwise choices of married partners that have resulted in divorce, some women have found it difficult to make a choice from the available suitors. To address this conflict Llyod, Behrman, Stromquist and Cohen suggest that women have to consider factors such as age, education differences, financial exchanges, assets brought into marriage and whether it is an arranged marriage, thus leaving some women unmarried (2005:6).

2.5.5 Ill-health and disability factors

Severe ill-health or disability lowers a woman's chances of marriage (Stubbs and Sainimili, 2009). In relation to marriage, single women living with serious health challenges or disabilities face two-fold discrimination. They are discriminated against on the basis of their gender and health challenges and perceived inability. Hence for many chronically ill and disabled women, singleness is involuntary. Collins observes that "Chronic illness and disabilities, both physical and mental…reduce the…potential for marriage and could interfere with the development of a fulfilling relationship with someone of the opposite sex" (2007:492).

Chronic illness tends to force women into isolation thereby limiting their social interactions and possibility of access to marital relationship with the opposite sex. Biordi and Nicholson define isolation as "the distancing of an individual, psychologically or physically, or both, from his or her network of desired or needed relationship with others" (2011:85). They argue that an ill person may experience a change in social and personal behaviour as well as a drop in friends and acquaintances. Although this is discussed in the field of medicine, the dynamics at work are present in singleness resulting from chronic illness. For many single women in Jos marriage is a desired relationship, but for some illness may force them to either voluntarily or involuntarily distance themselves.

In the case of disability, since most parents of disabled girls do not see the significance of sending them to school, these girls are unable to receive an education or skill that will help them generate an income. This increases the likelihood of these girls' disability to become a

burden. Furthermore, the lack of educational attainment is a major cause of unemployment. Thus, many disabled women are perceived as liabilities to their parents and prospective spouses. This is not peculiar to Jos but is the experience of many disabled women in Africa. For instance, Kiani discovered that women with disabilities find difficulty in forming and maintaining friendships. Kiani reported that apart from difficulty in forming lasting friendships, "one of the main challenges that all participants shared was finding a suitable marital relationship" (2009: 524). Similarly, drawing from Rousso (2001), it has been argued that "gender norms around beauty and perfection" (Gender Note, n.d:2) tend to limit the possibility of marriage for women with disabilities. This is because as Rousso has argued, in a culture that emphasises and values physical beauty and perfection as symbols of womanliness, women with disabilities may be stereotyped as "asexual, undesirable and unattractive" (2001:26).

2.5.6 Religious factors

It would be an understatement to say that Nigerians are deeply religious. People uphold religious beliefs that prescribe guidelines for many aspects of life. However, current activities have created an environment in which the divide along religious lines is very dense. In Jos, the man is presumed to determine the religion of the woman; therefore, religious affiliation of a suitor is often an issue. Interdenominational marriages are often not favoured and social pressure can influence both the individual's and family's decision. The responses of Single Man B (2012) and a member of the COCIN Youth Fellowship[11] focus group (2012) support this assertion. Single Man B stated that "people are still thinking and acting along denominational lines. There is a lot of denominational sentiments among Christians which hinder young people from getting married to the people they want" (2012). According to a female member of the CYF focus group, when a girl introduces a man to her parents, one of their concerns is the church he attends. She explained that parent do not like their children marrying into certain denominations (2012).

Furthermore, the involvement of the church in marriage negotiations is declining. In its early days the COCIN was involved in the selection of spouses for and preparation of the weddings of their members. In what can be described as matchmaking, the church suggested to young men and women those they felt were compatible. The researcher is a product of one of those

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[11]Subsequent reference to the COCIN youth fellowship will be indicated by its acronym CYF. This also applies to the COCIN women fellowship (CWF) and COCIN men fellowship (CMF).

matchmakings. According to my father, our mother was not his first wife. When he became a Christians his first wife's parents took their daughter away. The early missionaries forbade the converts from participating in traditional practices of their people. They were not allowed to attend the marriage ceremonies, dance festivals or burial of their relatives who were not Christians. Since my father's in-laws could not reconcile this religious difference between them they decided to take their daughter back. Following this, the church selected a girl for him from a neighbouring village and conducted a church wedding for them.

Another factor that is associated with religion is the high cost of church weddings. Many Christians are yet to differentiate between a Christian marriage and a westernised organised church wedding. According to Siwila, church weddings have become more commercialised and expensive than traditional weddings. She argues that because missionaries at the initial stage seemed to emphasise white wedding ceremony in their definition of Christian marriage, African Christians have come to view white wedding ceremonies as the church's acceptable form of marriage (2011:112-113). Practically, one would argue that the fulfilment of the traditional requirement which the church recognises should be sufficient for the church to solemnise a marriage. However, this is not often the case.Fiedler suggests that because excessive cost of church weddings forces some young men to marry illegally outside the church, church weddings should be abolished (1998:52). Supporting this argument Banda suggests that instead of encouraging members to go through the rigors of having a church wedding, pastors should bless the marriage once the customary marriage has been effected. She argues that doing this would free members of the church, particularly women (2005:182).

2.6 The impact of education, westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and singleness

2.6.1 The meaning of education, westernisation and urbanisation

In this section an attempt is made to provide the meaning of the terms education, westernisation and urbanisation.

2.6.1.1 The meaning of education and westernisation

The Merriam -Webster dictionary defines education as "learning that takes place in schools or school-like environments (formal education) or in the world at large; the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society." Estep, Anthony and Allison describe

two views of education. First, the perception of education as the transmission of knowledge and culture, which has its purpose making the learners "acquire whatever the society and culture regard as important for them to receive" (2008:19). Secondly, education as "the process of guided growth of learners toward their complete potential as human beings." This has as its goal helping "the individuals to develop abilities and capabilities to become cultural change agents" (2008:19). These definitions underpin knowledge, culture, capabilities and change as basic to the task and goal of education. The following discussion of the impact of education on marriage and singleness reflects these key concepts.

In addition to the above definition, the word education is used in this study to refer to the formal system of education (which is mostly an adoption of western patterns of education) in Nigeria. Westernisation is a social process that encourages the adaptation of western culture, that is, its beliefs, values and lifestyle. In the context of this study, westernisation is synonymous to western culture. Education and westernisation are treated together because it is always difficult to discuss western education without its accompanying component, western culture. The line between culture and education can be described as razor thin, because part of what education aims to achieve is the enculturation and socialisation of the individual. A major function of education is cultural transmission. Thus, western education went hand in hand with western culture.Therefore, westernisation and western culture are used interchangeably. In the discussion in this chapter the mutual interconnection and heterogeneity existing among education, westernisation and urbanisation is recognised.

2.6.1.2 The meaning of urbanissation

Urbanisation is a concept that applies to the physical growth of urban areas or the concentration of population in towns or cities.It promotes the migration of people to an already existing urban area, the convergence of different cultures and development, as well as the investment of human and material or natural resources in cities.The United Nations Population Fund, UNPF defines urbanisation as "the process of transition from a rural to a more urban society. Statistically, urbanisation reflects an increasing proportion of the population living in settlements defined as urban, primarily through net rural urban migration" (2007:n.p). Key to this definition is the understanding of urbanisation as a complex concept that involves complex dynamics of change embedded in education, economic, religious, political and social contexts.

The urbanisation of Jos started as a result of tin mining activities. Thisprovided job opportunities for people who wanted to better their livelihood. Coupled with this is the location of federal and state owned institutions, which has informed the continous growth in population (Gyang andAshano, 2010).Preceding the arrival of tin miners and the tin industry, which attracted people from both national and international backgrounds, the Afizere, Anaguta, and Berom formed the the indigenous population in Jos. The tin industry created an atmosphere for large numbers of people to be engaged in mining, either as labourers or traders. Aside from the tin mining activities, Jos was "a recreational town for expatriates and the Nigerian elite" (Edewor, 2007:35). Similarly, the presence of educational institutions and the headquarters of religious agencies such as the COCIN, Corpers Fellowship of Nigeria (CCFN), ECWA, Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES), Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), TEKAN and Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah Wa Ikamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS) has contributed to the growth of Jos as an urban area.

2.6.2The impact of education and westernisation on marriage and family

Education and westernisation have impacted both positively and negatively on marriage and family. In Jos the following have had some noticeable influence on the institution of marriage and family. Firstly, with the introduction of formal education, status was acquired through literacy. Being trained in the western form of education meant the acquisition of a new social status. According toSarumi, the introduction of western education led many Africans to sending their children (usually the male child) to western schools because of the belief that it offered "ample opportunities for further studies, lucrative and prestigious white collar jobs and earn them respect in the society" (2007:606). Yet, such a status changing opportunity was often denied women (until later) for no cause other than on the bases of their gender.

Secondly, it created opportunities for self-improvement and involvement of women in both family and society. Although gender inequality still prevails in Nigerian society, western education has provided opportunity for women to access education thereby enabling them to become aware of theirrights and potential. In addition, it has empowered them to contribute to the social, economic and political development of their society.This has also taken women away from the home and the domestic sphere where they were traditionally placed.This in some cases has been a source of conflict in some families. Nevertheless, many women function as wives, mothers and professionals and many are succeeding in their multi-layered

roles.As Olujide pointed out, Nigerian women no longer hold the perception that wifehood and motherhood are barriers to career development. Women's education no longer ends in the kitchen, as her influence can be felt both in the family and beyond(2008:96). Waruta describes the impact of education on the marriage institution in contemporary African society as follows:

> The spirit of self improvement has become the ideal for the 'educated African' and unless marriage adds to the 'accumulated capital means of progress,' it can wait. Education has also dented the male domination of women and many African men are scared. While the democratization of the sexes may be a blessing for modern women, the price of such a situation has definately been the weakening of the traditonal more stable marriages and the emergence of anti-marriage sentiments or unstable families of convinience (2000:95).

Thirdly, education and westernisation have influenced the circulation of new ideas thus contributing in changing the dynamics of marriage (Smith, 2001:147). They have helped individuals to re-evaluate previously held ideologies and traditional values. Individuals are able to question traditions and cultural practices that are detrimental to personal and societal progress. Consequently, individuals are assisted in re-evaluating some traditional practices that are beneficial to certain groups in the society. As individuals are exposed to new ideas and values, they are able to critically evaluate earlier accepted beliefs and practices and challenged the oppressive practices.

Fourthly, it has led to the adoption of the nuclear family. With the espousal of formal education with its attendant western culture, marriage and family life are moving toward a more individualistic nature. The nuclear family pattern has become a symbol of being an educated person (Adetutu, 2010). This change in attitude towards marriage and family is the result of the adoption of western values about marriage and other global influences on traditional cultures in Jos. Arowolo has argued that western culture has brought about the breakdown of family values, concern for individualistic aspirations over communal interest, urbanisation, corruption, negative perceptions of sexuality, the erosion of indigenous languages, the imposition of monogamy and the nuclear family as a norm(2010:n.p).

Fifthly, with the embracing of education and western lifestyle, many people have been distanced from their traditional roots. According to Anugwom, education helps in broadening people's experience, training of manpower for the society and enables individuals to develop their potentials and skills that will enable them access employment opportunities (2009:128). Notwithstanding this positive impact, she observes that "the more educated one becomes the

more alienated or distanced from his roots and culture he often becomes" (2009:130). However, Labeodan argues that "despitethe fast spread of westernized lifestyle and easier access to formal education, the Nigerianfamily norms are still strictly adhered to" (2005:10). Although conflict between maintaining traditional values and embracing modern life (which is often synonymous to western culture) does exist, this is sometimes exaggerated. Many Africans recognise that their traditional values are relevant totheir context, and discarding them means a loss of both their identity and their humanity. The sustenance of these traditional values rests on good human relations, community, hospitality, respect for authority and elders. The call for revival and sustenance of cultural values is an indication that traditional beliefs and values are still upheld and cherished by Nigerians.[12]

Finally, the introduction of formal education into the Nigerian society has brought improvement in aspects of technology, health and increase in women's participation in the formal sector. But asGubernskaya observes, structural factors can influence a change in attitude about marriage.They can either hinder theattainment of traditional norms about marriage and family or expose individuals to new opportunities that compete or outweigh the benefits of marriage(2009:179). Similarly, Ehigie and Umoren citing another study by Espinal and Grasmuck (1997) argue that "single women and married women without children advance more rapidly in their chosen careers than those who marry and have children" (2003:81). This implies that marriage and family slow down an individual's professional achievement, accounting for delayed marriages for some. But this assertion is disputed in Olujide's study of Nigerian female managers.He stated that 63% of the female participants indicate that there has been no conflict in their roles as wives, mothers and managers. Reasons being that their husbands were understanding or that it was necessary for their achieving financial autonomy, thus contributing to rearing of children and family upkeep(2008:98).Olujide's study underpins the support and cooperation of other family members in life achievement. It also implies that women accomplish more when family

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[12]The calls that come from different quotas of the Nigerian society indicate that traditonal norms, beliefs and values are still cherished. In Nigeria the cry for the revival of traditional values has been an ongoing call both in the print and mass media. Responding to a report on teenage pregnancy in Nigeria, in the "Nigerian Tribune" of 14 May 2012, a parent stressed the need for parental guidance, and the inculcation of such virtues as hardwork and contentment as a remedy against girls becoming victims of wealthy men who would take advantage of them.A similar call, "Let us go back to our roots and rediscover our cherished core cultural values that guarantee mutual respect, justice and coexistence", from the Nations' president, under the caption, "President Jonathan Urges Traditional Rulers to Preserve Cultural Values" in the 'Leadership' of 7 May 2012 goes to reiterate the importance that Nigerians place on traditional values.

members have a positive attitude towards their jobs or career pursuits and when there is less gender role conflict.

2.6.3The impact of urbanisation on marriage and family

Urbanisation has long been associated with poverty. The general notion that urban areas offer bettereducational and job opportunities, housing, communication and transport systems and social and health services,gave impetus to the rise and growth of urbanisation in Nigeria. Ironically, this quest for a better life has been the cause of poverty for some families in the urban areas. According toGyang and Ashano, the living conditions of most families in Jos is very poor, as greater number of the people fall into the category of low income earners. Many of them are barely able to provide the basic needs for their family or send their children to good schools. They affirm that:

> The Jos-Bukuru urban has been a magnet for people of diverse backgrounds and from the rural areas who see it as a place where cultural and economic opportunities abound and where available services ensure for them an enhanced quality of life. Unfortunately, some of these people end up being disappointed, while the population explosion overstretches the public amenities or infrastructure provide by the local and national governments (2010:666).

Ocholla-Ayayo has made a similar observation, that many urban families are neither able to provide the necessary services that urban living requires nor invest.Many are unable to improve their living conditions because they spend their earnings on, *inter alia,*food, housing, water and electricity bills, school fees, health care, clothing, funerals and remittance to their rural family members. Consequently, many of these individuals fall back to their rural family members for sustenance as they may have to go back to the village for food(2000:87-88).

Urbanisation has also been associated with an increase in the age of marriage and smaller family size. According to Bigombe andKhadiagala, cities have become sources of new lifestyles that have contributed in altering "the structure of family away from traditional patterns" (2003:1). They argue that urbanisation and education are correlates in the timing of marriage (2003:6). This assertion is corroborated by the findings of this study as discussed in Chapter Six, which indicate that the family size of divorced women is relatively small compared to what is obtainable in rural settings.

The operative values in urban settings have necessitated the transformation of women's role from housewives to educated and professional women.However, as observed in the UN

Habitat,the world urban forum's document on gender, culture and urbanisation, patriarchy and urban conditions and services, have not made gender role transformation easy for women. The dramatic shift from the extended to nuclear family patterns has paved the way for alternative forms of family systems, which have implications for women's social and economic lives. One such implication is that unlike the traditional rural setting where financial control is one-sided, with the male head of the family determining how it is run, economic cooperation and autonomy is higher in modern urban life(2004).Urban women have greater independence and more autonomy in managing family affairs (Belanger and Linh, 2011). However, some studies have shown that"men retained full decision making authority even when women earned money" (Martin, 2003:14). Although urban women may experience independence and changed gender roles, urbanisation mitigate or reinforce patriarchal gender and status inequality. The contributions of single women to their families' economy in particular mostly have gone unnoticed.

The movement of people from rural to urban areas has often assumed similar patterns throughout the world. A study of internal migration in Asia indicates that unmarried women are more likely to migrate than their married counterparts. Apparently, many of these girls move to the cities to find jobs with the aim of supporting their parents in the rural area. Many of these young women use their income to train their younger siblings and other family members (Economic and Social Commission 2002, cited in Martin, 2003). However, urban life poses different challenges to individuals and their families, part of which is the removal of individuals from the closeknit support system they enjoyed in the rural setting. While the educated person may decide to alienate his or herself from the traditional support system, the structure of the urban setting tends to remove the individual from the support mechanism that tradition provides.Similarly, the tendency of individuals to shift towards individualism is more prevalent in the cities. Urban life promotes individualistic ideas whichweaken the strength of the support network people enjoy in the cities.Support may sometimes be interpreted as interference. This notion of urban life is supported by Adar'sstudy of the impact of urbanisation on the Kibbutz family and the status of women. Ada observes that urbanisation promotes ideological and conceptual shifts as "self-fulfillment, individualism, and economic neo-liberal attitudes replace former values of equality and cooperation" (2002:4). The dynamics and significants of social support for single women are discussed in Chapter Seven of this study.

Some studies have linked urbanisationwith the rise in the rate of divorce in Nigeria (Adegoke, 2010; Adedokun, 1998). Accordingto Adegoke, the adoption of the nuclear family system by urban dwellers has undermined the traditional family system where the extended family plays a vital role in conflict resolution among couples. He comments:

> [T]he extended family that used to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings [that] arise between couples were no longer functioning effectively like in the past. The extended family structure eventually broke up in the process; and there was a shift towards the nuclear family system characterised by less involvement of members in the resolution of marital conflicts (2010:107).

Asike shares a similar sentiment in his argument that urbanisation weakens parental authority and traditional marital bonds, and the sense of communalism that reflects rural life. He maintains that cities lack the traditional social support systems individuals had in their extended families, kin and age-group. Consequently, the absence of communal responsibility in child rearing and social support has resulted in juvenile deliquency and socially dysfunctional individuals(1996:67-69).Okolo argues that urban life has deleterious effects on African traditional values as the African experiences conflict between maintaining long-cherished traditional values and the creation of new ones. He argues that among others, urbanisation underplays traditional Africa values such as value of children as demonstrated in large families, love for extended family relationships, respect for elders, the inseparable bond between the religious and secular and hospitality and a sense of community(1996:73).

Urban life has the potential to influence delayed marriages or even permanent singleness. The nature of urban life exposes women to modern values that encourage delayed marriage. Many women are preoccupied with pursuing their dream of a better life and marriage becomes a secondary goal. It is argued thatthe timing of marriage for urban women rests with the individual as they are less likely to be controlled or influenced by their kin (Mensch et al., 2005). Singleness in women may also be influenced by men postponingmarriage due to "greater expectations about job status and employment stability andthe material possessions needed to form a household...."(Mensch et al, 2005:3).

Apparently, urbanisation has given rise to the conversion of the bride price and dowry into monetary values. The unemployment rate in Nigeria is high such that many young men interested in marriage experience difficulty in paying the bride price. The implication is that single women have limited commodities in the marriage market to choose from. This deficit of eligible men accounts for delay in marriage for many women in Jos. Similarly, for many

young people, unemployment accounts for major financial constraints and impedes the actualisation of personal goals.

The participants in the CMF focus group (2012) are agreed that urbanisationis about the separation of family members which affects closeness. It has exposed people to new cultures that are strongly grounded on media influence. They explained that the influence of the media such as television and movies on children in the cities is very strong. As a result many young people make decisions that conform to what they see in the media and not what is socially acceptable. They argue that urban life promotes unfaithfulness in marriages because some men come to the cities and leave their wives in the village. They also observed that urbanisation promotes healthy rivalry as people want to improve their living standards; but also unhealthy competitions, with people desiring to be like others. It can be argued that although the media serves as an important source of knowledge and information, it is also responsible for changing family dynamics (Forge and Blackman, 2008) and creating an environment of anti- marriage values and the breakdown of family values (Eyong, 2007:134; Srygley, 1978:526). The urban experience can be a source of crisis for urban dwellers. Mwiti and Dueck describe the tension Africans experience in reconciling traditional values and the new identity social change presents thus:

> It is true that much change has come to Africa…within us is a collective sense that maintains some of the precious values that God stamps in each of our hearts such that wherever we are, whatever we become, we long for the authenticity of our roots. This is why our children, although living in far away nations, will at some time return to ask, 'Mama, tell me about our people.' As the winds of poor identity blow the family and individuals hither and thither, people long for the values that helped their ancestors to survive, although they had not as much as entered the door of a modern classroom. This is our indigenous psychology of survival (2006:147).

From the exploration of the impact of westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and family it was discovered that social change accounts for the present state of marriage and family in the study area. This exploration has also provided information for the analysis of the social realities of single women in subsequent chapters.

2.7 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has attempted to show that traditional cultures had well-defined structures that addressed the problem of singleness in the society. The practices of mate selection, polygamy, wife inheritance and even female-husband are used by the culture to provided spouses for individuals. In contemporary Nigerian society these are no longer

appealing, but no structures are put in place to address the new challenges this change presents. Marriage types such as customary, statutory and religious marriage are practiced in Nigeria today, but the assumption is that young men prefer to choose their own spouses.

The discussion has also shown that greater educational and economic opportunities as well as urbanisation have impacted on the institution of marriage and family, leading to increasing numbers of women delaying marriage and even never marrying. Single women now have greater freedom of choice and many choose to pursue their education and careers. This shows that education has exposed people to new ideas and new social relations and have enabled people to have a broader perspective on life, thus, creating a shift in values and attitude relating to marriage and family. With the acquisition of formal education, women have been taken out of the home and placed in the labour market. Consequently, the more educated a woman is, the less likely she will be confined to domestic roles traditionally assigned to women.

Apparently, the impact of education, westernisation and urbanisation has been both positive and negative. These forces have conditioneda change in attitude towards gender roles and promoted female education, uplifting the status of women and redefining their role in society. It has also helped many people to question traditional gender role ideologies, and to embrace more progressive ideologies.The acceptance of new values, beliefs and norms of marriage has positively weakened the dependence on one family member as the sole breadwinner, taking women out of the confines of the domestic sphere.

This chapter indicates that education, western culture and urbanisation may appear to have weakenedtraditional roles andresponsibilities within families, but it is also evident that people in Jos uphold traditional family values. It can be inferred thus, that despite the changes in the dynamics of marriage and family conditioned by social change, religionand culture still play a key role in issues relating to marriage and family in Jos. The consciousness of religion and culture has always been a key factor in the choice of lifestyle. Hence, religion and culture still define the way people live and their views toward marriage.

Chapter Threeprovides an overview of marriage and singleness in the Church of Christ in Nigeria. Particular attention is given to the founding of the church, its vision, mission and strategy for propagation, organisation and leadership structure, doctrinal beliefs, the theology of marriage and the place of women.

CHAPTER THREE

Marriage and singleness in theChurch of Christ in Nigeria

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two it was argued that there have been changes in family life patterns in Nigeria, particularly in Jos. Marriage practices, particularly traditional mate selection and polygamy, which helped individuals to find spouses and served as a 'remedy' for singleness are no longer favoured practices among Nigerians. It was also argued that although such practices were used to provide husbands for women, the main concern was not in the woman's interest. Instead, they servedas agencies for boosting the man's financial strength, social status and masculine prowess. This bias and inequality is also reflected (and still does) in the society's attitude and punishment meted out to people who went against traditional restrictions. Women were condemned, whilst the same actsby men were tolerated. The discussion in chapter two has also indicated that education, westernisation and urbanisation have impacted on family life patterns in Jos in different ways. This amongst other factors have accounted for the presence of single, never married and divorced women.

The objectives of the chapter are: to give a concise description of the missional development COCIN as a foundation for the evaluation of the its pastoral ministry to single women in subsequent chapters of this work, to assess the church's theology of marriage and the role of women to ascertain how thesehave influencedthe perception of singleness and the exercise of pastoral ministry to single womenin the study area.

3.2 The missional background of the COCIN

The founding of the COCIN is credited to the missionary work of Karl Kumm, a German born in 1874 (Tett, n.d:7). Kumm's goal was to take the gospel to the Sudan, where Islam was fast gaining ground. Because he had the initial plan to reach Sudan through North Africa, he travelled to Alexandria, and later became a guide to Dr Grattan Guiness and his daughter, Lucy, whom he later married (Gutip, 1998:21-22). Both Kumm and Lucy Guiness pleaded with Christians to take action for Sudan, which Lucy in her passionate writings described as

"the greatest and most populous of all the wholly neglected... region on the surface of the globe" (Action Partners, n.d:4).

The outcome of this appeal was that Karl Kumm, Ambrose Bateman, John Burt and Lowry Maxwell were sent to Nigeria in 1904 by the Sudan United Mission (SUM) Council. (Rengshwat, 2005:71-72, Maxwell, n.d:13). On October 8th 1904, the four missionaries arrived at Wase, a town in Plateau State (COCIN Constitution, 2008:1; Gutip, 1998:23, Maxwell, n.d:43). Although the missionaries had to contend with unfamiliar weather, disease and language barriers, they worked hard and shared the Gospel message with the people (COCIN, 2004:9). As a result of the resistance, the missionaries had to move to other areas. However, Wase was maintained as a temporary base to reach other areas (Rengshwat, 2011:1). Nonetheless, they were forced to abandon it in 1909 (COCIN, 2004; Gutip, 1998).

With the passing of time the people became more receptive to the Gospel message expounded by the missionaries, which distinguished them from the colonial administrators. As Kumm travelled around, the extent and urgency of the task provided him a with a broader vision. He was not satisfied with the level of support for mission work from Britian, thus armed with a mandate from the SUM, he went to America in 1906 and two months later an American Branch was set up in Wukari to continue the work Maxwell has started (Action Partners, n.d:8). Meanwhile, the mission work in Plateau State was progressing. In 1907, the church Missionary Society (CMS) started missionary work in Plateau (COCIN, 1998:16) among the Ngas and Mwahavul (Sura) through the efforts of foreign missionaries together with Nigerian evangelists from the southwest of Nigeria, where CMS missionary work was already established. The same mission extended its work to Kabwir among the Ngas in 1910 (COCIN Community Mission, 2010:2), and Panyam and Kabwir became their mission bases.

By 1912 the missionaries had gained some acceptance and a number of men and boys began to attend the school they started. In 1919, Elsie Webster started teaching in Panyam. Her work was successful as the schools grew and became an added advantage for the church. Elsie, who was nicknamed, Nakam (the lady who teaches) was a tower of strength, and through her mentorship David Lot, an indigenous convert, became a leader of the church (Action Partners, n.d:12; Gutip, 1998).Similarly, the Action Partners observed that the CMS mission was also expanding against the odds encountered. Although their reception was not so favourable in Kabwir, there was some success as a result of Charles Wedgewood's work in

1912. Wedgewood , nicknamed Gonerit (the man with the spectacles), was much appreciated by the people and in 1978 Gonerit Memorial School was establised in his honour(n.d:12). However, in 1930 the CMS handed the work in Kabwir and Panyam to the SUM (COCIN Golden Jubilee Celebration Programme, 1998:16).

The work among the Berom, which started in Gyel in 1907 was not favourably received by the local people, hence the missionaries left for Foron. The Foron mission flourished, its roots spreading to other parts of Beromland and north of the Plateau State (RCC Gigiring, 2011:1-3; Chollom, 2007:61). According to Chollom (2007:54-5), the missionaries emphasised education and health services. They established a health centre and instructional and literacy classes. Barton, who was one of the first to start the work in Foron became acquainted with Tok Bot whom he taught to read and write, an act which attracted others who wanted to acquire similar skills. Furthermore, the skills Tok had learned made him a valuable resource to Reverend Edward Evans in the translation of the Gospel of Mark into Berom in 1916, and to the Suffills who translated the four Gospels, 1John, the Acts of the Apostles and some Old Testament stories into Berom language between 1923-1936 (Chollom, 2007:57). The Foron mission was successful as Barton reported (Maxwell, n.d):

> Events are moving rapidly, and we must prepare to deal with a large number of people. There will, as far as I can see, be a mass movement soon, if help is forthcoming now to deal with those seeking the truth (n.d:111).

Through mutual conscent, the Cambridge University Mission Party handed over its mission work to the Sudan United Mission, British branch, between 1930-1934 (COCIN Constitution, 2008:1). Furthermore, as a result of Kumm's request for more funds and workers, the British branch sent another batch of missionaries: Frank Aust, John Young and Horatio Ghey in 1950 (COCIN, 2004:9). Since the SUM (now Action Partners), had the intention of establishing an indigenous Nigerian church that would be self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing, the mission gave the indigenous people freedom to administer their own affairs in 1948 (COCIN Constitution, 2008:1). On 12 June 1976, the church changed its name to Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN). A year later, the SUM ceased to exist in Nigeria. Consequently, all its property and administration of mission affairs in Nigeria werehanded over to the COCIN (COCIN Constitution, 2008:2). However, the church was still in partnership with the mission body, which acted as proprietor of any activity or project it embarked upon. Similarly, the mission, and the now indigenous church each kept its identity, leadership and financial arrangements (Gutip, 1998:4).

From inception, the COCIN made the provision of basic services to people a priority of the Gospel. The SUM's vision of reaching the people in the Sudan and regions beyond (COCIN, 1998) with the Gospel informed a great emphasis on Christian witness and instruction in the Scriptures and doctrines of faith. In its pamphlet titled, *The heirs appear*, the SUM wrote:

> Academic distinction, however, though it is a graceful companion to effective Christian witness, is not its sources. The Spirit enlivens whom He will and when a man has an ability to draw men to Christ and to impart a spiritual gift he is a good missionary whatever his academic background (n.d:11).

Although the missionaries reached the people through preaching the Gospel,[13] they also saw education, health services and agriculture as strategies for reaching the people (SUM, n.d:6). In December 1923, Herber Cooper made a statement at the Wukari conference that sums up the missionary strategies of education, health and agriculture thus:

> The aim must be the development of an indigenous Christianity, which shall propagate itself throughout the country. While evangelism is the first duty of the missionary, it includes education, medical work, language study and preparation of books, visitation and many pressing claims. The missionaries must so work as to become more and more dispensable, giving the (indigenes) Church all the responsibility and work which it is capable of undertaking.... (Action Partners, n.d:11).

These methods proved to be effective and successful as suggested in the subsequent discussions.

3.2.1 Evangelism through social action

3.2.1.1 Evangelism through education

According to Tett, Karl Kumm believed that education would help to avert the threats of slave raids. Moreover, the ability to read was vital for the process of evangelisation,and this prompted the the missionaries to established Centres of Religious Instruction (CRIs) at each mission station (n.d:53-55). The need for training indigenous teacherswho would carry on the evangelistic work also became obvious, therefore, a school was set up in Gindiri in 1934 (Rengshwat, 2011:94).With the passing of time Gindiri became the centre of missionary education activities (Williams, n.d:5; Maxwell, n.d:185). Through the efforts of H.G. Farrant and William Bristow, the Gindiri training centre for Evangelists and Teachers started in 1934. Three years later, a Hausa Pastors' Course began with Bali who came from Langtang, Lot chosen from Panyam, and Tok Bot from Foron, as the first students. These men were later to

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[13]Passages such as John 3:16 and Acts 4:12 were vital to the preaching of the Gospel. The missionaries used this text as the basis of their evangelism.

become central to the indigenous church and key individuals in the history of the COCIN (Action Partners, n.d; SUM, n.d; Tett, n.d).

In order to meet the needs of the growing church in Plateau State, the Gindiri centre was expanded into different types of schools. The Boys' Middle School was established in 1950 (SUM, n.d:14), and a Boarding School for Girls in 1958 (Williams, n.d:14). In 1953 a School for Blind Children was started, and later an adult programme followed. The experience of work in the Freed Slaves Home[14], coupled with the realisation that blind children needed help,encouraged David Forbes and his wife to study the Braille system. They became resourceful in the training of the blind children in Braille and farming. Samuel Odunfa, one of the students, summed up his experience of the missionary work thus:

> Above all, we have been urged and taught to give priority to thesearch for God. We have been taught to allow His Spirit to permeateour being. We are told that we need Him to meet the difficulties andchallenges of life. And I believe that this is true" (Action Partners, n.d:17).

Similarly, the Reverend Bitrus Yamden, a student said of both the European and Nigerian teachers, that they were men "who taught, not for material benefits but for the joy of wanting to impart knowledge to those whom they loved...they sacrificed their lives for the sake of Christ who died for them" (Action Partners, n.d:16).

The COCIN's interest and investment in education has continued to be sustained through the establishment of schools in LCCs and every mission field of the Church. According to the records of the programme of the COCIN Community Mission annual awareness week (COCIN Community Mission, 2012), all the mission fields of the church grouped into six zones have either a primary school, or both primary and secondary schools. Moreover, the Gindiri schools provide trained manpower and human resources for both church and society. For the church, Gindiri has come to be known as 'the heart of the Church' (Rengshwat, 2011:205).

In keeping with its vision of education as a tool for both spiritual and physical empowerment, the COCIN is presently pursuing the establishment of a university named after the founding father, Karl Kumm. The report of the 81st General Council of the Church in November 2012, indicated that the work has reached an advanced stage (Bewarang, 2012:3).

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[14] The Freed Slaves' Home built in memory of Lucy Kumm was a place where missionaries took care of boys and girls that had been rescued from slavery and human trafficking. The freed slaves who were able to trace their families were sent home while those who could not were sent to the freed slave homes to school or to learn a trade that would enable them to earn a living.

3.2.1.2 Evangelism through health

Medicine has been described as "the hand maid of the Gospel" (Tett, n.d:72). The SUM missionaries regarded the aspect of physical health seriously.As a result,the COCIN has come to understand the healing of the sick as a vital part of the missionary mandate (Mark 16:18). According to Gutip (1998:23), one of Karl Kumn's desires was to establish a medical school where African doctors could trainto reach out to their own people. Through their health programmes the missionaries used the opportunity to tell those who came for bodily healing, about Jesus, the great physician of both body and soul. From the beginning they did this through first aid services, but as medical personnelresponded to God's call, the vision was broadened. Dispensaries were opened in many of the mission stations, and missionary nurses worked there for many years. Many Nigerians served as assistants, thereby learning on the job, and some were later trained formally. The dispensaries also served as primary health care centres. Dr Percy Barnden, one of the missionaries who worked at the Freed Slaves Home, was posted to the Berom area. It was there he had the vision of a hospital, and the Berom Christians chose Vom as the site for the building of the hospital (ActionPartners, n.d:14).

The health programme grew with the founding of the Vom Christian Hospital; records place it between 1922 and 1923 (COCIN, 2004; Maxwell, n.d:15; Rengshwat, 2011:101; Tett, n.d:75). This hospital is said to be among the first hospitals to be built in Nigeria (David, 2008:n.p). According to the Action Partners (n.d:14), the missionaries combined their medical and paramedic services with their Christian witness. By 1937 the need to start a leprosy treatment unit in the hospital had become obvious (Maxwell, n.d:256). However, the missionaries later realised that it was better to have an in-patient settlement at a different location, and in 1952 it was moved to Mangu. The Mangu centre grew beyond merely treating patients , to include rehabitation of leprosy patients and polio victims. By1978, it was no longer known as the Mangu Leprosy Settlement,but became the Mangu Leprosy and Rehabilitation Centre (Action Partners, n.d:14).

The SUM extended its health programme to the northern part of the country where leprosy was a serious health challenge. In order to avoid the clash between religion and governance, the colonial administration restricted Christian witness among Muslims. However, when the Government realised that it was only the missions that was working to help the people, it

reversed its earlier decision of restricting Christian witness to areas that were non-Muslim. It therefore allocated a large portion of land in Molai, near Maiduguri to the missionaries for the purpose of setting up a leprosy centre to help the Kanuri, a Muslim tribe. In 1936 the Molai leprosy treatment and rehabilitation centre was established. By 1976, Molai had become a referral centre for government clinics. Molai was both successful in physical and spiritual healing. David Telta, one of the patients was later to become a leader of the church (Action Partners, n.d:18-9). The medical programme of the SUM was carried out in three categories: hospitals (Vom and Gwoza), leprosy settlements and clinics and dispensaries.

3.2.1.3 Evangelism through agriculture

Agriculture was another method the missionaries used to reach the indigenous people. The missionaries' desire to help them to raise better crops was seen as an unparalled opportunity to show the community that Christ was also concerned with the realities of daily life (Batchelor, 1980:4-5). It was argued that the integration of"church, community and food production...will result in a stable and intelligent Christian society having a very wholesome witness" (SUM, n.d:11).

In what was tagged 'Faith and Farm', the missionaries pursued the strategy of mission and evangelism through agriculture. Peter Batchelor believed that the message of the gospel needed to be given a holistic approach. In 1957, he lauched a scheme for village improvement and evangelism, and two years later, in 1959, the Faith and Farm was born. The Faith and Farm programme was designed to allow people to enter into an apprenticeship in mixed farming, and upon graduating they would be given a loan to purchase a plough and oxen. In each area a man was put incharge of training others, and he was expected to minister to people in their own areas. The Bible and preventive medicine courses were part of the curriculum of the Faith and Farm programme (Action Partners, n.d:22). The Faith and Farm project had as its sole aim helping the church to witness in a holistic way, thereby meeting the spiritual, physical and mental needs (SUM, nd:17).

The Faith and Farm programme, like education and health, also florished as it gained acceptance among the people. In 1970, another training school for Bible and Agriculture was opened in Zamko. This time English was the medium of instruction. Although the Faith and Farm programme has been merged with others projects such as the Mangu rehabilitation and

other rural health programmes to form the COCIN Community Development Programme, the Zamko training school still runs in accordance with the original objectives (Action Partners, n.d:28).

3.2.2 Indigenous leadership

An attempt to put the missionaries' principle of establishing an indigenous evangelism and mission work into practice that would transform into a self-governing church, was made with the training of indigenous people. It was thought at this time that both the church and nation needed educated leaders to manage their affairs (Tett, nd). Three indigenous pastors, Tom Tok Bot from Foron, David Lot from Panyam and Bali Falang from Langtang were ordained in 1938, a year after their graduation from Gindiri Pastors' College (COCIN, 2004; COCIN Community Mission, 2010). The mission work also saw the establishment of churches in the four main areas among the Berom, Mwahavul, Ngas and Tarok people. Damina Bawado from Langtang, Dusu Lo-Dam from Foron and Gideon Gonap from Kabwir became pastors of the churches respectively, joining the three men that had been ordained earlier (Action Partners, n.d; COCIN, 2004).

For easy administration, a regional church council which joined all the districts was formed in 1948 with W.M Bristow as chairman and Reverend Arthur Burrough as secretary.In 1951 Reverend Damina Bawado became the first indigenous chairman of the Regional Church Council, which constituted Foron, Kabwir, Langtang and Panyam. However, the Regional Church Ccouncil was changed to General Church Ccouncil in 1976 (COCIN, 2004). Reverend Bawado led the church for thirty years until 1981 when he was succeeded by Reverend Luther Chishak (Gaiya, 2003). Foron, Kabwir, Langtang and Panyam are very important areas in the history of the COCIN. These areas served as the centres of missionary activities of the CMS and SUM. Though with the handing over of the CMS mission centres, the SUM took charge of the mission work in the areas, and these later transformed into a large international body of believers.

As a result of the work of the founding fathers, and the indigenous leadership, the church has now transformed from a semi-indigenous Christian body into a significant church. The COCIN with its headquarters in Jos, is today one of the largest and most influential denominations in Nigeria, spread across the thirty states of the federation. It also has churches

in other countries in Africa and the United Kingdom (Kim and Habila, 2012:5). This expansion prompted the process of changing the name to the Church of Christ in Nations. The membership of the COCIN is approximately three million (Action Partners, n.d:3).According to the Provincial Church Council reports to the 81st General Council (19th –23rd November, 2012), and the COCIN annual missionary awareness programme (COCIN Community Mission, 2012), the Church has approximately 3500 pastors, one quarter of whom are ordained (COCIN GCC, 2012:61-86), and approximately two hundred and thirty seven in the mission fields. Although it had its origin in Plateau State, the COCIN cuts across all ethnic groups of more than one hundred and forty tribes (COCIN RCC Gigiring, 2011, p.xiv). It is commonly observed that this ethnic diversity is reflected in its pastors and membership.

Today however, COCIN thrives in a context faced by severe religious conflicts. In the recent past, the North and central parts of Nigeria have been targets of Islamic fundamentalism, and many of the casualties are the COCIN members. For example, on April 24th 2011, Nathan Dabak and Sunday Bwede journalists with the COCIN newspaper, *The Light Bearer,* were killed in Jos North LGA by the members of the Hausa Muslim youth (Compass Direct News, 2012:n.p). Similarly, an attack on the church was carried out on February 26th, 2012 when a suicide bomber, escorted by the Special Task Force (STF), rammed into the headquarters of the COCIN, killing four people and destroying vehicles and parts of the pastorium, the secretariat and the inncompletechurch building (Odeh, 2012: n.p). The Islamic sect Boko Haram[15], meaning 'western education is a sacrilege', claimed responsibility for the bombing with a threat of carrying out more attacks on the church (NAN, 2012:n.p). In May 2012, in the COCIN Jajeri Borno, a pastor and two others were killed by Islamic militants who opened fire on worshippers during a Holy Communion service (Light Bearer, 2012:9). According to the COCIN president, Reverend Dr Soja Bewarang (2012), the church has experienced a constant loss of members due to the activities of Boko Haram. In his reaction to the incident of the bomb blast at the church's headquarters, Bewarang (2012) stated that within two months the COCIN and particularly churches in regional councils in States such as Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Yobe, Kaduna and Plateau, have experienced difficult times.

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[15]Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group that opposes western education and western lifestyle, and uses terrorism to fight for the Islamisation and imposition of sharia law in Nigeria. Boko Haram has come to be known in Nigeria as a murderous, barbaric gang that has unleashed terror, killing and maiming many Nigerians and even attacking foreign nationals. The group founded by Mohammed Yusuf came into existence in 2001. Its popularity, however, started in 2009 when it started waging an extremist campaign against Christians, security official and any group or persons who opposed its activities. Boko Haram also embarked on destroying schools and government facilities on the assumption that they represent western ideologies and lifestyle.

Despite these challenges, the church has been assiduous in its mission, as Christians have maintained their attendance of services and other weekly church activities in the midst of life threatening and stiff opposition.

3.3. The contemporary COCIN structure

3.3.1 Strategic Plan

The COCIN views itself as an Evangelical Christian community saddled with the task of contributing to the expansion of God's kingdom, and building believing communities that promote a holistic life. It carries out this task through pursuing its vision and mission and other strategic plans for the propagation of the Gospel (COCIN, 2009).

3.3.1.1 The COCIN's vision

The vision of the COCIN states:

> COCIN envisions a Church in which the leadership and members are maturing in Christ by obeying the word of God, living holy lives, united and committed to worshipping God and spreading the holistic gospel, thereby impacting the world as salt and light of her time to the glory of God, till the return of Jesus Christ (COCIN Constitution, 2008:3).

The vision shows that central to the COCIN are the maturing of believers in Christ, unity of the body of Christ, commitment to worshiping God, and spreading of the holistic Gospel. This vision is set firmly on the basis of God's choice of gifted men and women who will carry out this task. Elaborating on the vision of the church, the COCIN Community Mission (2010:3) states that being the salt and light of the world, offering themselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1), and doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus to his glory (Colossians 3:17) are the only forms of true worship that can be offered to God.

3.3.1.2 The COCIN's mission

The COCIN states that its mission is:

> To glorify God and not any person or material; to edify and equip believers to preach the good news of wholistic salvation in Jesus Christ to unbelievers. Thus, COCIN shall continue to administer the sacraments and be self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing (COCIN Constitution, 2008:3).

From the above mission statementone can infer that the mission of the church is designed to fulfil the vision and programme of the early missionaries. Primary to its mission is the glory

of God, and the edification and equipping of the believers to fulfil the Great Commission. The self-propagating, self-supporting, self-governing aspects of the mission statement implies that the church will not have to depend on its missionary sending individuals for leadership and financial aid. Instead, the church will source the means for running its affairs indigenously. The three-self formula for mission, which has been a contentious topic because of its workability in different contexts (Rengshwat, 2011:3) is attributed to Henry Venn. According to Neill:

> As early as 1854, Henry, the presiding secretary of the Church Missionary Society in London, had spoken in terms of the aim of the mission as being the calling into existence of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating Churches....Once the mission has brought a Church into being, it may die out in the area; the missionaries may go on to the unevangelized region, and leave the Church which they have brought into being to fulfil, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the functions of a Church (1990:220-221).

However, Rengshwat suggests that the success of this three-self with regard to the COCIN is still questionable because only the self-support aspect was emphasised, while the aspects of self-governance and self-propagation were more theory than practice(2011:203).

3.3.2 The basic doctrines, beliefs and creed of the COCIN

3.3.2.1 Doctrinal beliefs

COCIN is an Evangelical church, which believes in the infallibility of the Bible as the final authority in matters pertaining to faith and conduct. Drawn from the Bible, as stated in its constitution the chuch upholds such beliefs as the divine inspiration, infallibility, authorityand reliability of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21), the church as a priesthood community of believers chosen for holy living (1 Peter 2:9), the unity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; 2Corinthians 13:14), the total depravity of the human race and its need of new birth in Christ Jesus (Genesis 3; John 3:3; Romans 3:10, 5:12), the humanity of Christ, his works of grace, mediatory role, and eternal reign (Mark 10:45; Luke 24:6; 1Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1Peter 3:18), justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus alone (Romans 3:24-26; Acts 13:39), the Holy Spirit's role in conversion and sanctification (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:23-26; James 1:18; 1Peter 1:23-25), the purpose of the church as worship of God, evangelisation and building up of Christ's body through the spiritual gifts (Matthew 16:16-18; 1Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 2:19-22 and 4:11-16), the sacrament and its regular observance (Matthew 26:25-29, 28:19-20; 1Corinthians 11:23-24), and the physical return of Christ, bodily resurrection, final judgment, eternal reward of the righteous, and punishment of the wicked

(1Thessalonians 4:14-17; 2Thessalonians 1:7-10; Acts 24:15; Hebrew 9:27 and 2Corinthians 5:10)(COCIN Constitution, 2008:6).

3.3.2.2 Its creed

COCIN subscribes to the Apostles creed:

> I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hades, on the third day He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting(COCIN Constitution, 2008:2).

3.3.3 The COCIN organisational and leadership structure

The COCIN operates a horizontal and vertical system of leadership. The vertical structure of leadership places one person "in charge" while the others follow. However, as Pearce and Barkus (2004:49) argued recent research indicates that shared leadership is favoured because it gives rise to high performance. In the COCIN communication flows either from the headquarters to the congregations or from the congregation to the headquarters. The church is structured in two blocks.One block dealswith church worship and outreach, while the other block deals with administrative and service issues. For the purpose of administrative and holistic services the church has seven specialised departments; Evangelism and Church Growth, Education, Personnel, Finance, Estate, Health and Social Services and Information and Communication Technology, and Councils, Boards and Committees; The Boards of Trustees, GCC, EC, Licensing council, PCC, RCC, LCC, CC, COCIN Headquarters church, chaplaincies and Boards. However, the arm concerned with direct church worship consists of the RCCs, LCCs, and CCs and prayer houses.

3.3.3.1 General Church Council

The GCC is the highest decision-making body, comprising of the management committee (the President, Vice President, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary, ten PCC chairmen, three EC lay members, Chairmen and Secretaries of RCCs, Trustee members, Heads of Departments, Treasurer, Heads of GCC institutions and chaplaincies, three lay representative, CWF leader, two lawyers and the church Protocol Officer. The GCC (and all

other councils) meet twice a year besides emergency meetings. All decisions taken at the GCC are binding on the the church as a whole.

Operating at the GCC level is the EC, made up of the President, VP, GS, DGS, a trustee member, treasurer, PCC chairmen and three lay representatives. The EC oversee the implementation of policy decisions of the GCC, transfers of ordained ministers and senior staffand disciplinary cases. It also carries out interviews of pastors for ordination, appointment of board and committee members and oversees PCCs, RCCs and other departments.

3.3.3.2 Provincial Church Council

The PCC, which comprises two or more RCCs is made up of the EC of each RCCs within it, the treasure, two lay elected members and the principals of joint Bible Schools. The task of the PCC includes: Carrying out duties within the assigned power of the PCC, overseeing the election of RCC EC, coordinating the work and progress of the RCCsand ensuring that decisions of the GCC and EC are implemented.

3.3.3.3 Regional Church Council

The RCC is made up of five or more LCCs. Council members comprise of ordained ministers within the region, presiding ministers and secretaries of LCCs, treasurer, principals of the COCIN schools beyong primary level, EBS supervisors, supervisor and secretary of the CWF, co-ordinator of groups and any lay members that may be invited to advise on particular issues.

The duties of the RCC include: overseeing the LCCs, preparing candidates for ordination, transfers of licensed and unlicensed pastors within the region, recruiting pastors, creating new LCCs in line with laid down procedures and implementing the decisions of the EC at that level. The RCCs also present reports of their work at the GCC meetings and any disciplinary cases of ordained ministers to the EC. It also has the power to take disciplinary actions against pastors within the region.

3.3.3.4 Local Church Council

This is made up of one or more CCs and has as members the presiding pastor (who is either an ordained or licensed pastor), seven elected elders (two must be women) and one of who shall be the church secretary. The presiding pastor and elders oversee the work and progress of the congregation and execution of GCC, PCC and RCC decisions as the affect the LCC. Other responsibilities of the LCC are, *inter alia*, working out strategies for evangelism and church growth, nomination and recommendation of suitable persons to be trained for church service, establishing new congregations as well as observing the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Additionally, the LCC keeps a record of all finances, communicant members and takes disciplinary action against erring communicant members.

3.3.3.5 Congregational Committee

The last level of organisation is the CC which is made up of worshippers under the same building regardless of number of services or language preference. Those who oversee affairs are the presiding minister (ordained or licenced pastor) and seven elected committee members (two of whom must be women). The CC performs the following functions: organisesclassfor catechism and communicant members, prepares and sends members for evangelism and outreaches,prepare reports on persons who wish to be trained for church work and supports those in training.

The COCIN in its 81st GCC meeting held on the 19th-23rd November 2012 made some recommendations for changes to be effected in the church's constitution. One of such recommendations was a case for the inclusion of women in the ECs of the GCC and the RCC. Although giant strides have been made in the area of female leadership in the church, as some women are directors and heads of units, women are lacking at the executive level. Presently, it is at the LCC and CC levels that women are included in the COCIN leadership structure. The Constitution states that atleast two women must be members of the elders council.

However, there have been two different interpretations. Some, especially in the rural areas have insisted that the Constitution recommends only two women, while in the cities most have interpreted it to mean that the number of women can be more. Despite the fact that the female elders have the same decision- making power as their male counterparts, in some cases they have been confined to the business of catering during meetings or church

functions. Some female elders lackconfidence in themselves to participate in decision-making initiatives. Coupled with the fact that the structure of the church exerts control on women, women have been oriented to believe that men must be in control of all spheres of life. As Ndeda observes, women who internalised oppression often become compliant victims and need a great deal of convincing to understand that the order and system of power in the church is oppressive. She asserts that "internalized oppression becomes something of a vicious circle since once women accept the judgments of androcentrism or patriarchy they are unable to critique it" (2011:n.p). Thus it can be argued that female leadership roles and access to power for women in the COCIN are sometimes impeded by women themselves.

In the case of the COCIN, women are the followers while men stand at the helms of affairs making decisions that women must follow. Feminist cultural hermeneutics suggests that although religion influences thoughts and social relationships, women must approach such endorsement of religiou-cultural restriction from the point of "critical solidarity" (Phiri and Nadar, 2006b:8). In other words, women must expose practices that are oppressive and non-liberative.

3.3.4 The COCIN's theology of marriage

The COCIN has no existing document that spells out its theology of marriage. However, the church's theology of marriage can be drawn from its Constitution, service handbook, wedding sermonsand general teachings on marriage based on the understanding and interpretation of the Bible. Additionally, the responses of the participants to the question on what their understanding of marriage is, could be seen as a reflection of the church's theology of marriage. The following six concepts reflect the theology of marriage in the COCIN: (i) Marriage as a divine institution, (ii) marriage as a sacrament, (iii) marriage as a social institution, (iv) marriage as a heterosexual institution, (v) marriage as the locus for procreation and child raising, and (vi) marriage as a foundation for family.

3.3.4.1 Marriage as a divine institution

The COCIN views marriage as a sacred, monogamous union that reflects God's covenant with his people, and this resonates with Genesis 1:26-28. For instance, although the question, "Will you forsake all others and keep only to her [or him] as long as you both shall live?" in the section on marriage solemnisation in the COCIN Service Handbook (2010:9-10), is a call

to marital faithfulness, it also reflects a belief in monogamy as the biblical ideal for marriage, and an acknowledgement of the existence of polygamy. The COCIN also acknowledges that there are cases of polygamy recorded in the Bible. However, these are not appropriate representations of the biblical ideal for marriage (cf. Kunhiyop, 2008:227). The responses of the 34participants and 21 focus group participants to the question regarding their understanding of marriage indicates a belief in the divine origin of marriage. An overwhelming majority of the participants traced the origin of marriage to God. ReverendPolycarp John[16]affirmed that "Marriage is the bond of union existing between a man and a woman as instituted by God in creation and confirmed by the law or faith of those involved" (2012). Oforchukwuasserts the belief in the divine and sacred nature of marriage, "Christian marriage is sacred because it exhibits a religious character" (2010:60).

3.3.4.2 Marriage as a sacrament

Closely linked to the conception of marriage as a divine institution is the concept of marriage as a covenantal sacrament, which connects and joins the individuals beyond the physical bodies. In the COCIN only those baptised are recognised and admitted into full membership. Therefore only the baptised members' weddings are consecreted in the church (COCIN Constitution, 2012:8; COCIN Service Handbook, 2010). The church states its belief in the sacramentality of marriage in its Handbook (COCIN Service Handbook):

> Marriage is a picture of God's eternal loved for his people and of the union between Christ and His Church. So the apostle Paul teaches that the husband must love his wife as Christ love the Church; and the wife must submit to her husband, as the church submits to Christ (2008:7).

The conditions as stipulated in the Constitution and the above statement reflect two basic presuppositions of the church: firstly, that marriage for the COCIN is akin to the relationship between Christ and the church. The marital union is an analogy of the union between Christ and the church, where Christ's unconditional love is demonstrated, and the church submits to him (Ephesians 5:22-32). Secondly, that the COCIN sees a connection between marriage and the doctrine of baptism, which is a declaration of faith, and a basis for belonging and participating in the church.

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[16]The names of Reverend Polycarp John and Reverend Sunday Patrick, names of participants interviewed under the category of clergy are aliases because the two preferred anonymity.

3. 3.4.3 Marriage as a social institution

As a social institution, marriage is viewed by the COCIN as a gift from God to solidify and stabilise society since it provides a stable family structure where individuals are raised, educated and socialised (COCIN Service Handbook, 2008). To give the couple and the children that would be produced in the marriage social legitimacy, the COCIN adheres to the requirements of traditional customary marriage practices, particularly those relating to the bride price. Thus, it is mandatory for the COCIN members that would be wedded in the church to complete all traditional requirements before the church solemnises or sanctifies their marriage. Furthermore, those who are cohabiting and have already started a family but may want the church to join them in a legally recognised marital relationship are expected to fulfil traditional requirements. For example, the wedding announcement sheet reads:

> We announce to the congregation that all requirements of marriage between (name of the groom to be) and (name of the bride to be) are completed, and the two are willing to abide by the conditions of a Christian marriage. We encourage all to respect the sanctity of marriage, therefore we urge anyone who knows a genuine reason why this marriage will not be solemnised according to Christian tradition to come forward.[17]

The above words are translated from Hausa, one of the languages the COCIN uses. According to the requirements of the COCIN this announcement must be made in the congregation(s) at least eight days before the wedding takes place. This practice of announcing an intended wedding is an affirmation that marriage involves a public declaration. It also supports the assertion that marriage in Africa involves not only the couples but their families and the larger community

Historically, marriage negotiations, which carry different meanings and perform different functions, are vital elements of many human societies (Agberemi, 2004:67). In African and Judeo-Christian cultures marriage negotiations are deeply embedded in marriage practices (Matembe, 2004:20; Mawere and Mawere, 2010:226). In societies where the payment of the bride price is practiced, marriage does not only serve the purpose of ligitimate procreation, but gives the offspring of that marriage legitimacy.

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[17]This is a translation from Hausa language which originally reads as follows, *An sanar da jama'a an gama duka alamarin aure tsakanin......., dan ...., da ...., yar ...., kuma dukansu biyu sun yi niyan su cika dukkan abinda aka sharada domin a shaida auren na hanya addinin Kristi ne.Jama'a ina karafafa muku yadda ya wajaba a rike aure da tsarki, kuma na umurce ku, idan akwai wani wanda ya san kwakwaran dalilin da zai hana a shaida wannan aure bisa gan hanyar addinin Kristi ya zo ya fada.*

Reverend Dawuda Leng (2011), a COCIN cleric,in a wedding sermon titled *Marriage is designed for completeness and partnership*stated that Goddid not make man to be alone. Drawing on Genesis 2:18-25, he explained that whether viewed of God or human perspective, it is not good for man to be alone. Therefore, man can only find completeness in relation to another human being and with respect to marriage the woman is the only one who completes the man. However, one can observe that this argument is problematic because it implies that a human being is not complete outside marriage. Significant as marriage is, people do not need it to be complete. The COCIN in its Service Handbook states that "marriage is a gift from God for the proper expression of the natural instinct and desires, which he has given us" (2010:7). This view is compatible with those expressed in the document "Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles", a documentation of the result of scholarly discussions by the Witherspoon Institute. In this document scholars argue that "the institution of marriage provides order and meaning to adult sexual relationships and, more fundamentally, furnishes the ideal context for the bearing and rearing of the young" (2008:3). However, with regards to the presence of marital instability and divorces in human societies, Acolates rightly observes that the "ordering of marriage has not mitigated the disorder (that is the sin, the human brokenness, especially in the form of spousal abuse)" (2011:5) that characterise many marital relationships, Christian marriage inclusive.

3. 3.4.4 Marriage as a heterosexual relationship

The responses to the question on the participants'understanding of marriage indicate that an overwhelming majority,46 (90.1%), view marriage as a monogamous-heterosexual unionor relationship. This is reflected in the participants'use of such phrases, 'union of one man and one woman', 'relationship between a man and a woman', 'covenant between a man and a woman', and 'coming together of a man and a woman' in stating their understanding of marriage.

Table 3.1 Phrases used by participants to describe their understanding of marriage

Phrase	Number of participants	Percentage %
Union of man and woman	19	37.3%
Coming together of a man and a woman	11	21.5%

Relationship between a man and a woman	9	17.6%
Covenant between a man and a woman	7	13.7%
Other[18]	5	9.8%
Total[19]	51	100%

According to the COCIN Vice President, ReverendDachollom Datiri, the heterosexual nature of marriage has a very strong biblical backing because, as recorded in Genesis, God made Adam and subsequently made Eve from Adam's rib. This implies that the marital relationship is a heterosexual relationship (2013). This belief is also affirmed in the COCIN Service Handbook, which states that "God established marriage.... he wants a man and a woman to find help from each other to enable them live in this world full of different forms of suffering"(2008:6).

3.3.4.5 Marriage as a locus of procreation and child-rearing

The COCIN Service Handbook states, "God established marriage for the companionship and the increase of human beings on earth.... He also wants families to be established where children will grow and learn good behaviour and love God" (2008:6). This implies that it is within a marriage that children are to be nurtured in faith and godly virtues. It also presupposes that the ideal place for procreation of godly offspring is within the marriage bond. Thus, according to the COCIN, marriage provides a natural and stable environment for raising children. However, the church does not see procreation as the primary function of marriage, as some early Christian traditions held for centuries. For instance, in one of his writings, the De *coniugiis adulterinis* (composed 419 to 420)Augustine argued strongly that "procreation of children, therefore, is in fact the primary, natural and legitimate purpose of marriage" (cited in Fullam, 2012:n.p). This implies that procreation is the goal of marriage. Although in another argument he places fidelity and sacrament on the same level with procreation, procreation is prioritised (cited in Fullam, 2012: n.p). Aquinas also shared a similar view of the principal function of marriage as that of procreation and education of offspring. He saw faithfulness and the sacrament, when understood in the context of the meaning of Christ and the church, as the secondary end of marriage (Lawler, 1993:60).

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[18] Throughout this study, the term 'other' in the tables refers to phrases that appear once or could not be categorised into one of the categories of phrases (e.g. coming together of two people, union of two people, God's plan for humanity, marriage is a calling, God's plan and to a man and a woman gift for fellowship).

[19] The same population in this table has dropped from 55 to 51 because the question regarding participants' understanding of marriage was not answered by seminary lecturers.

The COCIN sees companionship as the essence of marriage on the same level with procreation. However, problems arise whena marriage does not result in procreation. The church exists within a cultural context where procreation is valued above companionship. It has been argued that the essence of marriage in Africa is traditionally procreation(Kunhiyop, 2008:249). Thus, the inability to procreate has been the cause of marital crisis for many COCIN families. Some studies associate childlessness to divorce in Africa. In a study of 34 ethnic groups Kore found that childlessness was a primary factor in divorce, and that childbearing was more important than the marital union(1989:88).

3.3.4.6 Marriage as a foundation for building family

According to the COCIN Service Handbook, in instituting marriage God intends that families would be established(2008:6). The family institution functions primarily as a social institution for nurturing individuals, thus societies reproduce and maintain themselves through the different family structures that exist within them. Membership and kinship ties in families are not necessarily biological, however, ideal families are founded on marriage. It has been argued that marriages are the building blocks of communities, societies and civilisation thus a society can only be as strong as its marriages and families(United Church of God, 2008:6). Asserting the significance and basic function of family, Zilbach argues that the family ensures moral development and transmission of values, education, provision of activities that create and foster ties among members, communities and the wider society(2003:310-311). Similarly, Waruta warns that "...a weakened institution of family implies an unstable and fragile society, and ... a strong family institution is a prerequisite for healthy and wholesome individuals and social order" (2000:102).

3.3.5 Perception of divorce

Participants were asked to state their understanding of divorce. The table below indicate participants' understanding divorce.

Table 3.2 Participants' perception of divorce

Phrase for divorce	Number of participants	Percentage %
End of the union between a man and	15	27.2%

woman		
Separation of marital union	9	16.3%
Death of a marriage	6	10.9%
Termination of a marital union	11	20%
Deviation from initial plan	4	7.2%
Others	10	18.1%
Total	55	100%

The responses of 15 (27.2%) participants indicated that they understood divorce as the end of a marital union. According to Reverend Datiri, divorce can be a legally accepted situation or one that may not have legal backing but the individuals involved are not interested in continuing the union (2013).

The COCIN teaches that marriage is a lifetime relationship. Consequently, divorce and separation are not considered as possible options even in a dysfunctional marital relation. According to a member of the CWF:

> The COCIN theology and practice all along upholds marriage above singleness. Even though biblically this is sound but the Church has ignored Paul's teaching or approach in 1 Corinthians 7:32, 37-38to this matter. In this passage, Paul gives singleness its rightful place. The context of RCC Gigiring is African where marriage is everything whether or not those bond in marriage live by it. Singleness has no place at all. COCIN ministers will hardly provide space for such teaching even though Paul is straight forward about it (2012).

The participants' understanding reflects the COCIN stance on divorce which appeals strongly to Jesus' words, "Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mark 10:9) for its theology of divorce. This it boldly prints on its marriage certificates as a reminder that divorce is prohibited for members, because marriage is seen not just as a contract, but as a life long covenant between two adults. This aligns with the position of the participants at a seminar of the All African Churches of Christ (AACC) held in Rhodesia in 1963 on *The Christian home and family life* which states:

> Divorce is the breaking of a marriage union consecrated in the sight of God. It is a putting asunder of what God has joined. Thus it is an act of disobedience to the divine will as declared by our Lord: 'What God hath joined let no man put asunder (*Mark* 10.9). Divorce is therefore sin, a sin in consequence of the hardness of the heart of man" (AACC,1963:48-49).

It argues further that even if divorce is the only option, the church must not be involved in the process of the dissolution or even pronounce the dissolution of marriage but leave it to the individuals to make the decision. The COCIN also subscribes to the 'no divorce at all'

interpretation because God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and the Bible says that a spouse is bound to the partner as long as they live (Romans 7:2-3; 1Corinthians 7:39).Thus, divorceis not permitted even in the case of marital unfaithfulness, because the Bible recommends reconciliation(Kunyihop, 2008). Therefore, the COCIN places couples who divorce on church discipline. Some studies disagree with the condemnation of divorce(Adams, 1980; Kisembo, et al, 2010). According to Adams the Bible makes provision for divorce and does not condemn divorce in its totality. He argues that God himself took part in divorce proceeding against Israel (Jeremiah 3:8), so, divorce should not be condemned off hand(1980:23).

The church does not have sole control over marriage and divorce because the government has control over marriage contracts, and divorce is a legal issue that the courts deal with. But the church recognises that divorce has devasting effect on families and the society (Kore, 1989), therefore giving it a theological and pastoral approach is necessary. To this end Kunyihop has recommended: upholding the biblical position of marriage as a life long union, a biblical, realistic and therapeutic approach to address the problem of divorce and dealing with individual cases(2008:254-255).

The contribution of Reverend Datiri gives an all- embracing summary of the Church's beliefs about marriage. He observed that:

> The theology of marriage is simply this, the union between a man and a woman who know the Lord, and so know what they are going into. The union in which they will live together until death. Honouring one another and living to please God (2013).

The above assertion points to the monogamous, sacramental, sacred, social, and heterosexual nature, and permanency of marriage. The silence of reference to procreation in the above conception of marriage implies that procreation is given a secondary place. It is also a pointer to the belief that marriage presumes procreation.

3.4 A critique of the COCIN theology of marriage

Central to the COCIN's theology of marriage are principles drawn from Jesus' teaching and the Pauline address on the issues recorded in Matthew 19; 1Corinthians 7, and Ephesians 5. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the teaching on marriage drawn from these passages has been unbalanced . The theology of marriage, particularly as presented in the New Testament is two- dimensional. An analysis of the above texts would reveal an underlying assumption

that singleness is as much a divine institution as is marriage. Both Jesus and Paul spoke positively about singleness. Jesus even gave a universal (final state) dimension to singleness (Köstenberger and Jones, 2004),that there will be no marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:30). In the case of divorce, the New Testaments recommends singleness or reconciliation (Laney, 1982). However, this is an aspect that has been neglected in the teaching of the COCIN on marriage. Yet, the theology of a church plays a vital role in shaping its perception and practices.

Fundamentally, the COCIN theology of marriage, criticises the "libertarian ideology that elevates human freedom and self-determination as the supreme principles for human relationships" (Köstenberger and Jones, 2004) upheld by many conservative evangelicals. It supports the notion that marriage is a relationship of commitment and responsibility. However, the traditional Christian theology of marriage has come under attack in recent years, even from some evangelical Christians. But Köstenberger and Jones (2004)argue that the institution of marriage needs to be redeemed through restoring marriage to its biblical foundation, that is, putting "God back at the centre of marriage and family." They emphasise the need for a return to biblical ideals of marriage thus:

> On the basis of our conviction that the current cultural crisis with regard to marriage and family is at the root a spiritual crisis, we firmly believe that the only solution is a return to, and rebuilding of, the biblical foundations of these institutions. Once God is removed as the initiator of the institution of marriage and the family, the door is opened to a plethora of human understandings of these terms and concepts, and, in the spirit of postmodernism, no one definition has the right to claim greater legitimacy than any others. The only mechanism to adjudicate between competing definitions, then, is not that of morality but that of public opinion and majority vote (2004:19-20).

Another positive consequence of this theology of marriage, particularly with respect to the heterosexual nature of marriage is that in a context of increasing gender-role confusion, it encourages the retaining of the concept of humanity's complete identity as created male and female. This implies that God's creation of male and female is a deliberate act (Vorster, 2008; Köstenberger and Jones, 2004; Hunt, 2002). According to Vorster, biblical data indicate that the creation order still remains the ultimate test for marital relationship. Therefore viewing marriage from a biblical perspective provides a positive solution to the crisis caused by new patterns of marriage and family life (2008:465-466). Similarly it supports what Kyalo describes as "reverting to the basic essential of marriage" (2012:211).

However, critical issues arise which have not been addressed by the church both in its policies and pastoral practice. Firstly, the pastoral problem that arises from the theology of marriage as a sacrament relates to the question of faith. There are situations where people are baptised for the sake of having a church marriage and not because of their faith, or a desire to obey a biblical principle. Furthermore, people have not been given adequate teaching on the church's subscribingto the biblical concept of monogamy as the ideal form of marriage. Thus, because in-depth teaching on marriage is still lacking, many members of the COCIN are not adequately prepared for the challenges of marital life. One of the consequences of this inadequate teaching on this doctrine is the presence of marital unfaithfulness which sometimes results in divorce. For instance, Divorced Woman C narrated that she became singlewhen her husband left her for a woman he was having a relationship with when they were still married. In her own words, she states:

> My husband of fifteen years left me for a woman he met in his place of work. I work with the Local Government while my husband works with the state Government, so we work in different stations. We were doing well in our marriage, but two years after he went to his new stations things changed. I received rumours of his relationship with the lady but I did not want to believe because he was coming home every weekend as we agreed (2012).

Secondly, the practice of the bride price even though a significant element of the African socio-economic and religious life poses a problem in contemporary practice. Studies have documented the social, religious and financial implications of a bride price (Bishai and Grossbard, 2007; Eriot, 2007; Matembe, 2007 Gonzalez-Brenes, 2005).[20] As has been mentioned, the practice of a bride price has different meaning and value in different societies. However, as Eriot rightly observes, the social value of the bride price has been superceded by financial and other interests(2007:103). In some instances the practice of the bride price is characterised by abuse and criminal acts. In Jos it has been the cause of delayed marriages, domestic violence against women and wrangling between families. Yet, the Church has not been able to address the contemporary pastoral problems that arise from its practice. In the COCIN[21] marriage practice issues of the bride price are dealt with by the families affected. Although pastors and preachers often preach about the challenges the bride price poses to the institution of marriage from the pulpit, problems in this area still persist. The complexities of

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[20]Deo Eriot and Maria Matembe are two sources from a wide range of topics on the bride price related problems in Africa addressed at the International Conference on Bride Price. The conference was born out of the desire to end violence and abuse against women resulting from the interpretation of the payment of a bride price. The motivation was the result of a baseline survey carried out in 2000 through the instruments of consultative workshops,drama, and debate forumswith traditional leaders, policy makers, and civil society. The findings in the survey revealed that the practice of the bride price was 'rife with injustices and ripe for reforms' (Conference Report, 2004:5).

[21]RCC Langtang is the only regional council where the church has made it a law that the bride price is paid in the church and witnessed by the pastor and parents of bride and groom. This RCC has also specified the amount which the bride price cannot exceed.

the bride price require a different approach to that which leaves the issues in the hands of those involved and concerns expressed by few individual pastors from their pulpit preaching. In a materially driven world, the church must take a definite stand to address the issue, by perhaps following the example set by Langtang Council.It is apparent that the COCIN's theology of marriage is drawn from the Bible. However, as Siwila cautions, although it is a good idea for the church to use biblical texts to address marital issues, there is also a need to caution the way the Bible is being used (2011:141).

3.5The role of women in the COCIN

The role of women in the COCIN has been motivated by two influences: patriarchal culture and missionary legacy. The structure of the COCIN reflects a system of patriarchy which seriously apportions power to men. Scholars have shown that in the African culture, male values are predominant while female values are undermined, placing women in a disadvantaged position (Kanyoro and Oduyoye 2006:4). Roles are prescribed for the welfare of the community and women tend to take secondary place which often makes their participation in religious and the larger society inadequate (Oduyoye, 2006:10). It would not be an understatement to say that religion, which places lots of restrictions on women, has been one of the strongest instruments used in defence of patriarchal systems. Consequently, gender inequality is being promoted in the church and the wider society. Rakoczy states that patriarchy is an ideology that enforces male superiority in all structures and dimensions of life (2004:10). This implies that patriarchy extends beyond the territory of religion as has been discussed in Chapter Two.

Missionary practiceshave a great influence on how a church founded by missionaries would later be. According to Bavinck, "The history of mission is of great value to the missionary practice" (1960:284). In the context of pastoral ministry, the role and position women hold in the COCIN can be traced to the way the founding missionaries dealt with women issues, particularly the involvement of women in the ministry. The right of all believers to missionary involvement was not applied in the mission of the church right from the beginning. The missionaries made marriage, especially for women, a prerequisite for missionary work. For instance, the German missiologist Gustav Warmeck was reported to have argued that although women are valuable to mission work, their role must be that of the subordinate role of missionary wives or missionary assistants, and they must not be allowed

to preach because that would be unhealthy and contradictory to the Scriptures. As a result, women were not entitled to any missionary (and theological) training. His conclusion was that real missionaries are ordained men (Fiedler, 1994:292). Warmeck's position was supported by an earlier resolution at the 1902 Congo Missionary Conference, where it was decided that women missionaries would not work well on their own in Africa (1994:310). Although not all missionary bodies agreed with Warmeck, because some of them engaged women as missionaries in their own right, the same cannot be said of all mission work in Africa. Many women were involved in mission work (Tett, n.d:38-39) but did not play any major role. These women were expected to keep away from regular church offices such as elder and ordained pastors. This agrees with Pui-lan's argument that missionaries did not only take the Bible and Christianity to the people "but also their cultural assumptions of womanhood, gender roles and sexuality" (2002:27).

The British branch of the SUM did not accept women for mission work, and single women were particularly thought to be a burden to the whole mission (Fiedler, 1994:297). Mission was seen as a man's job. However, not all SUM branches held the same view about mission work. For instance, the US branch sent Johanna Veenstra and other single women to work among the Jukuns in Benue, central Nigeria (Action Partners, n.d). Veenstra exerted a tremendous influence on the area of her mission work (Tett, n.d). The British branch strongly opposed the engagement of women because they thought that women were not capable of dealing with the responsibilities involved in mission work. Thus the few women that were involved in mission work were seen as holding forth for the men (Fiedler, 1994:300). This missionary practice of women's restriction found the patriarchal soil of African culture fertile for maintaining its male-gender privilege even in ministry which is the call and responsibility of all. However, it cannot be said that women were never involved. The story of Vou illustrates that women were (under certain circumstance), involved in pastoral work. According to Gaiya, Bot and his wife Vou were among the early converts in Berom land. In 1927 Bot and Vou responded to the call to evangelise the Aten, the neighbors of Berom who were believed to be cannibals. Bot became ill and was taken to the Vom hospital for treatment, and Vou had to remain behind to teach the converts the Word of God. After the treatment, Bot's sight became poor and he could not read, but Vou, who had learned Aten, helped the Reverend Suffil with translation work(2004). Concerning Vou's pastoral work Gaiya also reported that:

> The evangelistic and pastoral work among the Aten was solely handled by Vou who was full of joy when Song, one of their first converts, was ordained in the church. Pastor Song became the shepherd of the church(2004:n.p).

This report confirms the earlier assertion that where women were involved in ministry it was seen as holding forth for the men. The church failed to recognise this unique contribution consequently it was unable to incorporate women in its pastoral ministry. The belief that pastoral work was a male preserve was so strong that men failed to see that when given the opportunity, women could also take on pastoral responsibilities. The words of Oduyoye point to the influence of missionaries in the exclusion of women in pastoral ministry:

> The way Western churches that have been implanted in Africa look at women mirrors their predecessors…These churches, which most often take the form of patriarchal hierarchies, accept the material services of women but do not listen to their voices, seek their leadership, or welcome their initiatives (1995:172-173).

Elsewhere she has argued that the church has been unable to maintain just relations between men and women because "patriarchy ousted God's intention of partnership" (1993:124). Consequently, the state of partnership of men and women is a state of sin.

Statistics show that women form 65% of the population of the church. According to Reverend Datiriwomen in the COCIN have a very significant role and women are the majority in most churches. In one sense women are the backbone of the church, but because of the influence of culture, women have not been allowed to play the vital role that they can play that will salvage marriages. He maintains that he would like to see a situation where more women are involved in the counselling ministry, because he is convinced that there are many women who can give very good counselling to help marriages that are floundering He further states that he believes that women can make very good pastors but the policy of the church has not allowed that.Consequently, they have not been given the freedom to act and render the help that they are capable of. As a result, even in premarital counselling, which is a vital need for people preparing for marriage, women are rarely involved (2013).

Women's presence in the COCIN today is felt through the CWF, which is the most organised group in the church. Many pastors in the COCIN acknowledge the place of the group as the financial muscle of many congregations. Membership of the CWF is limited to married women. The CWF organises its activities around offering what can be described as pastoral care to its members and equipping them with skills for home management. At the GCC level the CWF has a skills acquisition centre that emphasises vocational educational specialities for

girls. However, only a few girls have access to this programme because it is organised at the GCC level. This structure for women empowerment is not made available for girls at the local or congregational level. Apparently, the CWF is unaware of its pastoral responsibility to single women in the church at the congregational level. A member of the COCIN Youth focus group observed that the CWF has not reached unmarried women because their activities are centred on home management. He explained that although women acquire useful skills in crafts such as soap making, tie and dye, sewing, knitting and cookery they have not extended this to single women at the congregational level (2012).Reverend Pokol stated that:

> Women play a very impressive role in the COCIN. Their ministry is holistic as they go on evangelism and outreaches, they teach women how to manage their homes, their domestic centre helps train young women in trade and business for them to be self- employed. The effect on the church's ministry to single women is not encouraging, because it has not influenced ministry to them in anyway. The concentration is on married women and preparation for marriage (2012).

Pastoral ministry in the COCIN is viewed through the lense of ordination and leadership, which has been solely a male prerogative; this point will be discussed at length in Chapter Six. Furthermore, the practice of ministry in the COCIN has conditioned members round a mind-set that unless it is an ordained minister or someone designated as pastor that offered ministry, ministry offered by any other is not to be respected. Consequently, pastoral care offered by women is neither recognised as pastoral care nor honoured because they are not pastors. The church has failed to acknowledge that women's contribution to pastoral ministry is vital to its overall ministry. As Oates observes, "in many respects, women are superior to men in the caring ministry. Yet the network of women who have become established in pastoral care positions of influence and ecclesiastical power is ...very sparse (1990:835). Oduyoye has made a similar observation in her assertion that because mission- founded churches have inherited forms of patriarchal hierarchies, they only accept the material service of women, but reject their leadership or initiaves(1995).

According to a member of the CWF focus group:

> The role of the women in COCIN is largely service in the church and evangelism. Women do not have much at the decision making level of the church. All women, singles inclusive are expected to serve others. In fact, the church always proclaims that women are the church's backbone but when it comes to meeting their need, they are expected to care for themselves. In respect to the singles, the women are limited on how far they can go because the policies are not accommodating (2012).

This comment suggests that the COCIN does not believe that women have the ability to make decisions. The idea that women's ideal role is that of service, imply that men are the leaders. However, it has been argued that women also think of service as their defined role in ministry. Messer echoes the danger in women thinking of ministry only as material service, when he asserts that although women need not give up their caring and nurturing qualities, women tend to operate on the servant side of ministry only, and face the danger of losing their vision and value of leadership(1989:104).

Although women's presence is felt in the church, patriarchal bias has restricted their role to that of material services and evangelism,thus trivialising their contributions in other aspects of the church's life. Furthermore, women have internalised the culture of patriarchy which render them inferior to men in intellect, and are therefore limited in their scope of functioning. Because women have paid more attention to 'good' homemaking and less on developing individual potentialthat can be utilised outside the context of marriage,their impact has not been felt in the area of ministry to single women. This has negative implications for both marriage and singlehood. It portrays marriage as something that limits an individuals'potentialand capability to function optimally in the wider society. For singleness, it implies that it is a problem that can be solved through marriage.

In addition, the leadership structure of the COCIN, which is a reflection of its missionary legacy, has not provided women with equal space to prove and distinguish themselves in the church as co-workers and co-priests in the expansion of God's kingdom, and the building up of the believing community. It has failed to provide, in the words of Green "... a space in which the women are able to reclaim some personal control over their lives" (1993:162). Phiri has observed that the church may have rejected some cultural practices that demean and undermine the status of women, but it has also imposed some restrictions that are oppressive to women. Thus, the church's understanding of God and the Scriptures have informed the teaching and practices that relegate women to the background and place men in the limelight of Christianity (1997:43).According to Uchendu, patriarchy gives men an unrefutable favoured position that makes males grow with the notion that they are superior and therefore have an inherent right to rule and dominate(2008:13). It would not be an understatement to say that this is the worldview that is used to define the role of women in the COCIN. Hence, leadership, and by implication, power, is gendered in ways that favour the male rather than a complementary gender relationship between males and females.

The COCIN tradition often demonstrates a discrepancy between faith and practice. The church affirms the priesthood of all believers and includes women in the ministerial teams. Yet, women cannot go beyond passing the communion bread and wine to the congregation, preaching, teaching and other activities that are confined to women. There are areas of the ministry of the COCIN which are the exclusive reserves of men, and forbidden to women. This exclusion of women raises much suspicion. This begs the question - why are men afraid of the involvement of women in the pastoral ministry of the church? It can be inferred that theCOCIN opposes women's participation because it entailsthe sharing of power and questioning of establised structures that give men power.Tappa shares a similar view in her argument that the power-oriented nature of the structure of the church, which manifests in clericalism, often denies general participation. Those who suffer the most are women(1987:103). Church tradition has played a significant role in the exclusion of women in pastoral ministry in the COCIN and many denominations in Nigeria. Mwaura argues that African culture contain some negative aspects which have been reinforced and legitimised by scriptural texts and Christian tradition that are not friendly to women(2003:80). Furthermore, discrimination on the grounds of gender is shown in involving single men where necessary. Single men are allowed to lead worship services and some are even accepted as pastors, but never single women. Although the COCIN affirms the important contributions women make to the church, its structure does not allow them to be involved in every aspect of the life of the church. Single women are affected the more. Bennett suggests that acknowledging singleness enables the church to recognise the importance of the singularity of God's grace, and of cultivating a life of virtue. She argues that:

> [The] picture of Christian household is incomplete if we do not consider singleness, partly because considering singleness is a recognition that households do not bear identical character to each other; the baptized are not all married with children, nor does it appear that marriage and family should be the main emphasis for Christians (2008:83).

With regards to the use of religious ideologies as a tool for male dominance, Tappa, drawing from Moltmann argues that although patriarchy did not originate from Christianity, Christianity was unable to oppose the system. Instead, from inception men have been the major role-players which have served the purpose of patriarchy. She argues further that to pursue the agenda of male domination, Genesis 3:16 has been looked upon as a divine prescription rather than the description of the result of the Fall(1987:101, 104). Thus, Goviden's call that the Church must explore, expose and discard practices that are discriminatory to women(1994:285), becomes a vantage point for the healthy development of

gender equity in the COCIN. Similarly, until the COCIN learns to deal with the mechanisms that support patriarchal structures and ideologies, it can never be truly the agent of liberation. Until it sets aside power and forges an atmosphere where gifts and calling are utilised irrespective of gender and status, it can never be the community of faith that God desires.

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter three provided a brief synopsis of the missional development of the COCIN including the role played by the missionary founders, the SUM, in the policy and doctrinal formation for the church. The discussionhas indicated the following: firstly, that the missionary strategies of evangelism through social action produced fruitful results. The contemporary COCIN beliefs, structures and practices reflect its missionary legacy.

Secondly, the structure and policies of the COCIN reflect a serious gender gap. Although there has been significant change in the involvement of women in the COCIN, the only leadership positions available to women are women's fellowship leaders, elders and other related subsidiary functions. Women do not form part of the membership of the Executive Council. This does not define the sort of inclusion that would increase women's level of participation, and the impact they would make in the pastoral ministry church. The restriction of women in leadership roles in the church suggests that women are less valuable in the service of God. Therefore, ministry must be viewed from its proper perspective, thatis, the right of every believer, and the inclusion of women is a demonstration of the equality of believers in grace and humanity.

Thirdly, with respect to the church's theology of marriage, the only documents in the COCIN that address the question are the Constitution and service hand book. The teaching of the church on marriage also reflects its theology of marriage. However, there are pastoral problems that arise in terms of practice that the church has not taken steps to address in its policies and pastoral practice. Similarly, the church has put aside the teaching on singleness, an aspect that the Bible treats together with marital issues.Singleness is neglected in the COCIN theology of marriage and its teaching on marriage is skewed in favour of marriage, which has led to the marginalisation of single women. The church needs to investigate its teaching with regards to singleness with a view to a shift towards a biblical theology of

marriage that includes singleness. COCIN's theology of marriage must enhance and foster positive attitudes towards single people.

Finally, the synopsis of the COCIN has indicated a gap in its pastoral practice that needs to be addressed. The status and role of women in the church and the lack of teaching on singleness as a biblically recognised state creates a lacuna in the ministry of the church. The questions raised are: what has informed this neglect or oversight? How has this impacted on the pastoral ministry of the church? What should the church do? These are some of the questions that this study attempts to answer in the subsequent chapters. Chapter Four, deals with ministerial training in the COCIN with a focus on ascertaining its adequacy in preparing pastors to offer pastoral ministry to single women.

CHAPTERFOUR

Pastoral training and singleness in the Church of Christ in Nigeria

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three provided an overview of the missional development of the COCIN. It explored its mission, vision, doctrinal beliefs, strategies, church structure, theology of marriage and the role of women. The COCIN is a missionary-founded church that has its guidelines based on the principle of self-support, self-propagation and self-governance and rooted in the belief in theinspiration, infallibility and authority of the Bible in matters of life and conduct. With respect to marriage and singleness it was argued that although the COCIN claims to base its theology of marriage on certain biblical texts, itsapplication is not gender balanced. The teaching and ministry practice of the COCIN has promoted an incorrect perception of singleness, and the exclusion of single women from giving and receiving pastoral ministry. Furthermore, that culture, the missionary legacy of the exclusion of the woman and the promotion of their passive participation in ministry, as well as a skewedinterpretation of the Scriptures have impacted negatively on the status of women in the church and on pastoral care of single women. These are partly responsible for the silenced voices of women and the lack of pastoral ministry to the never married and divorced women in the church. In the same chapter it was shown that education was key to the establishment, growth, and expansion of the COCIN.

Chapter Four builds on aspects of Christian education in the COCIN.However, its main focus is the pastoral training offered by the church. The purpose is to ascertain the extent to which this training has prepared the COCIN pastors to deal with gender complexities in their exercise of ministry. This chapter contains the meaning and perceptions of theology and theological education as employed in the study. Itfocuses on the exploration of the methodology and strategies that the COCIN uses for the training of pastors. In this chapter the feminist framework of thinking is used to evaluate the pastoral training of the church in relation to its theological beliefs, methodology and curriculum content. This forms the

background to the argument in support of an engendered curriculum of theological education to meet contemporary pastoral needs arising in the church.

The theological beliefs underpinning ministry and pastoral training in the COCIN are drawn from the church's mission and vision, its doctrinal beliefs and interpretation and application of biblical texts. These theological beliefs will be used to interrogate and engage the pastoral ministry of the church to single women in the subsequent chapters. Therefore, the questions it seeks to answer are: what has been the nature of pastoral training in the COCIN? Does this training adequately prepare pastors to address gender complexities of ministry? What does the COCIN gain from engendering its theological education?

4.2 Meaning of theology and theological education

4.2.1 Defining theology

Drawing from Karl Berth, theology has been described as the science of critique, which involves the examining of the proclamation of the church to ascertain its accuracy and faithfulness to the Word of God (Enlow, 2006:3). The phrase 'science of critique' in this description is as essential as it is problematic, because it implies that theology can be dealt with without necessarily believing in God or having any experience of him. It also denotes a removal of theology from a spiritual discipline and locates it in what has been described as as a "move from a divine illumination of the mind to a cognitive habit, a technical, pragmatic discipline" (Farley, 1983:336). However, this does not alienate theology from the use of scientific methods of varifying facts, because theology demands a "critical scientific enquiry as well as childlike faith" (Heyns and Pieterse, 1990:4).

Heyns and Pieterse state that theology is an interrogation of beliefs arising from religious contemplation conducted in the context of faith 'to promote faithful living.' This means that theology is not just the understanding derived from knowledge and information about God that inspires faith, but also the practical application of faith (1990:3-4). It entails what Kretzschmar describes as "being involved alongside God in the world" (1994:15)for the purpose of transformation.

4.2.2 The meaning of theological education

Over the years, various descriptions have been used to portray theological education as seminary education in which the goal is to equip individuals for the Christian ministry. However, todayit has assumed a definition that extends beyond seminary education (Morgan, 2008). Although theological education means different things in different contexts, a general theme that appears in every context is itslinkto preparation for church service and leadership. Some studies have linked theological education with transformation. For instance, Kinsler and Emery view theological education as a process that is concerned with"personal, ecclesial and social change in accordance with God's purpose for humankind"(1991:41). This implies that any theological education that does not take care of the need for personal, ecclesial and social transformation ceases to function as theological education. According to McKinnon theological education in Africa is understood as:

> The discipline of enabling students to learn what they can about God through the Bible and the Spirit in order that their lives might be shaped in such a way as to increase devotion to God and service to others (2010:n.p).

This conception of theological education underscores knowledge of God through the Bible, love for him and service to others as core elements of theologogical education in Africa. Although this might not seem to be a strong point, it describes to a certain extent what theological education means in the COCIN. Kumalo shares a similar view when he argues that the process of theological education must be consistent with its goal, that is the building of the community of faith (2008/2009). Thus, theological education must take a broad and holistic approach thatimpact on beliefs, values and actions.

Theological education is the instrument churches use toprovide both spiritual and academic resources for ministry. Hunter suggests that theological education should be viewed as part of the outreach and mission of the church because "ministry is directed toward a people and world deserving of resourceful, intelligent, and sensitive service...." (1982:13).Drawing on Wesley, Pieterse holds that theological education is central to the formation of Christians who are passionately committed and intellectually and theologically competent to represent the mystery of the Christian faith in a world that is characterised by diversity, complexities and increasing plurality (2004).

4.3 Theological beliefs underpinning pastoral training and ministry practice in the COCIN

4.3.1 The theology of the Great Commission

The COCIN understands the Great Commission as an instruction that commands the participation of every believer in the task of evangelism, outreach and ministry. The Reverend Dr. Musa Gotom who is also a formerpresident of the COCIN,has argued that evangelism and fulfilling the Great Commission is the task of every believer(1984). Habila reports that Reverend Bewarang affirmed the close link between the Great Commission and the teaching ministry of the church in his speech at the 2013 COCIN TEE graduation. According to Bewarang, the growing rate of social ills and threats in life calls for the Great Commission's instruction to teach and evangelise to be taken seriously. He explained that the TEE programme was initiated as a result of the need for an indigenous form of training on evangelism to aid in church (2013:8).

The COCIN perceives itself as a church that has the mandate to equip and empower its members to fulfil the call to witness and be co-workers with God in building his Kingdom. In a sermon on the theme, *Those who walk with God, work for God*, and taking his text from Nehemiah 4:1-9, Reverend Dashan, pointed out that the Great Commission is a call to every believer to walk with God and work for him. He explained that it is an instruction that comes with great responsibility, which is to go forth and to give (2013).The perception of the Great Commission as a command binding only on the apostles changed in 1892 when Carey argued strongly in his booklet, *An enquiry into the obligation of Christians to use means for the conversion of heathen,* that the Great Commission was binding on all Christians of all times. Carey's argument gave a new understanding of the Great Commission, which became a driving force that stirred the Protestant missionary movement. Thus, for Protestant Christian, "devotion to the Great Commission is a critical marker of spiritual vitality, and points to the core of what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ" (Robert, 2005:18).

The vision of the COCIN is to have a church that is "united and committed to worshipping God and spreading the holistic gospel..." (COCIN Constitution 2012:5). This vision is founded on the instructions of Jesus Christ, which is referred to as the Great Commission (COCIN Fwol-Vorok, 2009). The COCIN Fwol-Vorok stated in its strategic plan for the

period 2009-2013 one of its core values as "reaching the immediate and remote communities with the complete (holistic) gospel of Christ as enshrined in the Scriptures" (2009:5). For the church this entails going out for evangelism and supporting mission work (COCIN Fwol-Vorok, 2009:17).

The COCIN views evangelism and teaching as the key elements of the Great Commission. According to COCIN Fwol-Vorok, accomplishing the task of the Great Commission requires sound biblical teaching. In order to achieve its aim, the church uses strategies such as:

- Organising sound biblical teaching.

- Encouraging members to enrol in the Extension Bible Studies programme.

- Creating awareness for the need to consistently attend the weekly Bible Study programme of the church.

- Encouraging members who are able to teach to make themselves available for teaching in the church.

- Strengthening the existing discipleship class in the church and identifying teachers that will continue the work of teaching from among the disciples (2009:15).

In order to challenge and charge its members with the task of evangelism, the COCIN often uses the lyrics of hymns that capture the themes of Christian missions, service and reward in its recommended hymn book, *Sacred Songs and Solos.* For instance, to motivate congregations to participate in the Great Commission, the following lyrics are often stressed: *Sacred Songs and Solos* 791:

> Have you been true to the trust He left us?
> Do we seek to do our best?"
> If in our hearts there is naught condemns us
> We shall a glorious rest.

And 813:

> Let none hear you idly saying,
> "There is nothing I can do",
> While the souls of men are dying,
> And the Master calls for you.
> Take the task He gives you gladly,
> Let His work your pleasure be;
> Answer quickly when he calleth:
> Here am I; send me, send me!"

4.3.2 The theology of Christian service

Theological education for the COCIN stems from a pastoral and ecclessiological theology that understands the church as a community comprising of people with diverse gifts that will enable them serve.The slogan "Every man is saved to serve. It is his business to preach" (Cooper, 1921:92; Rengshwat, 2011:130) was a guiding principlein the education programme of SUM, and other faith missions. The missionaries believed that utilising the contributions and gifts of the people was a determining factor in what the church would become. Maxwell is said to have noted that "it was not going to be possible to build a Church organisation without education" because "'One cannot build up a church on ignorance'" (COCIN, 2013:2). According to the COCIN Constitution (2012) the purpose of the church is worship, evangelism and building of the Christ body through the exercise of spiritual gifts. The church achieves this process of building through training lay people, particularly in the TEE programme and encouraging the establishment of schools at the different administrative levels of church. This point will be elaborated upon in subsequent discussions on the method of training in the COCIN in this chapter.

The COCIN believes that education is required to preserve the society, therefore the church views itself as a 'light bearer, pathfinder and guide' in educational matters and thus eevery year the COCIN observes the *COCIN Eeducation Wweek*. The church dedicated the 2013 programme to the COCIN educational institutional. Topics of discussions included a historical reflection on the development of education in the COCIN, the role of parents in their children's education, church schools, and examinations and quality control in COCIN schools (COCIN, 2013).

Christian education is a divine service, which builds on the foundation laid by Christ and the Apostles. According to Rengstorf, education of the believers exemplifies "a high sense of mission and an equally strong sense of service" (1995:158)and it is through possessing a clearer understanding of the Word that pastors would be able to equip their congregations. Kent is in agreement when he states that the teaching of God's truth is central to all pastoral care(1971:72). It is within a similar framework of thinking that the COCIN affirms the centrality of theological education to its life and witness as a church. It also affirms the importance of training for the equipping of God's people for ministry against the backdrop that all members are called into ministry by virtue of their incorporation into the the church

through baptism (Gotom, 1984). Therefore, theological education is needed to equip the church to fulfil the call:

> [To] prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-14).

Although all are called into service, Ephesians 4 alludes to church ministry offices when it refers to people being gifted as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Thus, the COCINviews some men as possessingahigher calling to a more official and public work in the ministry. These are designated as 'minister' or 'clergy' and are conceived as men who work on behalf of the church. In the COCIN,ministers are tasked with equiping other members for the work of ministry. Despite the fact that men and women are participants in the production, acquisition and application of knowledge, in the COCIN single women may have the opportunity to produce and acquire knowledge, but face restrictions in terms of the interpretion and application of the knowledge they have acquired. Furthermore, pastoral training in the COCIN is a generalised training in which the individual gifts, skills and understanding of pastors are not taken into consideration. Consequently, pastors are not developed in areas of personal strength and specialised needs of the congregations they serve. Further still, because ministry training to a large degree has been undertaken by men, the practice of ministry has not addressed the specific needs of single women, but the general concerns of men and women.

4.3.3 The theology of the priesthood of all believers

The COCIN draws on its teaching of the priesthood of all believers from 1 Peter 2:9. Consequently, one of its doctrinal sources are that "the church is a chosen community of believers, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people….in view of this, it is the duty of the Church to strive to live a holy life" (COCIN Constitution, 2012:6). The priesthood of all believers means that believers, males and females, are equal heirs of God's Kingdom. It means they can participate in all ministries in line with their calling and gifts. Collectively,the COCINviews itself as a community which forms a priesthood of men and women who believe and are baptised in Christ.Affirming the priesthood of all believers, Reverend Dashan, stated that God has called both men and women to be priests, irrespective of their gender and status. He maintained that the instrument God chooses to use is ultimately His choice (2013). Although the COCIN affirms this theology, it nonetheless recognises the priestly office as a call to some from among the community of priests. It believes that lay

members cannot act in the capacity of the priestly office holder, because only those chosen from among believers to act in that capacity can exercise or perform the duties of this office on behalf of the believing community.

Despite the COCIN's affirmation that the priesthood comprises every believer, emphasis has been placed on priestly office, thus rendering other aspects of ministry insignificant. A close observation of the doctrine of the priesthood, however,indicates that this theology emphasises the corporate responsibility and accountability of believers. In addition,it challenges the accumulation of power and authority in the hands of a few individuals (Jeyaraj, 2006). Thus, it can be deduced that an uncritical evaluation and practice of the theology of the priesthood of all believers has far- reaching implications for the pastoral practice and the overall ministry of the COCIN. As y observed above, the practice associated with the priesthood of all believers does not presuppose that every individual can exercise the rights to, or perform the priestly function. Ministry offices may have the tendency to create unhealthy church hierarchies which must be discouraged, but they maintain order in the church. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, it must be understood that the doctrine does not support the apparent gender and status bias reflecting in the COCIN's restriction of single women, in its function and application. Instead, it recognises that every believer is a building block in the spiritual house (1Peter 2). As mentioned in Chapter Three, the COCIN excludes women from the priestly role and marginalises single women in its practice. In this regard one can deduce that the COCIN practice contradicts the belief in the priesthood of all believers which it affirms and even states as one of its doctrines.

4.3.4 The theology of the church as the household of God

The church has been described as a household in the context of the triad household of love, faith, and hope (Antone, 2006). Another belief that underscores ministry in the COCIN is that of the church as the household of God.Basic traiats of a healthy family such as nurturing, commitment, shared responsibility, affirmation, support and participation (Curran, 1983; Otto, 1962)can be identified in the COCIN. Young believers are nurtured through such programmes as a believers' class or discipleship class. The virtues of support and sharing are demonstrated in acts such as bringing gifts of food, kitchen utensils and cash donations to a family during weddings, burials and thanksgiving. Visiting the sick (often accompanied by cash gifts to assist in offsetting hospital bills) is considered as an act of care and Christian

obligation. In some instances women may take turns among themselves to spend the night in hospital with a member of the fellowship. Some congregations and church groups have fellowship meals either monthly or quaterly. During these fellowship meals food is either prepared on site or brought from members' home. This time of sharing mirrors household activities where family members serve each other.During times of bereavement or crisis church members may spend time and undertake tasks that are supposed to be carried out by the family. In some cases where a group member is affected, other group members are assigned daily to assist in carrying out tasks that the family needs.

The household metaphor has implications for the pastoral ministry of the COCIN in respect of single women. It means that the COCIN members must appreciate that those who belong to Christ are members of a common family, who deserved to be accepted, nurtured, cared for and given unconditional love, a sense of responsibilty, safety, protection and an identity (Antone, 2006:55). Families offer supportive human relationships and look out to the spiritual and physical well-being of each family member (Hepner, 2005:52). Single women deserve to be loved and cared for by other members of the new household.

With regard to the nature of the church and its relationship to marriage, family and singleness, Scott in his review of Bennet's (2008) book, *Water is thicker than blood: an Augustinian theology of marriage and singleness,* asserts that:

> Bennet proposes a theological vision –an ecclesiology –in which Christians first understand themselve as members of the body (sic) of Christ with a unified history in which all participate in God's grace. Only when keeping this in mind can Christians understand how marriage and the various states of singleness (virginity, divorce, widowhood, and monasticism) relate to each other and to the church as the household of God (2009:403).

Bennet's perception of the church underscores the significance of believers understanding their Christian identity and position in the community of faith regardless of their status. It also l demonstrates that the church as a household comprises different people, young and old, the married and the single. Therefore, it can be argued that the paradigm of the family of God is an appropriate model for understanding the church. However, the question that remains unanswered is: do single women in the COCIN experience the church as a household where they are accepted, loved and empowered to fulfil their God-given potential and find wholeness of life?

4.3.5 The church as a communty

Another belief that is closely linked to that of the church as a household is that of the church as a community. It has been argued that culture has impacted on the church in many negative ways, but this is an African cultural concept that not only has the support of the Bible, but also has a transformative power. The Anaguta, Afizere, Berom and Irigwe from the four local government areas that make up the dominant tribes in Jos have a common practice of communal labour refered to in Hausa as *'gaya'* or 'team work'. In this practice a group of people work together on a friend's or community member's project such as farm work or the building of a house. During the harvest the community takes turns to harvest members' crops. Many pastors in the COCIN have used the principles of *gaya* to mobilise their congregations for executing building projects, sourcing funds to support mission work and providing emergency shelter or relief for crisis victims. The concept of *gaya* reflects the gains of communal labour, such as conservation of time and energy and yielding greater productivity. It also demonstrates the structure that tradition puts in place to ensure that values of the community are preserved.

A related concept is that of *abokane (*men) and *kawaye* (women), meaning friends. This concept which in contemporary usage is called *committee of friends,* demonstrates the power of peer group associations. In the practice of *abokane* and *kawaye* people who share the same interests come together as friends and support each other. It is a concept that women have utilised to provide mentoring and role models for the younger generation. In many instances, *abokane* and *kawaye* have provided support for each other against environmental pressures. Some fellowship groups, especially the women fellowship groups, have used this concept to provide support for group members and promote healthy competition that helps in achieving the projects and goals of the fellowship. African traditional societies used peer groups as educational tools to pass down the values of their communities. As Mwiti and Dueck rightly argue "This system of training younger generations created a positive peer group that assured each individual of not only accountability, but also of mutual affirmation, identity, and group support at each stage" (2006:146). However, because single women lack a forum in which this concept can be applied, they are often left without support from their peers in the church. By supporting peer association among single women, the church will enable them to plan their own programmes (under the supervision of the church leadership) that will enhance their spiritual development. It will also help single women who may be experiencing

difficulty fitting into any of the categorised groups in the church, to find a place where they can interact with their peers.

4.3.6 The shepherd motif

The task of the edification and building of the Church cannot be divorced from the facilitatory example of Christ's ministry. As Wright points out "Jesus' ministry was that of helping people achieve fullness of life, assisting them to develop an ability to deal with the problems and conflicts of life" (2011:24). The Church is called to facilitate wholeness in the individual. This involves guiding, leading, caring, nurturing and encouraging, which necessitates teaching and training of others in order to sustain this task.

The shepherd model is a vital element in the pastoral ministry of the COCIN. Reverend Datiri in his presentation titled, *The essence of the shepherd's responsibility*, at the 2013 COCIN Fwol-Vorok Pastors and Elders' Retreat, asserted that the church comprises of both sheep and shepherds, and every member qualifies as sheep or shepherd, because "All Christians look like sheep when viewed from the front and like shepherds when viewed from the rear" (2013:12). Using the acronym G-O-E-S, Datiri argues that the pastor is a guardian, overseer, example and shepherd who has been called to various functions. Firstly, to guard both the Wword and the people entrusted to his care. He or she is to preserve doctrinal purity and balance, and to encourage spiritual growth and discourage sin in the members. Secondly, to oversee the administrative and spiritual well-being of the Church using the mantle of accountability given to him or her. Thirdly, to exemplify a concrete, tangible model of what being a Christian means. Fourthly, to shepherd the members of the congregation through concrete actitivies such as monitoring their spiritual growth and encouraging them to grow in love and obedience to Christ, caring and healing(2013:43-61). This conception of the supervisory aspect of the pastoral ministry resonates with Trueblood's claim that:

> The ministry is for all who are called to share in Christ's life, the pastorate is for those who possess the peculiar gift of being able to help other men and women to practice any ministry to which they are called(1967:41).

According to Jeyaraj, the shepherd image suits the description of pastoral ministry because it properly expresses the dimension of suffering and care. Its association with agriculture is applicable to all times and contexts because human life is closely linked to agriculture, as a source of human existence. Maintaining further that the phrase 'pastor-teacher' in Ephesians 4:11 stresses the function of the pastor as one who feeds and cares in the pastoral

ministry(2006:204). Wuest argues that the duties of the shepherd include "teaching, feeding, guiding and guarding the flock of God" (1954:124). Thus, it can be inferred that education is an indispensable aspect of the pastoral ministry, because it joins every other function of ministryatiri's assertion that the pastoral enterprise must be founded on theology, and not treated like contemporary social science is in line with h the above argument(2013:27).

However, the shepherd model of ministry has been criticised for being a tool to encourage and maintain oppressive structures. It encompasses the tendency to create dependency, making those being shepherded to become objects of the shepherd who is the leader and they merely the followers. Pattison rightly argues that "the fact that images are taken from the Bible may give them power and authority", which heightens the possibility of their being used "to legitimate ideas derived from other sources" (2000:122). Similarly, Toppin observes that the shepherd image is inextricably linked to human institutions and manifests injustice and marginalisation of women in the hierarchy of gender roles which support male dominance. She argues that "the imagery of the shepherd as a pastoralmodel, although appearing to be alongside the marginalised… still evokes a sense of injustice, for its imagery has played a significant role in the suppression of women" (2007:1). She contends that with respect to the position of women in the Church, a strong sexism is embedded in the shepherd model of ministry (2007:5). Toppin lists some limitations of the shepherd model as being androcentric and lacking a collaborative approach to ministry practice (2007:8).

In contrast to what the shepherd model has become today, the shepherding pattern of ministry as presented in the Bible is comprehensive and inclusive of the weak and strong, female and male, married and single. All categories of people were given priority in the ministry of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the perfect pattern for ministry. The Gospel presents Jesus' ministry in the context of education, because every encounter presented an opportunity for teaching. This corroborates the argument that ministry must be modelled on the example set by Christ. Jeyaraj observes that Jesus' teaching ministry radically challenged the priests, Pharisees, Sadducess and scribes' interpretation of the Torah. The time he spent with his disciples oriented and gave the disciples a new perspective of God and ministry for people(2006:252). Therefore, given that there are images that are more empowering and transformatory, it is argued along with Toppin that the shepherd model is not an appropriate model to reach single women with pastoral ministry (2007:8).

4.4 The strategies and methodology of the COCIN theological education

4.4.1 Theological colleges

The COCIN's emphasis on theological education is an acknowledgement of the importance of education to solid pastoral ministry and the objective of the Church (Gutip, 1998). Theological education for the COCIN was more or less a Bible-based Christian education focused on evangelism. It was centred on moral, spiritual and character formation, and preparing individuals for spreading the Gospel and working in full- time ministry in local congregations (Rengshwat, 2011). Additionally, the training of pastors was undertaken to fulfil the self-governing, self-support and self-propagation policy of mission work in the COCIN.This is reflected in its constitution and statement of doctrinal beliefs as discussed in Chapter Three.

The establishment of theological colleges was motivated by the political events in Nigeria. In the 1950s the colonial administration decided to revise the constitution of Nigeria to encourage the local people to become more involved in the governance of the country(Maxwell, n.d:299). However, nationalists felt this was not sufficient because what the country needed was not only equal participation in governance, but independence from colonial rule (Rengshwat, 2011:141). This political change in Nigeria influenced the missionaries into revising their education programme. According to Maxwell (n.d:229-300), this turn of events meant three things for mission work. Firstly, Christians would be out-numbered and out-voted in parliament because Christian education had not been thorough enough to prepare Christians for secular leadership. Secondly, education of the indigenous people must transcend winning individuals for Christ to a comprehensive educational programme that empowers them to build a powerful Christian community that would be intelligent and progressive. Thirdly, the new changes may result in hostility toward foreign workers, which calls for comprehensive education. Maxwell writes:

> There must be planned, persistent instruction on the actual Scriptures itself. They must be thoroughly equipped with, and taught to use, the Sword of the Spirit, for they will have to fight for their own faith against deceptive doctrines and diabolical propaganda. To this end it is imperative that we do our best to give them competently trained pastors, able not merely to 'break the bread of life,' as we say, to them, but also to perceive and expose the faleshood of much of the talk of today, which leads men to look for their heaven upon earth, and find their satisfaction in things, and not in God. If we have to leave, we must see to it that we leave a ministry behind us which, by the grace of God, will be theologically competent to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (n.d:300-301).

The above evaluation of a socio-political situation paved the way for a broader educational programme, and the establishment of theological colleges and seminaries for the training of people that would lead the Church and train others.

4.4.1.1 The Gindiri theological seminary

As already mentioned in chapter three, Gindiri for the COCIN symbolises education. What started as a centre for missionary education grew into a cluster of schools for the education of different categories of people. The Gindiri Theological Seminary (GTS) was an offshoot of the centre established in 1934 for the training of men for evangelistic work (Action Partners, n.d; Tett, n.d). In 1937 the missionaries started a pastors' course, and students who were married men had to go with their wives and children (Tett, n.d:57), and a women school was also established for the wives of evangelists and teachers (Rengshwat 2011:94). According to the Gindiri Theological Seminary, the institution has gone through the following stages of developments: Gindiri Pastors' College (1934-1985), Gindiri Bible College, (1986-1991), Gindiri College of Theology (1992-2010) and Gindiri Theological Seminary (2011-to date) (2011: 4-5).

Today the GTS comprises approximately 400 students who are mostly COCIN pastors, and those preparing to enter full- time pastoral ministry (Reverend Pokol, 2012). The seminary offers a Diploma in Theology and a Diploma in Ministry, Bachelor of Divinity Degree, and Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies programmes which run for a duration of four years. The programmes are characterised by the traditional mainline four-fold pattern of theological and pastoral training, which are Biblical studies, Church History, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology (Gindiri Theological Seminary, 2010).

The curriculum of the GTS to a large degree reflects an ada ptation of the traditional missionary and western models. Courses covered at both Diploma and Degree levels include among others: Old and New Testament Backgrounds, Reformation and Post-reformation Church History, African Church Hhistory and Independent Churches, Systematic Theology, Ministerial Ethics, Pastoral Psychology and Counselling, Work of a Pastor, Evangelism and Cross-cultural communication, Holistic Development, Practical Pastoral Fieldwork, African Christian Theology, Literature/Theology of Islam, Church and Contemporary Issues, Philosophy of Religion and Church Administration/Stewardship (Gindiri Theological

Seminary, 2010). No attention is given to gender in these courses, even in the course description. This problem is not peculiar to COCIN theological training. Harawa-Katumbi observed a similar discrepancy in theological education in Malawi. In order to remedy this, Harawa-Katumbi suggests that themes such as Feminist African Theology, a feminist reading of the Bible, the role of women in African Traditional Religions and the development of Christian women movements, which touch on women studies and gender, could be included in the Degree programmes(n.d:2).

The above situation suggests that the social context of curriculum planners influences the contents of the curriculum. Concerning gender studies in the curriculum of the GTS, Reverend Vongjeng explains:

> We do not have gender studies included in the curriculum, but the school encourages women to be involved in theological education. Many women are not trained in the pastoral ministry because we believe that it is a male ministry. But from the few who have the opportunity to train with their husbands we have noted the talented ones. We encourage them to join the men's class and many of them are doing excellently . Many of them go back to the Church as theological educators and religious education teachers, but not as pastors (2012).

According to Reverend Paul Gonlur, a COCIN pastor and seminary lecturer in the GTS, the absence of gender studies in the curriculum reflect the historical context in which the school operated, where the content was selected to meet the needs of that time. Gender was not an issue in the Church, therefore pastors were trained in the area of general ministry to family and no specific gender was given attention(2012).

4.4.1.2 The Theological college of northern Nigeria (TCNN)

The TCNN is an English-language seminary established in 1959 for the training of pastors for the evangelical church in Nigeria. The establishment of the TCNN has largely been linked to the need that arose for nationalists who wanted to manage their own affairs (Maxwell, n.d: Rengswhat, 2011). In the spirit of ecumenism,the COCIN also trains its pastors in the TCNN, which today is an inter-denominational school owned by sixteen member churches (Megill, 2008:88). The COCIN is one of the sixteen member churches that own the TCNN.The promotion of the ecumenical agenda and a wide scope of operation for the church and the society have been cited as the advantages of interdenominational partnerships (Mombo, 2000)such as exists among the proprietors of theTCNN.

Like the GTS, the curriculum of the TCNN centres on the traditional four-fold disciplines of biblical studies, systematic theology, church history and pastoral studies. Gender study is not part of the curriculum content.

4.4.2 Regional Bible Schools

Located in the RCCs, the Regional Bible schools started as District Bible schools, which function primarily for the short-term training of pastors. The Regional Bible schools take the pattern of the Gindiri evangelist and teacher training programmes where the emphasis was on the theory and practice of evangelism. After the completion of their studies students returned to their people or shepherd congregations near their place of origin (Rengshwat, 2011:103). Pastors were expected to go with their wives and children.

The Foron Bible School which is managed by the PCC Jos was established in 1964. Unlike the two week programmes, the Foron school runs for three months (Rengshwat, 2011:127). Being the daughter of an evangelist (formerly known as Mai Bishara) I have childhood memories of our stay in Foron when our father went for his evangelist training in 1972. I remember our mother coming home from the women school and telling us about the lessons in food and nuitrition, personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness, knitting and needlework. Our mother also learnt to read the Bible in Hausa. I also remember her trying to pronounce words like their white teacher did. Although the programmes of the regional Bible school have been modified to include other aspects of pastoral ministry, much of the curriculum still reflect the earlier focus. Thus, self-support and self-propagation through farming and evangelism are still primary focii in the Bible school programme.

 In both the Bible colleges and theological institutions, theological education and pastoral training in the COCIN pays much attention to spirituality and character formation. As one who went through the the CNN, I reflect on the training, which manifested in the cooperate life of the institution through daily chapel worship, weekly pastoral care meetings, the once in a semester quiet day and other informal settings. It has been argued that curricula that focus on ministry and spiritual formation give theological education a more holistic approach(Banks, 1999:8).

4.4.3 Theological Education by Extension (TEE)

The TEE has given theological education a broader perspective thatincludes the holistic training of the people of God. Today, lay people are also trained theologically to function within and outside the church. Theological education, therefore, has come to be seen by the Church as the task of training of believers in the knowledge and service of God and humanity. This affirms the assertion of Kinsler and Emery that although different emphasis have informed the theological education programme of churches in the Word of God, the church and the world have remained central. Therefore, an appropriate and effective curriculum of theological educationmust integrate these three dimensions(1991:33).

The TEE programme started as an experiment in 1963 at the Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala in a response to the leadership and ministry needs of the Church (Mulholland and de Jacobs, 1983). However, TEE has come to mean different things in different contexts. According to the COCIN TEE Provost, Terphena Dashan (2013)[22], the TEE programme in the COCIN started in 1972 with the Extension Bible School (EBS), a sixyear programme which provides students with a certificate in theology upon completion of three basic courses known as the B1, B2 and Post DBS. The initial aim was to provide pastors with further training since the pastor school was for only one year. This was meant to culminate in the ordination of those that were found suitable as ministers in the church.

However, with the growing number of resident theological institutions providing training and further training, the aim of the TEE in the COCIN was modified. The TEE has become a person-centred, ministry-oriented programme that is aimed at the spiritual formation of men and women and equipping the COCIN members for lay leadership tasks in the church. For instance, it is COCIN policy that for one to be elected as an elder, such a person must have completed the EBS or ETC course or enrolled in it (Dashan, 2012).

In 1990, the church started a five- year programme, that is, the Extension Theological College (ETC) which awards students a diploma in theology that is expected to have the same value with that awarded at theological institutions. The student of TEE is expected to study at home, and meet (once in two weeks) for a guided discussion with an adjunct

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[22]Although the TEE Provost is not a part of the research samples, in the course of my research it became necessary for me to undertake an investigation about the TEE programme in COCIN.

facilitator and other students to reinforce study and practice. In relation to the curriculum of the EBS and ETC programmes, courses focus on evangelism, mission, church growth and cultural studies in addition to the regular courses that are offered in theological institutions, to meet the needs of the three programmes. The requirement for selection of canditates for the COCIN TEE programme include: personal faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, a sound Christian testimony, active involvement in the local church, a letter of recommendation from the church and a basic level competence in the English language (COCIN TEE, n.d:5-6).

COCIN TEE recently started a course for missionaries called the Theological Education by Extension Mission School (TEEMS). This initiative was necessitated by the poor performance of missionaries (some of whom have not received any training prior to their becoming missionaries), which indicates a serious deficiency in missionary training and the need to address the challenge and difficulties caused by missionaries leaving the mission field and to provide further education for missionaries without jeopardising the work (COCIN TEE, n.d:1; Dashan, 2012). The focus of the curriculum of TEEMS is on developing the learner's (missionary) "competencies for life, and ministry within their setting or context" (COCIN TEE, n.d:1). The entry requirements for TEEMS are similar to those of the EBS and ETC, with the exception of the addition of a clear sense of calling to ministry. The COCIN states in its TEE brochure that the vision of the missionary training is to develop:

> Competent, bi-vocational, multi-talented or versatile and holistic missionaries and mission leaders that are godly, academically sound, skillful and zealous, effective and efficient in surveying, mapping, planting and developing viable, self-multiplicative, self-support and self-governing churches among the unreached communities and initating holistic development in such communities.... (COCIN TEE, n.d:2).

According to the Western Regional Research and Study Team on Theology in the African Context, TEE is "A type of extra- curricular classes organised in certain areas to train the laity in order that they become theologically strong for greater services in the Church" (Kinsler, 1978:119). This agrees with the claim that TEE is a decentralised, and field-based approach to theological education, which does not interupt the student's productive relationship with society. Thus, its focus is helping congregants to deepen and strengthen their beliefs through the knowledge of the Scriptures and their Christian beliefs(Mulholland. 1976:66).

An examination of the COCIN TEE programme indicatesthat the Church benefits in the following areas: firstly, women's enrollment in TEE is more than that of resident

programmes. Women often find it difficult to leave their families to attend resident studies. Thus, the programme has afforded women an opportunity to acquire some knowledge of the Scriptures and be trained for ministry along with their male conterparts. Although women do not serve as pastors in the COCIN, they are involved in other aspects of ministry in the church. As has been mentioned, passing through the TEE programme has afforded some women the opportunity of serving as elders in their local congregations. Furthermore, it has curbed to a certain extent the monopolisation, professionalisation and elitisation of ministry (Kinsler, 1983). Lay people, particularly women, can also participate in ministry in the wider church, through services in parachurch organisations and mission organisation. However, in the case of single women, theological education is still an 'elitist' (married people) endevour since they are denied full participation in the church's ministry. Since single women cannot be elected as elders and are not allowed to lead in worship, they often feel reluctant enrolling in the TEE programme because they would have no opportunity of putting the knowledge they have acquired into practice.

Secondly, in a sense the TEE programme displaces the traditional notion that ordained ministry is the purest and proper form of ministry and that only pastors are entitled to ministry training. However, it must be pointed out that although the COCIN may have utilised the opportunity provided by TEE to train more manpower for the Church, it has not maximised the resources for pastoral ministry represented by the TEE graduates. As mentioned earlier, pastoral ministry in the COCIN is synonymous with ordination. Consequently, TEE graduates have not found a place in the COCIN pastoral ministry. Thus, some members enrol in the programme without giving it the commitment it deserves.

Thirdly, TEE provides an alternative and affordable means of training manpower for the church. The cost implications of resident studies is causing many people to embrace the TEE programme. Moreover, students of TEE do not need to resign or request study leave from their heir employers (as it may be sometimes required for resident students to do) before undertaking the study. Although many people have been trained through the church's programmes of theological education, the Church is still in need of trained church workers. The poor performance of missionaries referred to above testifies to this need. The COCIN is fast expanding and it will always be in need of trained workers. I subscribe to Mulholland and de Jacobs' argument that the TEE programme is an instrument for integral church

growth, which is capable of promoting positive transformation of both church and society(1983:33). This calls for the COCIN to revisit the benefits of its TEE products.

4.5 An evaluation of the COCIN pastoral training programme

Anexamination of the curricula of tCOCIN theological training above suggests that no gender studies course exists. Moreover, there is no reference to gender studies in the course descriptions of the certificate and Diploma programmes of the regional Bible colleges, the Diploma and Bachelor of Divinity programmes of the GTS and the Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Divinity, Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Theology programmes of the TCNN where the COCIN trains its pastors. The syllabi of these programmes cover only traditional theological courses such as Biblical studies, Systematic Theology, Church History and Pastoral studies. However, as one of the seminary lecturers Reverend Pokol observed, pastoral training in the COCIN is still lagging behind because it has not included in its curriculum of studies what he describes as "fresh ministry- oriented issues" (2012). The absence of gender studies in the curriculum of the COCIN theological and pastoral training renders it a far cry from current concerns in theological education.It is what can be described paradoxically "visible through its absence" (Rakoczy, 2004). Moreover, as Heyns and Pieterse rightly point out, the task of theology is the propagation of the Ggospel and helping human beings (1990:6). This implies that an enabling theological education must address both the text and the context.

Although the findings from the three institutions of the COCIN that trains its pastors indicate that gender issues are not integrated into the curriculums, it cannot be said that this is ignored completely, because gender issues are dealt with as appendages of other courses. For instance, in the GTS, gender concerns appear in courses such as 'Global Trends', 'Marriage Counselling', or as 'matters arising' in other courses. All the four seminary lecturers interviewed indicated that although gender issues are not given priority in the curriculum, they discuss issues related to women in the other courses they teach. However, such discussions are often controversial as pastors have their different positions. According to Reverend Pokol:

> Some teachers try to break gender differences through their teachings courses but you can see a lot of resistance from the responses of students and even some colleagues. An issue such as women ordination is a no go area for some ministers.Many students are vehemently opposed to the inclusion of women in pastoral ministry because they see it as not supported by biblical teachings, but as an agenda of women's liberation (2012).

This attitude and peripheral treatment of gender issues has an attendant implication for the practice of ministry to single women, which also explains why it does not reflect in the practices of the church. Thus single women suffer the most from the lack of concern towards women issues, because not only are they women, but single women.

As observed earlier, theological education in the COCIN was centred on grounding people in the Word of God and preparing them 'to contend for the faith' (Maxwell, n.d:300-301). However, Reverend Pokol observes that this heaven bound programme of eduaction, important as it is, does not prepare individuals for dealing with the challenges of life here on earth(2012). Many people, especially single women, experience difficulties in negotiating through their beliefs and social expectations. With respect to gender issues, the majority of the participants observed the need for a broader approach to theological education that addresses wider social issues. Reverend Gonlur stated that as a theological educator he tries to impart awareness of gender in his teaching. He explained:

> I try to use terms that incorporate both genders –instead of using words like manpower I use humanpower and try to be gender sensitive and inclusive in my lectures. I encourage pastors not to lay so much emphasis on couples fellowship but to have an all embracing ministry practice. I also encourage students to value women leadership in the church (2012).

The COCIN has maintained the approach to theological education handed down by missionaries and western theological educators. This may have been effective in addressing pastoral needs of that time, however, in the present circumstance, this does little to prepare pastors for the realities of Christian ministry in a changing Nigerian context. Students who have been trained in purely western methods of pastoral ministry often find it difficult to integrate the values of their training into the African cultural context (Kapolo, 2001). Similarly, it has been argued that the specialisation and fragmentation of theological education, which is characteristics of the western model has hindered the effective equipping of people for leadership and ministry (Cannell, 2006:19) in the African context. The Church needs a paradigm shift in its theological education to accommodate the realities of a changing worldwithout negating the uniqueness, truth and relevance of the Gospel.

An observation of ministry training and practice in the COCIN reveals an imbalance which has influenced even the curriculum content of the church's pastoral training institutions. Although the COCIN views education as the right of every member, it had for decades

limited theological education to the training of male pastors and ordination. Furthermore, as observed by Reverend Kachala, one of the COCINclerics:

> Our pastoral training is grossly inadequate. Pastors are not trained very well to pastor congregations. Our pastoral training is certificate and not ministry oriented. Core courses that have to do with pastoral work are not given the attention deserved. Not many theology students have gone through pastoral training, and many of them are released into churches as pastors. Not all people that go through theological education can be pastors, but the Church has not been able to categorise people for effective execution of ministry.

The above observation challenges the Church to revisit the goals and focus of its pastoral training. Although the assertion also tries to draw a distinction between theologians and pastors, it stresses the need for the church to clearly define its pastoral ministry and identify people who should be involved. Furthermore, the consequence of the above scenario is that those who are trained monopolise ministry and some pastors pursue theological education for the sake of ordination. This is a concern Zikmund echoes in her argument, that focusing theological education on ordination has the danger of "subverting the potential of the Gospel to transform the world"(1979:329).Therefore, the ministry of the ordained must be viewed as one of the applications of ministry in relation to the whole community of believers and not the only channel of executing ministry (Peck, 1989).

Another concern is that evangelism has always taken primacy in TCOCIN's education programme. This has been projected even in the Church's theological education and this to a large degree narrowed the scope of its theological curriculum. Positive and tremendous as the emphasis on evangelism may be to the mission of the church, the present conditions in which the church exists urges a different approach to ministry training. Kinsler and Emery (1991) argue that holistic ministry training requires that the interconnectedness between the personal, ecclesial and social transforming nature of the ministry be taken into consideration. However, they observed the danger of tilting towards one extreme in theological traditions where the personal is emphasised over the ecclesial and social transformation, or the ecclesial over the personal and social transformation, or yet still social transformation over the personal and ecclesial. Therefore, "one of the greatest challenges of theological education is to develop a clear and profound understanding of and commitment to integral human transformation" (1991:41). In order to respond to the contemporary needs of the people, theological education needs to incorporate a flexible and holistic framework. This framework must seek to redefine the ministry of the church and make it broad enough to include different categories of people in the church (Kinsler and Emery, 1991:8-9). Kretzschmar

observed that churches that view mission as purely personal evangelism are not likely to develop ministries that closely resemble the ministry of Jesus. Christ's ministry was comprehensive, broad and all embracing, addressing both personal and social needs (1994:15).

Similarly, the findings of the research question on whether the COCIN pastors are given adequate training to respond to gender complexities that may arise in their practice of ministy indicate that participants had divergent views. For instance, two (28.5%) out of the seven participants in the CMF focus group discussion emphasised that pastors are trained to deal with gender issues because some pastors are organising programmes that are geared towards an all- round empowerment for single people. However, the other five (71.4%) participants indicated that they were not sure if gender issues are included in the curriculum of pastoral training because the church does not have a specific ministry for them. They argued that the fact that only a very small number of pastors are exercising some form of ministry to single women indicate that priority is not given to gender issues in the training of pastors. One of the participants in the CMF focus groupexplained that the few pastors who execute one programme or the other for single people do not amount to even 10% of the pastors in the church. Even so, the programme that is planned is not always targeted towards meeting the need of single women, but all single individuals in the church.

Table 4: Lecturers responses to the inclusion of gender content in the COCIN theological education.

Serial number	Name	Yes	No	Comment
1.	Reverend Paul Gonlur		-	Provision for gender is made in other courses such as holistic development and marriage and family.
2.	Reverend Moses Vongjeng		-	The seminary encourages women to be involved in theological education
3.	ReverendBenjamin Pokol		-	We try to balance the absence of

				gender studies in the course holistic development
4.	Reverend Joseph Luka		-	It is implied in the course holistic development because gender can hinder development
Total	4	0	4	
Percentage	100%	0%	100%	

The table indicates that four (100%) of the seminary lecturers responded that there are no gender studies in the curriculum of their institution. The responses show that gender issues are only referred to in other course or implied, but not specified.

It is the general consensus of the 32participants comprising four church leaders, four clergy, four seminary lecturers, and twenty focus groups participants[23] that the COCIN's theological education and pastoral training has been inadequate in preparing pastors to respond to gender complexities inherent in today's pastoral ministry. For instance, Reverend Datiri observed that most pastors struggle in the area of gender issues when they come to the church and start their ministry. Many of them have to learn without being provided with anydirection, and some of them go about it the wrong way(2013).

Finally, the church needs to pay attention to the call for a curriculum review and probably re-development, echoed by the majority of the participants ts who suggest that the curricula of the COCIN theological institutions need to be reviewed because gender issues have become a major part of the current concerns both in the church and in the larger society. According to the provost GTS, Reverend Gonlur:

> The curricula of pastors' training institutions do not make room for adequate preparations for pastors to meet the challenge of gender complexities. Our pastors are not exposed to gender issues. There is need to have a curriculum review to include contemporary issues Singleness is a complex issue which needs to be addressed, because our training institutions reflect a bigger picture of our society. It is clear that culture determines how our pastors practice the pastoral ministry (2012).

The above assertion connects the absence of specific ministry to single women to the lack of a broad-issue-based theological education. From this one can infer that a gender inclusive

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[23]The question regarding the assessment of COCIN theological education and pastoral training was only directed to the church leaders, clergy, seminary lecturers, and the participants in three different focused groups of the men fellowship, women fellowship and youth fellowship.

curriculum will inform ministry to single women. The task of exegesis and theology should consciously and deliberately take into consideration gender factors. Therefore, the curriculum of theological training should transcend the treatment of gender issues as accidentals, and unfortunate appearances in other courses. Gender issues should be treated as a category in the curriculum. The inclusion of women studies in the curricula of theological training will empower women and promote the involvement of single women leading to a better and all round service in the church.

4.6 Engendering theological education for transformation

The notion of gender applies to both men and women, however, debates and studies in this area have in the recent past tended to focus on the female gender because of the prevailing marginalisation and perception of women (Kamau, 2012; van Klinken, 2011; King, 1995). This tendency to focus on women was replicated in the responses to the question on gender studies, which suggest that participantsunderstood gender studies to be an endevour that aims at promoting women. Key to this study is not the promotion of women in theological training but rather what the COCIN stands to gain by engendering its curriculum with a particular focus on single women's issues.

According to Schlegel, gender refers to how "the members of the two sexes are perceived, evaluated and expected to behave" (1990:23). This definition restricts gender to biological difference. However, Borresen gives a holistic perspective in which she sees gender as a biosocial category, that is, gender is both biologically determined and culturally constructed(1995:246-247). Jakawa states that men and women are the products of both culture and nature. She argues that change should be accepted because no culture is static and human beings are the products of culture more than they are products of nature (Jakawa, 2003:10). This implies that gender is a neutral term used to differentiate men from women, and that gender consciousness is the product of socialisation and is culturally defined (Haddad, 2010).

Phiri and Mombo point out that engendering theological education means including the experiences of women in the structure and content of theological education. They argue that engendering theological education challenges African patriarchy, male- centred theology and the assumption that western models of theological education are normative. They point out

that central to engendered theological education are "contextuality, dialogue, openness, grace and willingness to lean and to discern God's will and truth in every context" (Phiri and Mombo, 2010:61). Rutoro lists the essence of engendering theological education as:

- Taking initiatives to break the bonds of silence binding women and making the voices of women be heard in theological discourses.

- Reshaping and re-envisioning the contents of the theological education by integrating women as subjects.

- Integrating gender issues in the curriculum as a major and not as an elective.

- Developing a new paradigm to integrate gender studies within the theological framework.

- Making justice the central theme in gender sensitive theology.

- Making theological education about doing justice because knowing is not enough we must apply, willing is not enough we must do(2011:9).

Viewed within the framework of engendered curriculum discourse, this also raises the question of the importance and benefits of engendering theological education for pastoral ministry to single women. One may ask why women concerns need to be added to the programme of existing theological curriculum of the Church's pastoral training. Ursula King maintains that there is possibility of a different present and a future –for single women, theology and the church in the engendering of theological education(2001:29), since the goal of gender concern is equal opportunities for men and women (cf. Moser, 1999).

Firstly, an engendered theological education is an affirmation of the importance of the role of women in the church. It guarantees that single women would be involved in the decision-making and policy implementation of the church. It will also pave way for the inclusion of single women in the ministry of the church, which will induce a systemic change in the structure of the church, as well as validate the COCIN's claim in the belief of the priesthood for all believers. The priesthood presented in the New Testament reflects a radical transformation from the Old Testament priesthood into a new priesthood that includes all believers from every race, class, status and gender (cf. Galatians 3:28). This presents a new "understanding of the nature and mission of the church" and an ecclesiology that necessitates "a partnership of men and women in all expressions of the ordained ministry" (Dederen, 1998: 23). It makes men and women work as a team to develop a theology that is complete. As Morton points out:

> Any theology developed by one sex, out of the experience of one sex, and taught predominantly by one sex cannot possibly be lived out of as if it were whole theology. For whole theology is possible only when the whole people become part of its process, and that includes women. And in time, wholeness… when men and women together can participate fully and equally in bringing faith to expression (1975:14).

Furthermore, it also creates opportunity for an integrative and transformative approach to gender in theological education, which occasions a participatory involvement of every member. Located within a feminist framework, pastoral ministry respects the dignity of the human person and sees the need to include single women in the true meaning of church . Aside from opening up a space for single women's equal participation in pastoral ministry, it will serve as an avenue for consciousness-raising, which in the words of Hogan, "reveals to theologians [sic] the extent of oppression–both their own and others…."(1997:95). Further still, it will expose assumptions that trail pastors' views of single women as well as help pastors to avoid the pitfalls of male bias in pastoral ministry.

Secondly, since gender-studies is not part of the curricula of tCOCIN theological education and pastoral training, students may lack the exposure to literature that deal with gender issues. Therefore, engendering theological education will open a door of opportunity to access literature on a wide range of single women issues. It will help to correct negative religious and cultural ideologies about single women and promote unbiased interpretations of gender Scriptures texts, as well as offer alternative visions of addressing contemporary pastoral challenges. Knowledge of single women issues will offer the opportunity for pastors that have been trained to challenge patriarchal interpretations of the Bible and the implementation of church policies as they relate to single women's issues. Many cultural patriarchal conditioned assumptions trail people's perception of single women. Engendering pastoral training in the COCIN can necessitate a deconstruction of such patriarchal assumptions. As Stephen rightly argues, an engendered curriculum educates and deepens the students' understanding of the life of the church and enables them to acquire skills that prepares them to deal with a wide range of pastoral responsibilities(n.d:3). There is also the potential forshaping the students' understanding of cultural issues relating to customs, norms, beliefs, practices, and other factors that mitigate gender imbalances.This is supported by the social analysis framework of thought, which argues that for any action that must be taken towards meaningful change, an analysis of the social realities within a given society or organisation becomes an imperative. This is because social analysis transcends the personal

right to speech, attitude, and behaviour, and induces specific structural change as it calls the system into question (Holland and Henriot, 1984:24). Individual lecturers may be challenging the statusquo in their teaching, but a deliberate inclusion of gender studies will equip both lecturers and students with tools for analysing the position of single women in the church.

Thirdly, engendering theological education will give an in-depth insight in contextual pastoral training. Fundamentally, pastoral training in the COCIN has not taken into account individual gifts, skills and understanding. An engendered training will enable and encourage the pursuit of specialised ministry, personal development of pastors as well as take care of gender needs in ministry practice. Gaikward concurs with the call for a contextual curriculum when he asserts that "theological education should be a bonding and blending together of thetext and the context, a transformative interaction between guidance from the Word of God andthe situational needs and challenges of the people"(2009:8). Reynolds supports this when he states that "there is need for contextual theological education programmes for the training of clergy and laity" (2013:39). He argues that contextualising theological education demonstrates the strength of the flexibility of Christianity, which also "helps people to embrace and appropriate the message of the Gospel in their lived experiences" (2013:40). Apparently, the COCIN lacks this flexibility because it has adopted a rigid traditional approach to ministry that is damaging and seriously impedes on the overall well-being of single women.

The need for a contextual approachis in line with the social analysis framework, which suggests that pastoral responses and plans must be located "in the lived experience of indivividuals and communities" (Holland and Henriot, 1984:8). In its social analysis the COCIN must probe the consequences of failing to address the concerns of any one category of its membership in its ministry preparation. Its theological reflection must lead to new insights and open new responses to social and ecclesial issues (1984:8-9). The curriculum of theological education and pastoral training must reflect the church's interpretation of the context of the people. Kumalo affirms the importance of engaging and interpreting life issues in theological education when he states that "Interpretation enables the deeper understanding of the issues, informing better actions, and thereby shaping or influencing affected individuals or communities for the better good" (2008/2009:149).The experiences of single women can only be interpreted if the ministerial training takes gender studies as a vital component and content of its curriculum.

Fourthly, engendering the curriculum will empower and transform single women. Assie-Lumunba affirms that education facilitates the reproduction of social structures and provides the basis and impetus for transformation. In the context of the church, an engendered theological education is bound to condition some changes that may not only affect its structure, but would also affect single women positively. Itwill provide space for the increasing number of women in theological training in the COCIN to participate fully in the ministry of the church, because as Park rightly observes "women's social and cultural locations shape their ideas and experiences of the church and their ministerial practices"(2011:9). Women are sparsely represented in the curriculum planning of theological education, which naturally informs the absence of their voice and the male bias in the content and methods of pastoral training. Moreover, women's late arrival in the COCIN theological education has made it difficult for women to possess the necessary knowledge and skills for curriculum planning. This absence of women in curriculum planning invariably affects single women because not only do men design programmes that affect women, the assumption is that women issues discussed will also apply to single women. Single women have experiences that are unique to them and appropriate ministry to them is achieved only through addressing their concerns as a category among women.

Fifthly, engendering the curriculum will not only benefit single women, but will also express a wider range of human experience and encourage mutuality between men and women in the pastoral ministry of the church. It will encourage cooperation in participation, decision-making and sharing of benefits between men and women in the church. Additionally, it will help to decrease the polarities between men and women, as well as provide equal attention to the realities and experiences of men and women (Riley, 2005).

Lastly, an engendered curriculum is bound to affect both the educators and learners' perception of single women which have been moulded by socio-cultural factors. Theological education and pastoral training in the COCIN to a large extent has been masculinised. Both men and women have been orientated to regard this field as a man's domain. It is widely accepted that individuals' pyschological and social development is moulded by their society's definition of character and conduct assumed to be appropriate for each gender. Drawing on an example from the Latin American context,Foulke affirms the role of a peoples' social location in influencing the theological task. The consequence with regards to gender and theological education, is that the gender perspective of the researchers and expositors of

theology affect the entire context of their work(2000:38-39). The engendering of theological education may have a ripple effect of demasculinising theological education and pastoral training in the COCIN and provide new perceptions of single women and their role in extending God's Kingdom, and building the community of faith.

4.7 Conclusion

The analysis of the theological education and pastoral training of the COCIN has led to the conclusion that the COCIN's affirmation of the church as a household, the community of believers, the Great Commission mandate, the belief in the priesthood of all believers,the principle of Christian serviceand the shepherding and facilitatory function of the church, necessitates that single womenshould be seen as both givers and receivers of ministry. Apparently, pastoral giving and pastoral receiving can be located in the same person (Moore, 2002).

There is also a fundamental need for re-orientation and construction of new perceptions of theological education. The absence of gender studies in the curriculum of pastoral training and gender consciousness in the practice of the church have implication for its pastoral ministry. Single women's issues deserve attention in the curriculum of theological education and pastoral training. The inclusion of gender studies in the curriculum of pastoral training holds hope for single women. The COCIN has strong theological beliefs supporting its theological education, but these beliefs have not been reflected in its preparation for ministry and by extension, ministry practice.

The findings of the research with respect to ministerial training have shown that the theological education of the COCIN falls short since the curricula of its ministerial training institutions lack vital aspects that will enable teaching and learning take into account present day realities. The search for new patterns of ministry must be an ongoing one. Therefore, theCOCIN theological institutions need to review their curricula to include models and approaches that are broad enough to take into account contemporary pastoral needs.The inclusion of gender issues in the curriculum of ministerial training will be an affirmation by the COCIN that ministry is first and foremost God's will, his initiative, his project and that humans,male and female, married and single, young and old are part of it because He has

invited them. This aligns with the core value of the Great Commission, which underpins the church's pastoral training.

Reconstructing ministryin the COCIN will draw the attention of the church to its facilitatory role to its members, particularly single women. This conclusion is supported by Ozele's argument that the church in African has not adequately addressed women's education and constructive engagement in ministry. This is because African theology has often neglected African women's issues. Even when they are addressed, the discussion is clouded with assumptions that women's experiences of God are the same as those of men (2007:3).When women's issues are addressed it gives pastoral ministry a different sensitivity and perspective because "even the best care can fail when it is insensitive to a woman's experience" (Glaz and Moessner, 1991:1).

The corporate identity of believers in the one household requires them to function for the good of the whole as enabled by the Spirit (Dunn, 1998). Thus, biblical teaching and contemporary challenge invigorate a rethink of what church and ministry are all about (Banks, 1999). Furthermore, if the COCIN must achieve its mission and vision, it must utilise to the maximum the manpower resource TEE graduates provide in its pastoral ministry, even in the ordained ministry where necessary. It was also argued that although ministry is understood as "an activity of the whole people of God" (Hunter, 1982:12), the emphasis laid on ordained ministry has rendered the other aspects of ministry insignificant. Thus, ministry has been left in the hands of a few who are unable to meet the pastoral needs of the large population of the COCIN members. Although the COCIN affirms the involvement of lay people in pastoral ministry, it has not utilised lay ministry to meet the pastoral needs of its growing population, especially single women.

The COCIN must understandthe present Nigerian context in which the church exists in its recognition that its theological schools educate single women to function effectively as leaders and ministers of the Gospel. Additionally, theological education in the COCIN must shift towards a deconstruction of the patriarchal and androcentric interpretations of the Scriptures which has informed its practices by embracing interpretations that are gender inclusive. As a community of faith, the church should recognise, affirm and utilise to the full the gifts and call to service of single women in the capacity that God desires for them. Single

women like every believer have a right to full participation in all aspects of the Church's ministry.

Chapter Five, contains a discussion of the methodology and methods of the researcher. It presents the research sample and the process of data gathering and method of analysis of the data. The chapter serves as a link between the first part of the research which dealt with the background and theories and the second part which is concerned with the practical aspect of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

The methodology and methods of research

5.1 Introduction

Chapters one to four of this study addressed the background as well as relevant literature on the research topic. The first chapter comprised of the introduction, which discussed the motivation for undertaking the study, research problems and research question: what has been the degree to which the COCIN pastors have offered pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women? This was followed by the research objectives, significance of the study, locating the research within existing literature, principal theories underpinning the study, research design and methodology, definition of key terms and the conclusion and structure of the study. Chapter Two provided the setting for the study. It also provided an evaluation of the impact of the Nigerian culture, westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and singleness. The social analysis and feminist cultural theories were used in this evaluation. The third chapter dealt with the missional development of the COCIN. The church's contemporary structure and pastoral practice including its theology of marriage and singleness were examined. The role of women and its impact on the pastoral ministry of the church was also an area of focus in the chapter. The missionary practice of the exclusion of women from full participation in the pastoral ministry of the church contributed to the neglect of pastoral care of single women. Chapter Four analysed the ministerial training of the COCIN. It discussed the meanings of theology and theological education, theological beliefs underpinning ministerial training and pastoral practice and the strategies and methodology of theological education in the COCIN. The chapter also presented an evaluation of the church's pastoral training and argued for an engendered theological education for transformation. These chapters provided the relevant and invaluable resources for addressing the research problem, as well as for answering the research problem. Apparently, the practice of ministry in the COCIN is to a great extent influence by African culture and missionary practice of exclusion of women from full participation in pastoral care. The information gained from these chapters has guided me in the evaluation of the lived experiences of people as voiced through the in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion and discussed in the subsequent chapters

The last three chapters deal with the practical aspects that addressed the research problem of the absence of pastoral care to single women the COCIN. The chapters demonstrate the findings of the research as reflected in the silent and spoken voices of the participants drawn from the participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with three different church groups. In Chapter Six, the emerging themes from the data collected from the field research are discussed. Chapter Seven contains an attempt to access the needs of single women and to evaluate how the COCIN exercises pastoral care to single, never married and divorced women.

The present chapter is concerned with the research methodology and methods of collection and analysis of the data. According toDawson, the researcher needs both methodology (philosophy and general principle guiding the research) and methods, that is, the tools used in gathering information (2002:22). Research methodology and method serve as a compass and map indicating the direction and process followed to arrive at a conclusion in a research. Henning considers methodology broadly to include the methods the researcher uses to try to understand better his or her worldview as well as that of others in a given context (2011:15). She further argues that the research methodology is "the coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have the 'good of fit' to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose" (2011:36).

Consequently, the present chapter serves as a connection between the first four chapters and the last three. To achieve this objective,it has been structured into the following sub-topics: Qualitative empirical research, research site and research sample, process and methods of data collection, process and method of data analysis, methodological limitations and confidentiality and ethical considerations. This chapter is significant because it serves as a sign post which provides direction on how the research was carried out (Reynolds, 2013:95).

5.2 Qualitative empirical research

As stated in Chapter One this study is designed to explore people's lived experiences and the meanings and interpretations they attached to these experiences. Its objective is to illicit an understanding of how religious, cultural and western values and assumptions impact on the perception and attitudes toward singleness and the exercise of pastoral care in the COCIN. This study draws on Babbie (1992), Casebeer and Verhoef (1997:131) who describe

qualitative research as "the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" (1997:131).

Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting and involves a process of building a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon of interest" (2010:20).The knowledge provided by qualitative research is"essential for generating important undetected implicit cultural understandings, socio-cultural conditioning and the inter-familial relationships of the [participants], within their cultural environment as a base for more generalisable studies" (Iguisi, 2009:137). The choice of this approach was informed by two reasons: firstly, no research has been undertaken in this setting on the issue of pastoral ministry to single women. Secondly, the desire to understand the phenomenon of singleness from multiple perspectives. Meho describes the goal of any qualitative study as an attempt"to improve understanding of social and cultural phenomenaand processes rather than to produceobjectivefacts aboutrealityand make generalizations to given populations" (2006:1284). Thirdly, qualitative research can be utilised to empower practical theologians in their articulation of initial observation and the identification of primary issues in research process (Swinton and Mowat, 2006:94). Moreover, the qualitative empirical research promotes collaborative work between the researcher and the participants. This enables the researcher to understand more fully the experiences of the participants.Therefore, the qualitative approach to research is appropriate for this study.

5.3. Research site and research sample

5.3.1 Research site

The COCIN RCC[24] Gigiring, is a metropolitan regional church council with an estimated number of 23,296 worshipers (COCIN PCC Jos, 2012:2). The RCC comprises of thirty-one local church congregations (LCC's): Angwan Abuja, Angwan Miango, Angwan Paul Gindiri, Chamber, Dadin Kowa, Dahwol, Dashik, Dong, Fwol-vorok (Anglo-Jos), Gigiring, Giring (Abattoir), Gold and Base, Gura Lo-Gyang, Guran-Dok, Hwolshe Ring Road, Ji-yep, Kafanchan, Kambel, Kufang, Lo-Dick, Longwa, Mado, Mungyel, Rantya-Gyel, Sabon Gari Mado, Sha'aka, State Low Cost, Tudun Wada, Wildlife Park, Wurum (Census) and Zaramaganda (The COCIN, RCC Gigiring, 2011:64-194).

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[24]Regional Church Council or RCC interchangeably sometimes to avoid repetition when and where necessary. I will also use the acronyms PCC for Provincial Church Council, LCC for Local Church Council and CC for Church Council.

Jos, popularly referred to as "J-town" or "Jesus Our Saviour" by the residents is the capital of Plateau State, one of the thirty- six states in Nigeria. Located in the central part of Nigeria, Jos is situated between the northern and southern parts of country. It has cultural influences and traditions similar to those found in these regions, making it "a microcosm of the cultural pluralism of modern Nigeria" (Ochonu, 2008:48).Being an urban area, people from different parts of Nigeria come to work in federal government establishments, private companies or as businessmen and - women.

Jos comprises Jos North, parts of Jos South and Jos East Local Government Areas.The population of Jos, according to the 2006 census is estimated at 821, 618 with Jos East being the least populated at 85, 602 (Krause, 2011:19), and Jos North and Jos South at 429, 300 and 306, 716 respectively (Iorapuu, 2009:4; Mallo and Anigbogu, 2009:2). According to Gyang and Ashano, Jos accounts for 32% of the total population of Plateau State (2010:665). Thus, considered the most acculturated part of this state and seen by many to be the meeting point of the different ethnic groups in the country and a miniature Nigeria (Africa Report, 2012; Pwajok, 2011; Iorapuu, 2009); its culture termed the culture of Nigeria. Although Jos is the most acculturated part of the state, the Anaguta, Afizere and Berom from these four local government areas are the dominant ethnic groups (Asemah and Asogwa, 2012). The people of these ethnic groups are hospitable and accommodating and share similar cultural and traditional ways of life. They are predominantly farmers and also involved in small scale businesses. Other ethnic groups found in Jos are the Idoma and Igala, the Igbo, the Ijaw, the Benin and the Hausa (Africa Report, 2012; Iorapuu, 2009). Aside from these, the presence of the highest policy research institutes, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and the National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI)have turned Jos into a Metropolis (Iorapuu, 2009).

This research addresses the problem of the execution of pastoral care of single, never married and divorced women. This Regional Church Council was deliberately chosen for two reasons: firstly, my connection with the RCC as a pastor's wife and theological educator will give me easy access to the participants. Secondly, its urban setting reveals the need for ministry to single women, since most of them are found in the urban areas. I align with Casiño's observation that singles is one of the social organisations that is peculiar to the urban setting that the church has to deal with (2004:146). Therefore, the choice of this site is

suitable for addressing the research question of the extent to which the COCIN exercises pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women.

5.3.2 Research sampleand participants

A research sample is the participants drawn from a population as a "representative of the population about which the researcher aims to draw conclusions" (Kaniki, 2010:49). Henning suggests that in sampling research participants, the researcher has to seek for the ones who can journey with him or her towards more knowledge on the subject (2011:71). Sampling can be approached through theoretical sampling, snowball sampling, convenience sampling (Henning, 2011:71) and purposive sampling (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The research was comprised of a commulative sample size of 55 people distributed among six single women and four single men (within the 25-40 year age bracket), six divorced women (within the 26-60 year age bracket), four adult children of divorced marriages, four church leaders, five seminary lecturers and theological educators, four clergy, two magistrates, seven women (CWF), seven men (CMF) and six youths (CYF). Apart from the church leaders and the magistrates, the other participants were selected from among the COCIN members in the RCC Gigiring, Gindiri Theological Seminary (GTS) and Theological College of Nigeria (TCNN). In Nigeria the recognised and official adult age is eighteen.Thus, the choice of adult single men and women between the ages of 25-40 is informed by the assumption that by societal standard this group is at the margin of the ideal as well as the average age for marriage.

The research sample comprises of people with different educational levels ranging from PhD to PSLC (Primary School Leaving Certificate). The participants' level of education provides insight into the way they construct their responses, as well as provide the research with relevant information on understanding of their worldview. The participants were purposively sampled from the LCCs in the RCC, other sections of the church and from different gender and social status to give a valid representation of the church and the different categories of people within the it (see Appndix K).

Church leaders:

Four church leaders were interviewed in this research. These leaders were chosen based on their positions as policy makers in the church. The choice of these men is also informed by the knowledge that they are ordained clergy who pastor or serve as associate pastors in congregations in the RCC and other surrounding RCCs in the COCIN. At the national lever I had in-depth interviews with two members of the management team –the Vice President and the General Secretary. At the regional level I conducted interviews sessions with the Chairman and the Secretary of the RCC. The age bracket of participants in this category is 45-60 and the qualifications were PhD, DMin, BTh. and BDD (see Appendix K). The educational levels of these men and their dual role as policy makers and pastors in congregation were indicators that they possessed the capacity to provide relevant information on how pastoral ministry in the Church was executed. The gender distribution in the church leaders and clergy categories of participants indicates an absence of the female gender. This is because the COCIN does not support the ordination of women. This reflects the church's perception of pastoral ministry and the gender inequality that exists in the COCIN structure and pastoral leadership (see Appendix K –Table 1). Thus, it can be said that the COCIN replicates its gender imbalance in pastoral ministry in both administrative and priestly structures.

Seminary lecturers/theological educator:

In-depth interview sessions were held with five seminary lecturers and the Provost of the TEE. Three people from this category were holders of the Master of theology degrees while one held a Master of art degree. They were within the age bracket of 45-55. The in-depth interview sessions with the seminary lecturers were held at the Gindiri Theological Seminary in January 2012, while the interview with the Provost of the TEE was conducted in January 2013. The choice of these lecturers was informed by the researcher's awareness of their position as theological educators saddled with the responsibility of imparting knowledge and equipping clergy for ministry. One of the objectives of this study is to evaluate the ministerial training that pastors receive. Therefore, interviewing these theological educators provided relevant data for achieving this objective. The gender composition of the theological educators is four males and one female (see Appendix K –Table 2).

Clergy:

Four clergy whose ages range from 35-48 were interviewed between the months of January – August 2012. As has been stated the COCIN does not believe in the ordination of women. Hence the gender composition of the clergy is all male. In respect of theological training and educational levels, two were holders of the Master of theology, one a holder of Master of art and one a Bachelor of divinity degree. These clergy were chosen purposively because of the following reasons: firstly, as pastors of congregations in the COCIN they were directly involved with the practical administration of pastoral care. Secondly, they had the responsibility of teaching their congregants. Thirdly, they are directly or indirectly involved in policing formulation and implementation in the church (see Appendix K –Table 3).

Magistrate:

Two female magistrates within the age bracket of 50-55 were interviewed. Their educational levels were Bachelor in law (BL) and Barrister at law (BL). The decision to interview this category of people was to access the legal perspective on the research question. It was a purposive selection since they were women and a major concern of this study is gender justice. The first contact with these legal practitioners was through one of their colleagues a member of our congregation. After this initial contact the other, subsequent conversations and appointments were made through phone calls. The in-depth interviews with this judge and magistrate provided insight into understanding the relationship between culture and gender-legal justice in Nigeria (see Appendix K –Table 4).

Single women and men:

A total of 16 single people were interviewed. Their ages ranged from 25-60. The distribution of these 16 single people is as follows: 12 females (six never married and six divorced) and four males. With respect to educational qualifications, one held a Master in Science (MSc), three held Bachelor in Science (BSc) degrees, one held a Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) degree, two had Higher National Diplomas (HND), five had diplomas, one held a Senior School of Certificate Education (SSCE) and two had Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC). This category is the research sample that serves as a representative population. Interviewing these men and women provides the tool for accessing the validity of the

responses of the clergy on how they exercise pastoral care to the different categories of people in their congregations (see Appendix K –Table 5).

Adult children of divorced marriages

I held in-depth interview sessions with a total of four –three males and one male, children of divorced marriages. Their age distribution stood within the bracket of 20-50. Their educational levels were: one PhD candidate, one Master of Science, one Diploma and one undergraduate student. The intention for the selection of these persons was to access the experience of divorced people from the perspective of the children of divorced marriage. This was to compare and contrast lived experiences of divorced people and theory (see Appendix K –Table 6).

5.4 Methods and process of data collection

In this study resources were accessed through the analysis of existing literature and field research. Relevant literature on the subject from the field of pastoral theology was accessed from the following libraries: the UKZN library, the TCNN library, the LTI and personal libraries of friends and colleagues. Materials were also accessed from the internet. Although a large body of literature was accessed in the field of pastoral theology, this was narrowed down to resources on ministerial practices, particularly pastoral care. Furthermore, extensively literature on gender justice and the role of the church in providing pastoral care to single women was accessed. This literature was analysed so as to identify what was missing. The gap identified relate to the absence of specific pastoral care to single women. This literature became the entry point to the discussion and to contribution to the academic research (Reynolds, 2013:98).

Three approaches were used in the field research namely: the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and the participant observation. Since the aim of the study is to assess the pastoral care of the church to single women, the in-depth interview is utilised to explore the lived experiences of these women. The focus group discussion provided a diversity of perspectives and information on the issues of pastoral ministry to single women. The participant observation provided relevant resources which served as a parameter for measuring the validity of the data collected from the in-depth interview and focus group discussions.

5.4.1 Process of data collection

This section deals with the practicalities of data collection in this study. Because the objective is to access people's feelings, beliefs and attitude, this study made use of the interpretive approach to interviewing against the constructive approach which focuses on language and linguistic patterns (Kelly, 2010:297). Participants were first approached through personal contact and phone calls. Since most of the participants are resident in Jos, I contacted some after Sunday service and the church weekly programmes. My initial contact with the participants from TCNN and seminary lecturers was through phone calls and short message service (sms). For the congregations that were not familiar to me I contacted the pastors and explained to them my research interest and concerns. The pastors promised to contact some people and let me know through phone calls or sms. Arrangements were later made for me to see the people the pastors had contacted. In agreement with those who consented to participate a date was set for the interview session.

I met with the church leaders personally and we agreed on set dates for the interview. However, the interviews could not be conducted on the set dates because of the crisis in the area which the leaders had to attend to the needs of victims. The focus group participants were approached through their group leaders. These leaders arranged my first meeting with their groups. I visited each group on the set date and explained to them the purpose of my research and the objectives of the focus group discussion. I did not have any difficulty in getting participants for the group discussions rather I had excess. For instance, after hearing the explanation of my research concerns the people that indicated interest in the CYF were more than the required number in an effective focus group. This problem of the excess number of people who indicated interest was resolved through the agreed date for the discussion session since it was not convenient for some. After the initial contacts and interview dates were set, I gave the participants the informed consent form for them to study and sign if they agreed to participate in the research. As a minister's wife and theological educator, the process of data collection was not difficult because most of the participants were familiar to me. The pastors contacted to access participants from their congregations, and seminary lecturers and clergy participants were friends or colleagues within the COCIN. Some of the participants, especially single women, were from some congregations we once pastored and our present congregation. Even the two participants who were not members of the COCIN were not unfamiliar to me because one was a colleague and the other a

neighbour. The choice of these people was informed by the assumption that their life circumstances provide relevant data for this study.

The primary methods of data collection in this study were theparticipant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. However, for statistical information, literature from other researches were relied on because the participants did not have statistical records of the information required.Extensive use was made of related literature from African writers and other parts of the world due to the limited literature available on single women issues in Nigeria. The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in English. Being an urban area with different tribes that use English and Hausa as the major languages of communication, it was appropriate for me to conduct the interviews in one of these languages for easy communication. English language was used because it was the participants' preferred means of communication. Because the objective of the field research was to get the participants' honest opinions on the issue raised in the questions, participants were not given the questions prior to the interviews. Henning warns that although researchers may provide participants with a set of questions to reflect upon before the interview, doing so might alert the interviewee and lead the researcher to pre-empt a certain response thereby blocking conversation (2011:75) and the access to honest responses to the questions.

In addition to the participant observation, I personally conducted the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Tools used for gathering information include the following: an audio tape recorder and a notebook. I informed the participants in advance that the conversations will be recorded. Participants were also informed that their willingness to participate in the research will contribute to knowledge and pastoral practice in the church (see Appendix Ai and Aii).

5.4.2 Methods of data collection

Three methods of data collections were used in this study: the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. These methods were chosen because they provide relevant and "well-rounded collection of information for analyses" (Turner, 2010:754). The validity of the information gathered from one source was cross-checked with the other.

5.4.3.1 In-depth interviews

Johnson defines in-depth interviews as "face-to-face interaction between an interviewer and an informant, and which seek (s) to build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual disclosure" (2002:103). Henning describes an interview participant as one who agrees to "travel or wander with" the researcher and "can shed optimal light" on the subject under investigation (2011:70-71). Woods, affirms the relevance of flexibilityin this method of data collection. He maintained that the interview is a method of collecting information about the experiences of others that is used in research to "supplement and extend our knowledge about individual(s) thoughts, feelings and behaviours, meanings, interpretations…" (2011, n.p). For Henning, interviewing is a way of life that "assumes that the individual's perspective is an important part of the fabric of society and of our joint knowledge of social processes and of the human condition" (2011:50). This study focuses on three areas: the impact of culture, westernisation and urbanisation on the perception of single women and singleness, the type of pastoral training provided by the church and how the COCIN carries out its pastoral ministry to single women.

Since the goal of the in-depth interview was to access the experiences of the participants and the meanings they attach to themselves, to other people and to their environment, the semi-structured interviewing was used. Seven set of questions were formulated based on the category of participants as follows: church leaders, clergy, magistrate, seminary lecturers, single, never married women and men, divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages. However, a different set of questions was formulated for the focus group discussions. These questions were used for the three focus groups. These pre-constructed questions drawn from the research question were not given to the participants before the interview but were provided to guide interview sessions and focus group discussion.

Apart from the church leaders, seminary lecturers and clergy, the interview participants were consciously chosen from women and men in selected congregations in the RCC. As has been stated I sought the assistance of the pastors in the selection of individual participants in the congregations that were not familiar to me. The individual participants were approached by talking to them one-on-one. These selections were based on the assumption that these participants possessed, as well as, would be willing to provide the relevant information (data) I needed to address the research problem and to engage with the pastoral ministry of the

COCIN to single women. The consent of the participants was sought first and informed consent forms were distributed to them and signed before the interviews were conducted (see Appendices Ai and Aii). The in-depth interviews provided the relevant information I needed about the perception of the research participants on the relationship between culture, western education and urbanisation, type of ministerial training given to pastors and its practical application in the pastoral life of the church, especially as it relates to single, never married and divorcedwomen.

Interview sessions were held with thirty-five people comprising of twelve single women, four adult children of divorced marriages, four church leaders, five theological educators, four single men, four clergy and two magistrates across a fifteen-month time frame. Each interview session was meant to last between 40 and 45 minutes but some lasted over an hour because of interuptions.The in-depth interviews held with the single, never married women and men and divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages were resourceful in locating the study in the experiences of these women and their families. The interview was constructed to include questions about how participants perceive singleness and the effectof their single status on their spiritual and social and financial life. Questions were also directed towards the role of women in the church and its impact on pastoral care of single women, theological education and ministerial preparation, how pastors exercise pastoral ministry and the impact on pastoral ministry to single women.

The interviews with the Vice President and the General Secretary were held in the evenings in their homes. This was because the office hours were not convenient for these officers. The interviews with the clergy, seminary lecturers and the Provost of the TEE were held in their offices. Most of the in-depth interviews with single women and men were conducted in the space I provided in the church vestry, two were conducted in the participants' home. This physical space was chosen with the consent of the participant because of its convenience.

This study utilised the suggestion of Turner that interview question should be flexible and be constructed in the manner that reduces misunderstanding and prompt further understanding. The questions were also formulated in a manner that kept the participants focus on the topic. One question sought for new information as well as served as a follow up to the previous one (2010:758). In addition, participants were allowed to ask for clarityduring the interview

sessions. However, there were occasions where in order to keep the discussion focus on the topic I had to rephrase a question for an interviewee.

The interviews were transcribed and participants' recorded words were typed verbatim. The recordings were listened to several times and analytical notes that capture the attention of the researcher were made during the transcription. These were cross checked to get a clear image of the interviews and the information drawn from the interview sessions (Kelly, 2006:303) for effective analysis and interpretation of data.

5.4.3.2 Focus group discussions

In order to gain access to participants in the three focus groups: the CWF, CMF and CYF, the researcher contacted the leaders of the groups. These leaders mobilised their members and suggested names of people that may have relevant information to address the research problem. The focus group discussion is used in research to explore the "attitudes, opinions or perception towards an issue" (Kumar, 2011:127). Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim describe a focus group as "a general term given to a research interview conducted with a group. A focus group is typically a group of people who share a similar type of experience, but a group that is not "naturally" constituted as an existing social group" (2010:304).

Focus group discussions were conducted with the men, women and youth fellowships and the sessions were digitally recorded and notes taken. One focus group discussion each was held with the CWF, CMF and CYF. The CWF comprised of seven women between the ages of 34-60, the CMF comprised seven men between the ages of 40-65 and the CYF consisted of six participants of three males and three females between the ages of 25-38. According to Tamilio, six to ten participants are enough to facilitate meaningful dialogue and make the collection and analysis of data feasible (2011:19). The focus groups discussions conducted with these groups enabled the researcher to gain more insight into the cultural norms operational in the study area and how participants perceive and react to these norms. It also provided relevant data that gave insight on broad issues of concern to the women, men and youth who serve as representatives of the larger cultural group. This method of data collection is appropriate for qualitative research because it is useful in identifying group norms, eliciting opinion about group norms and discovering variety within a population (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey, 2005:30).

5.4.3.3 Participant Observation

LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch describe participant observation as "a method relying on watching, listening, asking questions, and collecting things" (1993:196).The selective observation method was used to observe the behavior patterns and attitudesof clergy, congregational members and married peopletowards single women during church programmes.Notes were made from the observed behaviour and details of field notes were recorded in a note book the researcher bought for this purpose. The notes were processed into textual notes and entered into computer files. The researcher consulted her notes one regular basis throughout the study and they became very useful at the analysis stage of the study data. When compared with the interviews, the data gathered from participant observation provided relevant resources for the researcher to understand the data collected from individual interviews and focus group discussions. According to LeCompte, Preissle and Tesch, participant observation enables the researcher to verify what people say they believe and are doing (1993:197). It is this need for verification of information and the strength of participant observation to enable the researcher nuance understanding with the context that has informed the choice of this study. The researcher's role as a participant observer helped her to identify and gain access to potentialparticipants in the research. This corroborates the assertion of Mack, et al., that "Participant observation data are invaluable in determining whom to recruit for the study and how best torecruit them (2005:16).

In addition to observing attitudes and behaviours in the church, the researcher attended two singles' forums organised by LCC Fwol-Vorok and Peace House, a Christian ministry and participated in activities during the 2012 COCIN family awareness week. The observations from these programmes indicate that discussions in these forums were centred mostly on marriage and family. The participant observation is useful in research because it serves as a check against participants' subjective reporting, helps in gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of study participants and the relationships among and between people (Mack, et al., 2005:14).

5.5The process and methods of data analysis

Researchers have affirmed the role of qualitative methods in assisting the researcher to access and describe underlying thinking and reasoning processes in theformation of people's conceptions. The goal of research is to expand knowledge. Some researchers emphasise the

role of the researcher in the analysis and interpretation of data (Myers and Barnes, 2005:6). Although one of the disadvantages of this method is that it is time consuming, the use of qualitative data has enabled the capturing of the feeling and perceptions of the research participant regarding the research question of how the COCIN exercises pastoral care to single women. In this study the field data wasanalysed qualitatively using the descriptive and interpretive method of interpretation of research data (Kalinowski, Lai, Fidler and Cumming, 2010:23). Written literature interacted with representative voices from the six participant categories to descriptively analyse and make explicit the phenomenon under study. The information collected from the interviews, focus group discussions and observational notes were compiled and typed into word processing documents.

The process of analysis started with the coding of the field data. The field information was coded to identify the themes and the relationship between the themes that emerged from the data. Westbrook, pointed out that coding identifies main categories and associate sub-categories from a body of data (1994:247). It also assists the researcher in finding what Patton (2002) describes as elements of 'convergence' and 'divergence' in research data. The texts, that is, the field notes and transcribed interviews, were read and re-read to ascertain the information that will assist in interpretations that support the data (Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly, 2006:323). Jorgensen describes data analysis as:

> [A] breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion" (1989:107).

This process of data sifting is significant because it ensures that the researcher does not describe or interpret the data to a high level of abstraction but maintains a great degree of integration of the entire analysis (Strauss, 1987:55-56). The researcherhas used the descriptive method to transform data so as to interrogate the absence of pastoral care to single women in the COCIN and to answer the research question. Verbatim reporting of transcribed interview recordings were also used where the researcher felt paraphrasing will reduced the meaning and effect of the participant's words.

5.6. Methodological limitations

According to Patton (1990:162), no research design is devoid of imperfections or trades-offs. The limitations of this study includes: firstly, the possibility of the author's social location as a woman influencing the presentation of data. As Mauthner and Doucet point out, readers of texts, in this case the research data, are susceptible to give the interpretation that reflect "their social location and perspectives" (2003:417). Additionally, the author's position as an outsider, that is, being a married woman brings with it personal assumptions that may reflect in the interpretation of the data.This is not foreign to research, as Ahrons argues; findings of research are often interpreted to reflect the researcher's underlying assumptions and conceptualisations(2007:55). Although the researcher tried to be as objective as possible in analysis of the data, this tension was reconciled by reinterpreting the data. In doing so, the initial assumptions and categories that the researcher came with were checked and changed against the data.

Secondly, all the interviews (with the exception of one adult child of divorce who is a member of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) and one divorced woman, a member of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) and focus group discussions were held once and among the COCIN members. Most of the time there were interruptions, especially those held in the participants' homes or places of work. For instance, in one of the interviews visitors came and the interviewee had to attend to his visitors first. Because the interviews were only conducted once it was difficult to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of single women. Furthermore, the fact that it was conducted mainly among the COCIN members makes it difficult to generalise the findings among other church denominations. However, this limitation is addressed by the range of opinions generated from the total number of participants. According to Kelly, qualitative researcher is interested in the wide range of opinions hence may need a smaller "data sources or sampling unit for a homogenous sample" (2010:289). Furthermore, the experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and alienation of these few women are transferable to similar context in other denominations and the larger society. This is corroborated by the assertion of Marshall and Rossman that although findings of qualitative research cannot be generalised in a statistical sense, but they may be transferred to the larger social context (1999:43).

Thirdly, the field research was scheduled to last for six months but because it was not easy to find participants it spanned over a year and three months. Some participantswere visited more than three times before an interview could be conducted with them. The interviews with church leaders was particularly daunting because many times they were away on official engagements or in a meeting. Furthermore, because of the religious crisis in the area, appointments were rescheduled many times because a leader had to visit a crisis area. Closely linked to this is the challenge experienced as a result of the problem with the recorder. At one point the data from nine interviews conducted was lost and because new appointments with the people interviewed could not be obtained, the handwritten notes made from those interviews had to suffice.

Fourthly, the availability of resources to do the field research was another limitation to this study. This study was a self- sponsored project because it was not possible to obtain a scholarship. Promised support from private individuals was relied upon, which was not sufficient. Waiting for financial assistance from individuals also made the interviews take longer than it was anticipated to. Moreover, it was a financially difficult period for many people in Jos. Many of those who have promised to assist lost their financial investments due to the closure of many investment schemes (known as wonder banks) by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).Most of them were forced by their financial circumstance not to keep their promise.

Lastly, the purpose of this research is not to argue against marriage but for the acceptance of the single status, even that which is caused through divorce.This research does not minimise the importance of marriage for individual, family and societal well-being. Although it is widely perceived in Jos that those who are married are better off than those who are single (cf. Gallagher, 2000), the aim of this study is not to affirm or disprove such assumption. However, an attempt has been made to uncover the factors that account for such a widely acclaimed perception and to interrogate the extent to which this has affected the pastoral ministry of the COCIN to single women.

5.7Confidentiality and ethical considerations

Based on the awareness of the ethical issues involved in a research, appointments were made with the people involved for both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion. An informed consent form was provided for the participants to read and sign before

conducting the interviews. Participants who agreed to participate in the interviews were assured that neither their names nor status would be reflected in the final document. Therefore, names and identifying information were changed to ensure confidentiality. This also ensured that participants remained anonymous.However, permission was sought from, and consent was granted by church leaders, seminary lecturers, clergy (with the exception of two who preferred to remain anonymous) and the magistrates for their real names to be used. Code names such as Adult Child of Divorce Marriage A-D; Divorced Woman A-F, Never married Woman A-F and Single Man A-D were employed to protect the identity of the following category of people: single, never married and divorced women, adult children of divorced marriages and the single men.

According to Meho, "emphasizing to participants that certain measures will be adopted to maximise confidentiality is necessary", therefore "interviewing researchers need to ensure that adequate provisions are taken to protect the privacy of participants and maintain the confidentiality of data"(2006:1289). In the report of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission participants argue that apart from minimising human risk, maintaining confidentiality has benefit for future research work (2004: xxi).

5.8 Conclusion

The research designed presented in chapter one described the problem statement of the research, the research questions and objectives of the study. This chapter has given a detailed description of the research methodology employed for the study. It described the sampling and data collection procedures andthe research methods applied for the empirical data analysis. The discussions in this chapter also addressed the reasons for the choice of the methodology and methods used in the research. It also addressed the limitations of the study and the ethical considerations involved in the study. This chapter provides the bases and the blueprint for the rest of the study. Chapter Six will present a discussion of the themes that emerged from the field data.

CHAPTER SIX

Pastoral themes in ministry among single women of the Church of Christ in Nigeria

6.1 Introduction

Drawing from the personal interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, sermonsand personal encounters, themes that emerged from the field research will be discussed in this chapter. The interview and focus group participants' suggestions on strategies that the church can use to minister to single women will be introduced in this chapter and will be discussed at length in Chapter Seven.

6.2 Marriage has a moral and social significance for the society

Marriage is assumed to have a social moral value and associated with virtues such as trust, stability, care, and commitment (Brake, 2012:2).The theme of marriage as a moral and social requirement was dominant in the focus group discussions and interviews. According to Area Court Judge, Ladi Nyako, marriage provides women with some form of social recognition and dignity.Therefore, a woman who is single lacks that recognition and dignity. She maintains that it is worse for a woman who once acquired that status and decides to abandon it, because peoplein Jos believe that if a woman leaves her first marriage she will not be able to remain in any other marriage again. This belief is so inculcated that it informs the way single women, particularly divorcees, are treated(2012). Gada concurs that the attitude of the society toward single women is informed by cultural values and norms of the society. The society believes that a responsible woman is somebody's wife. Therefore, marriage gives a woman status in Jos (2012). Reverend Dashan stated that culture and theology have been responsible for people's perception of single women. He maintains that myopic theologies have caused the society to blame single, never married and divorced women for social problems andbrandthem as "independent social criminals" (2012).Reverend John Yilkpuba, the vice chairman of RCC Gigiring observed that there is no respect for a single woman, no matter how industrious and educated she is. A single woman has no honour and dignity, and people look at her with suspicion. Therefore, it can be said that a woman's dignity and honour in the society hinges on marriage(2012).

Women who 'fail' to marry or remain married are therefore viewed as people who are rejecting God's standard for living. Reverend Dashan asserted that "divorced women are perceived as people who are ignorant of biblical teachings and cultural values attached to the everlasting nature of marriage"(2012). This concurs with the view of a member of the CYFfocus group that:

> The Church has demonstrated a lack of objective approach to the application of the Gospel message to current times because it has not approached spirituality and morality from anunbiased gender and marital status angle (2012).

Despite the fact that most of the time, it is not the fault of these women who divorce their spouses; many of them are blamed for it. In some cases it is not the wife who takes the step to end the marriage; she is often driven out. For instance, the six divorced women interviewed indicated that they never wanted their marriages to end; their husbands terminated the marriage. However, the church and society seem not to consider this fact in their response and attitude towards these divorced women.

Another member of the group argued that marriage is not a measurement of spirituality and morality. According to a member of the CWF focus group, single women, especially those who are e divorced, are not respected in the family and society. They are seen as people who lack tolerance, patience and endurance, which are attributes of a virtuous woman. Marriage is about tolerance and patience, and every woman is supposed to have this in order to stay in a man's house. The woman who isof age and is not married is believed to be wayward, materially minded or just not wifely (2012).

The conception of marriage by the COCIN members as a moral duty has both religious and cultural undertones. Religiously, the COCIN believes the statement "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it" in Genesis 1:28 to imply a divine injunction and moral obligation on humans to procreate. Ervine observes that marriage has been treated as the "normative for Christians" (n.d:225) and thus obligatory for every adult. Furthermore, marriage and procreation have come to signify the fulfilment of God's will, but divorce becomes offensive to what Davis calls "the sense of order and fitness of social affairs"(1944:700).In the COCIN RCC Gigiring, Jos, marriage is also associated with sexual morality. The responses to the question on people's attitude toward single women affirms the belief that marriage promotes sexual morality. The sexual reputation of single women has always been questioned by society andmany people conclude that they are women who lack

morality and virtue. Table 1 below indicates the words participants used to describe people's perception of single, never married and divorced women.

Table 5.1 Phrases used by participants to describe single, never married and women

Phrase	Number of participants	Percentage %
Suspicious	11	20%
Promiscuous and loose	9	16.3%
Irresponsible	7	12.7%
Wayward	7	12.7%
Impatient	6	10.9%
Unstable	4	7.2%
Abnormal	2	3.6%
Incapable	2	3.6%
Others	7	12.7%
Total	55	100%

The largest number of participants (20%) indicated that suspicion underpins peoples' attitude toward single women. A fair number of participants (16.3%) said that single women are perceived as promiscuous and loose. Seven participants(12.7%) stated that people view single, never married and divorced women as irresponsible. Another seven (12.7%) indicated that people believe that single, never married and women are wayward. Six (10.9%) felt that women who are divorced are seen as people that lack patience and endurance. Four (7.4%) indicated that the society sees single women as unstable. According to two participants (3.6%), because marriage is the norm in Jos, divorced women are seen as abnormal people. Another two participants (3.6%) indicated that single women are viewed as people who lack the ability to stay in a marital relationship. Seven (12.7%) used words or phrases such as women who cannot be trusted, lack character, do not deserve respect, intolerant, unreliable, social deviants, ungodly and selfish to describe people's perception of single women.According to Reverend Kachala:

> When people see single adult unmarried women they wonder why they are not married. Assumptions follow their every move, doubts, lack of trust, anger and unexplained pain, sadness, vain accusations by other family members and outsiders. This is how one can

describe people's attitude towards single women, most especially those who are divorced (2012).

The response of Reverend Dashan, the COCIN general secretary, to the question on the relationship between culture and how the church ministers to single women confirms the suspicion and assumptions that underpin people's perception and attitude toward single women, which probablyalso informs the church's neglect of pastoral ministry to them. He explained thus:

> The church does not have a deliberate ministry to single women. They are treated as part of other groups. Our culture and pastoral training compounded by theology has not allowed for such ministry. People frown at pastors getting closer to single ladies. Therefore, pastors are sensitive to what people would say. Sometimes single ladies themselves are suspicious of any pastor who attempts to get closer to a single lady. For example, I saw a single lady that I felt needed guidance, I drew close to her. But her friends were not comfortable and I suspect they were talking. I had to call them and explain to them that I saw their friend as a daughter who needs help and nothing more (2012).

It may be inferred that the above perceptions mirror society's acknowledgement of the sexuality of single women, and the sexual tensions they are likely to face. However, it can also be argued that thisis a conception of single women that is embedded in the belief that marriage is a remedy to sexual tension. This is a teaching drawn from Paul's teaching in 1Corinthians 7, which also reflects the traditional position of the church that confines sexual intercourse to marriage. The traditional position,however, has been challenged on the premise that it is not universally tenable and limits the individuals' right to make moral decisions regarding the use of their sexuality(Brake, 2012; Charles Curran, 1970; Valente 1970). Drawing on the letter of the medieval nun Heloise (ca.1100-1160) to her lover and husband, the philosopher and monk, Peter Abelard (1079-1142), Brake similarly criticised the traditional view of marriagefor juxtaposing love and marriage, and portraying marriage as the only model of moral transformation needed for the well-being of society (2012:16). Although these arguments challenge the perception of marriage as the ultimate goal and standard of morality, an uncritical embracing of such a stance has the tendency to devalue marriage and the role of the family in facilitating relationships thereby ensuring that societies are sustained.

In Jos, marriage is culturally viewed as a social, moral and religious act. Three of the single men interviewed perceived marriage as such. Single Man Astated that in the culture of the Tarok anyone who fails to marry is viewed as wasting her or his seeds. Therefore, when such a person dies a stone is rolled on the grave to signify that the person's seeds were wasted.

Similarly, a participantasserted that in the culture of the Mwaghavul marriage is seen as the only act that will complete a person. He said:

> People who are not married are not respected, and people need marriage to keep their family continuity. A person who is not married will have no- one to remember him when he dies, but the name of the man who is married and has children will live on through them. He will also keep his ancestral name through the names of his children (2012).

Another participant indicated that single people find themselves under immense pressure to get married. He said his mother once told himto impregnate a girl so that he would get married. He narrated an incident that took place when they had a family meeting.One of his cousins,a married man, by far his junior,wasoffered a seat because he was married, while he was left standing just because he wasnot married. He indicated that the discussion at the meeting showed that his cousin's opinions were respected more than his because of his marital status. He further explained, "Seeingthe way my friends, even those younger than me are treated like 'elders' just because they are married, sometimes makes me want to get married" (Single Man C, 2012). According to Single Man B, single people are not taken seriously just because they are not married.He maintains that "there is an underestimation of faith and spiritual maturity of single people because the Church perceives marriage as a spiritual attainment"(2012).

This situation is not unique to Jos, Nigeria. These are descriptions of long held African values and norms regarding marriage. According to Mbiti:

> ... marriage is a duty, a requirement from corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel and a lawbreaker, he is not only abnormal but 'under-human.' Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person concerned has rejected society and society rejects him in return(1999:130).

Mbiti's statement expresses the primacy of marriage, and the value that is attached to it as a requirement for social acceptance, and the locus of societal continuity. As 'a rhythm of life', marriage ensures the continuity of humans, and serves as a means of recapturing what Bahemuka describes as "humanity's lost gift of immortality" (2006:120).

Other arguments in favour of marriage are that, first, marriage has a 'civilising effect' on individuals. The belief that marriage morally transforms people was echoed in the responses of CWF focus group (2012) and CMF focus group (2012) to the question on the attitude of people towards single women. For example, a participant in the CMF focus group said that

marriage changes people because it has changed him into a more mature and responsible person. He claims that there were things he used to do that he does not do now, because the knowledge that he is now a father and his children are looking up to him makes him more responsible. The other six participants agreed that being married has made them more responsible men(2012). Participants in the CWF focus group centredtheir discussion of people's perception and attitude towards single women on what women think in terms of their family and not just themselves as individuals. According to a member of the group, marriage has a way of maturing a woman from a selfish girl to a selfless woman who thinks about the welfare of her family (2012). This is in agreement with the argument that marriage gives men a sense of purpose, norms, and social status, and support that orient them away from vices and channel their lives toward adult responsibility(The Witherspoon Institute, 2008:9; Bradford Wilcox, et, al., 2010:79). However, it has been argued that marriage is not an overall true test of a responsible person(Brake, 2012; Jakawa 2010). According to Jakawa many single peoplehave demonstrated excellent qualities in their businesses, professions and interpersonal relationships more than some of their married counterparts (2010:27). For Brake virtue and respect have different requirements other than marriage. Therefore, "Marriage is neither necessary nor sufficient for virtues or respectful attitudes. Basic good, respect and virtues can exist outside marriage..."(2012:4). Moreover, numerous studies have documented the impact of variables such as personality, family background, religious beliefs, education, and ethnicity on life performances and marital outcomes (Fein, Burstein, Fein and Lindburg, 2003; Hasting, 2006; Hsueh, et al. 2012; Moore, et al. 2004; South, 2001; Webster, et, al. 1995).

Secondly, marriage strengthens peoples' finances as well as provides financial and emotional security for couples, especially for women. Two (33.3%) of the six divorced women interviewed confessed that their single status was placing a strain on their financial progress because apart from catering for their own children they have relations who look up to them for assistance.Single Man Abelieves that having a spouse will boost his financial status since as a couple they will put their incomes into one purse. He maintained that when he experienced personal challenges he wishedhe had a wife to share it with. He stated that:

> One of the greatest challenges I face is the need for someone who will help deflate my stress. People's attitude towards us singles is negative.No one visits you. Female friends do not visit for fear of what people would say. Pressure from family and friends urging me to marry is mounting by the day. People make insinuations when speaking. Some suspect something is wrong with you (2012).

With respect to emotional and financial problems associated with divorce, it has been argued that divorce has a more personal, emotional and financial negative impact on women than men (Madison, 2010:para, 1). Ten (83.3%) of the twelve single, never married and divorced women interviewed said they believe marriage will give them emotional and financial security. For example, Divorced Women C affirms that life was better for her financially when she was married. Although she has a job, it has not been easy to take care of herself and three children. She maintains that her husband has become less supportive since he started a new family with the woman he left her for (2012).

Clarke-Stewart and Bailey observed that the impact and processes of adjustment after divorce are different for men and women. While men are more likely to experience psycho-pathological problems, global indices shows that women are likely to do more poorly(1989:76). Some early studies have attributed this variance to women's low standard of living and poverty resulting from divorce(Brave et, al., 1986; Weitzman, 1985). Although this is close to three decades, the situation has not changed. With regard to divorce, the majority of women in comparison to their male counterparts are worse off.

Thirdly, marriage has positive outcomes for both adults and children, as well as promotes the social, psychological and financial well-being of both family and society. According to Judge Nyako, divorce has adverse effects on Nigerian families and society at large. Many children with behavioural problems come from divorced families. The absence of supervision from either parent gives them excessive freedom to do whatever they like.She explained further that sometimes these children manipulate both parents. They join criminal gangs and involve themselves in secret societies, drugs and other deviant behaviours.Therefore, having both parents is good for children because they will be given guidance that reflects the different roles of father and mother, which are important for a child's development (2012).

Temitope observes that marriage provides the protection of bloodlines, a secure environment for development and property rights for both adults and children (2011). Divorce, on the other hand,is linked to poverty and crime, thus making it financially stressful for both family and society as the government spends billions fighting crimes (Waite and Gallagher, 2009:109). Fagan in his remark to the Second World Congress of Family has strongly argued

for the maintenance of the family institution considering the impact of divorce on family and society. According to him divorce affects families in six major areas:

- Religion: diminishes frequency of worship of God, and recourse to him in prayer.

- Education: diminishes learning capacities, and academic attainment.

- Economy: reduces household income and massive cuts in life-wealth of individuals.

- Government and citizenship: increases crime, abuse and neglectrates and the use of drugs.

- Physical and Psychological Health: weakens health of children, and possible shortened life spans, and

- increases behavioural, emotional and psychiatric risks, including suicide(1999:n.p).

However, it can be pointed out that significant as this position is to maintaining the integrity and stability of marriage and family, such pro-non- divorce thinking promotes and perpetrates discrimination against divorced women. It can cause guilt in women who are compelled to leave a life- threatening marital relationship. Women, like their male counterpart have a right to divorce. As Fenix-Villavicencio and David rightly argue "if a marriage is riddled with violence, abuse, oppression and deprivation for her and/or her children, a woman owes it to herself and the children to get out" (2000:n.p).

6.3 Marriage is good for child development

Another key theme, closely linked to the one discussed above and that emerged mainly from responses of adult children of divorced women, divorced women, and the focus group discussions with CWFfocus group is that of the significance of marriage to the over all health of children. Four (100%) adult children of divorced parents indicated that they experienced the divorce of their parents as major setbacks in life. For instance, Adult Child of Divorced Marriage B (2012) and Adult Child of Divorced Marriage C (2012) blamed their inability to perform well in school on their parents' divorce. Adult Child of Divorced Marriage C states that his parents' divorce created a big gap andimpeded onhis development.Because he lacked confidence, he was unable to relate well to people. He claims that if his two parents were together he would have learned how to interact with people, because his interaction with them would have taught him how to relate with people from different perspectives. With

regard to the impact of the divorce on his financial status and right to inheritance (property), he said that:

> Economically I do not think I have something that I can say this is what I got from my parents to build my future on. Anything that I have is the result of my struggle together with my wife, and now with my kids (2012).

Responses of participants in the CWF focus group suggest that women strongly uphold the view that women should stay in a conflicting marriage for the sake of their children. For instance, when one of the women put forth an argument that divorce destroys children many women agreed that they have remained in marriage because of their children.In addition, the women were unanimously in agreement with the contention that an average African woman will sacrifice her life for her children(2012). A similar opinion was expressed more than a decade ago by Santrock who stated that in a sustained or increase conflicting marriage, "the best choice for the children would be for an unhappy marriage to be retained" (2002:479). However, as rightly observed heterosexual marital relationship can sometimes be life threatening. Although discussed from the context of HIV/AIDS, Dube states that marriage has become "one of the deadliest institutions for women due to gender inequality (2006:137). The socially constructed notion that women must remain in unhappy marriages puts women in a disadvantaged position. Feminist cultural hermeneutics demands that women must scrutinised beliefs and practices embedded in patriarchal cultures that allow marriage to become the instrument of oppression.

Although research findings on the effects of marriage are sometimes confusing and contradictory (Ahrons, 2007:54), researchers in the field of divorce are in agreement that divorce has a significant impact not only on the couple but their family, particularly the children(Gonzalez, et al., 2008; Amato and Keith, 1991). According to Davis the post-divorce child "constitutes a potentially anomalous element in social organization" (1944:700). Similarly, researchers claim that children who grow up with both biological parents are better off than those who grow up with either parent(Parke, 2003; Moore et al., 2002). It has been argued that children raised in married families experience less poverty when compared to children of divorce who often have less financial resources (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan, 1999), earn less income as adult (Amato and Cheadle, 2005).

However, the above conclusions cannot be generalised as other variables relating to context such as family values, socio-economic and educational attainment of parents may produce

different results when taken into consideration. The findings in this study indicate that children whose parents have stable jobs and are educated did not experience financial difficulties on the same level with those whose parentsdid not have regular jobs. For instance, Adult Child of Divorced Marriage B said that her financial status is very low especially when compared to her friends because her mother's small income is not enough to cater for them. This was a serious setback for her especially in her academic performance (2012). However, this is not the same for Adult Child of Divorced Marriage D whose mother is educated and holds a high position and a well paid job. She maintains that her schooling has been smooth, and her mother has never denied her anything, except for having to explain what she will do with any money she asks her mother for (2012).

Notwithstanding these negative effects, some research have identified some positive effects of divorce on adult children in the aspects of resilience and determination(Thomas and Woodside 2011; Hetherington, 2003; Pedro-Carroll, 2001). A study among university students from divorced families indicate that "resillence is the normative outcome" as they were frequently found in the researcher's cluster of 'high competency' (Hetherington and Stanley-Hagan,2003:224). Similarly, results of other studies indicate that "immediate distress surrounding parental separation fades with time and the majority of adult children (75%– 80%) are functioning as healthy adults" (Ahrons, 2007:55). This is substantiated in this study by Adult Child of Divorced Marriage C who stated that:

> My mother used to say that she was born and raised in a poor family, and that she does not know whether it was her poverty that she was passing unto us. But as I grew up I told myself that that has to change. I do not want to be rich because that is not my target but at the same time I would not like to be poor so I developed this struggling attitude as a result of that I do not think I am poor and at the same time I am not rich (2012).

With regards to the psychological impact of divorce, the findings from the field research indicate that the absence of fathers (three of the four children of divorced couples lived with their mothers, while one lived with his grandmother after their parents divorced) affected the children's psychological well-being. For instance, one of the adult children (now a 37- year-old educated woman) describes her experience:

> It is hard for a child barely nine years old to say how she felt at that time but what I have felt over the years are still difficult to phrase. Confused will be the first word I would use. Terrified. I could not comprehend the dramatic change in our father from the loving husband and father we had always known him to the total stranger, bully, dictator, terrorist, he had become. I do not want to go over how I felt so readily because it will open a door to sorrow that is deep, dark, painful and heart wrenching. I felt betrayed by the one man I knew and trusted completely as a child –my father. I realised we could not trust him any more.His

promises, his actions, everything were about lies and deceit. He kept lying to us and we kept discovering it all. I loved my parents being together, it was all I knew. Then this –it made no sense at all. I grew into a girl with no opinion of herself, with no focus, no direction, no purpose, no future. I was an angry adolescent, sullen, withdrawn, insecure, unsure and directing my anger at the ones who really loved me and gave up much for me. I will just stop here. This brings nothing but bitter memories (Adult Child of Divorced Marriage A, 2012).

One can infer that children of divorced marriages often fear what the future will be without both parents. They may feel betrayed by the people they loved and trusted the most, which makes the parents to seem like total strangers before them. Words and phrases such as confused, terrified, not comprehend, stranger, dictator, bully, terrorist, sorrow that is deep, dark, painful and heart wrenching, betrayed, notrust, lies, deceit, it made no sense at all, and so on in this narrative reveals the devastating effect of divorce on children's psychological and social well being. The words, "I loved my parents being together" reflectthe value children place on having both parents in the family. Adult Child of Divorced Marriage B affirmed this when she stated that she feelsshe does not deserve to be happy since she cannot enjoy parental love and care like other children whose parents are together. She said it makes her hate herself and men, especially her father. Adding that shealso found it very difficult to associate with people, because shefelt sad and incomplete when she saw how happy her friends were, whose parents are together and she always wishedshe had such a privilege too (2012). The above affirmations of the negative effects of divorce challenges the pastoral ministry of the church to divorced women and their families. Similar experiences such as the ones narrated above have led some studies to the general conclusion that children are better off when raised by both parents, because children need fathers as well as mothers(Gallagher, 2001; Musick and Meier, 2010; Parke, 2003; McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994).

However, as noted above, there are instances where divorce may not be the best option, but the only option. Instead of being judgmental and labeling divorced women, the church needs to support women in their divorce when it is unavoidable and then find mechanism of ministering to them. As Kunhiyop has argued, divorce is a reality and a pastoral approach to it must be "biblical, realistic, holistic and therapeutic" (2008:255) rather than judgmental and insensitive.

6.4 Culture and church collaborating against women

Another prominent theme that emerged is that of the relationship and interconnectedness of culture and religion. The majority of the participants agreed that culture and the teaching of

the church have impacted on the perception and attitude of people towards single women. The responses to the question regarding the relationship between culture and how the church exercises pastoral ministry, indicated that the majority of the participants believe that the church and culture have collaborated to create and promote structures that are non-liberative and discriminatory against women. The COCIN subscribes strongly to religious requirements about marriage. For instance, the words "The Lord said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone'" (Genesis 2:18) have been interpreted to mean that God has designed marriage for everyone, therefore, singleness is not God's will for humankind. The church has taught that marriage is the moral estate of human beings. It has used the above text to reinforced traditional notions of marriage by teaching that one is never complete but in marriage.One of the participants asserted that the church has not paid attention to ministry to single women because of its interpretation of the Bible, and how the African culture perceives single people (2012). Another participant stated:

> Our Nigerian culture has a great influence on how the church exercises its ministry. This category of the membership of the church is neglected in terms of ministry because they do not fit anywhere in the Nigerian society. To a large extent it is culture that determines how things are done in the church instead of the word of God (Single Man D, 2012).

The above assertion regarding the relationship between culture and the church is similar to the feminist argument that the interpretation of the Scriptures, ignorance, selfishness and bossiness have impacted on the church's attitude toward women (Fanusie, 2006:153). Furthermore, African tradition has placed marriage and procreation at the centre of the male-female relationship. Because procreation is at the centre of marriage, it is therefore assumed that single women would not legitimately participate in biological procreation, so they have failed to fulfil God's purpose and also failed the society. This is a prejudice that characterises traditional societies.

The above religio-cultural constructions about marriage and singleness prevalent in Jos reflect what Russell describes as "the pervasive assumption of patriarchal order" (2006:45). This is corroborated by the feminist cultural framework of thought that patriarchal norms have for long dictated the lives of women in Africa. Kanyoro states that because of the pervasive oppression inherent in African religions and cultures (2006:38), African women theologians have no option but to challenge the culture of patriarchy that has dominated the African continent for long (2006:40). Feminist cultural hermeneutics requires that the socio-cultural norm which demands that women must get married at all cost must be scrutinised.

According to Froide, the society has "created the stereotype of the "spinster" or "old maid"—a woman who contemporaries believed had failed in her life by not "catching" a husband and not performing the expected roles of wife and mother" (2008:47). Divorced women are worse off because they are seen as those who have been fortunate to enter the marriage institution but failed to stay, thereby failing their families, friends, the church and society in general. Although the intolerance of divorce is diminishing, there is no significant change in the church's attitude towards divorced women. It is argued that "God hates divorce, but we hate the divorced" (Single Man B, 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that unmarried women are left out of the the church's pastoral ministry, since as Reverend Gonlur rightly observed "the Nigerian church and society expects people to be committed to marriage and family" (2012).

In Jos, it is culturally and religiously assumed thatthe woman exerts a significant influence on the moral aspects of both family and social life. It is believed that she demonstrates this through patient endurance in all circumstances. Because of this assumption, a divorced woman is judged as one who lacks moral strength. This notion was confirmed by Divorced Woman B whonarrated her story as follows:

> It all began when my husband was no longer giving me any money for the family upkeep. When I complained, he said other women are doing everything for themselves, yet do not complain. Things got worse, and he stopped paying the rent, and resorted to violence anytime I pointed out that the mearge income from my business was not enough to take care of the family needs. But when I told my pastor, he said I should be prayerful and continue to be a good wife, by and by my husband will change. He gave me many examples of women whose husbands were changed because of their patient endurance. But things did not change. The beatings were increasing by the day. That was when I thought I should go somewhere and rest for a while. I was not saying I will leave the marriage, but I just wanted to rest. When I left my husband divorced me. People blame me for leaving in the first place. Sometimes I regret doing so too (2012).

African feminists have argued that whether as a wife or a mother, a woman's influence is assumed to be so powerful as to transform a man from vice to virtue (Agbasiere, 2000; Uchem, 2001; Soothill, 2007). Therefore, she is often regarded as the moral linchpin of both home and society (Soothill, 2007:56-58). She is also viewed as a dignified person whose ethical and moral virtues can redeem and bestow status on the man (Uchem, 2001:53; Joseph, 2000:7-8). Thus, a man is encouraged, and sometimes coercedinto marriage so that he would be 'saved' from his vices. Marriage becomes the man's salvation from the destruction of vices, and the woman his "redeemer." Unfortunately, pastors often preach that womanshould persevere and submit, even in a non-reciprocal marital relationship. For instance, while preaching at a wedding, Reverend Alex Joseph stated that wives must obey their husbands in

everything because that is what the word of God says. He explained that even if there is evidence that the husband will mismanage family resources or demand that the wife surrenders her earnings to him, a wife owes her husband unconditional obedience (2013).

The idea that the woman is strong and has the power to influence others can be turned into a weapon of oppression. It makes women feel guilty for attempting to seek relief or stand up to abusive husbands.Although the above notion may be taken as a reflection of the society's belief in the moral strength of women, it may also demonstrate an element of insensitivity on the part of the church to the plight of divorced women. Acolatse points out that West African divorce pastoral care is a mixture of conservative theology, existing cultural norms and African worldviews. This approach, she argues, is detrimental to the psychological, spiritual and physical well-being of women in patriarchal societies(2011:1). There is virtually no consideration given to divorced women in the pastoral ministry of the church.Because divorce is not allowed, divorced women do not fall into the category of singles in the church because everybody expects them to return to their husbands.

Another instance where culture and church traditions collaborate is in the aspect of norms regarding marriage. The issue of the bride price, close blood ties, and monogamy as the ideal marriage for Christians as shown in the following narrations illustrate the theme of collaboration. According to Divorced Woman Fher marriage ended because of the bride price. She narrated as follows;

> I was married but not in the church. We stayed together for six years but he refused to go and see my parents to settle the issue of the bride price. I kept asking him and he would give one excuse or the other, because of that I have to leave with my son. Since I left he has refused to come for me and the boy. I feel bad because he has wasted my time. Now many people know that I was once married(2012).

Gada narrated a case that she was called to attend to in the village in 2007. She stated that:

> Alfred and Pamela[25] met in the city and got married. After they had been married for eight years they discovered that they were close relatives through their paternal line. They wanted to keep their marriage but their parents and relatives said that it was impossible because their culture forbids it. There was so much opposition from the relatives that the couples could not withstand, so their marriage came to an end (2011).

The last incident happened in 2006. Jonathan and Damaris met in Jos and started a relationship.They wanted to get married but the church would not wed them because Jonathan's wife from a previous marriage was still alive. Damaris insisted that she wanted a

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[25]In order to maintain confidentiality the names used are not the real names of the couples.

church marriage. Series of meetings were held regarding the issue but nothing came out of it because the first wife was still single. According to Divorced Woman A, Christianity has made it difficult for single women to get married. She explained thus:

> Polygamy was accepted by our people and polygamous homes were accepted as a means to establish relationships and rid the community of single women. But the Church disciplines a woman who decides to be a second wife or a man who decides to take a second wife. The Church sees it as the greatest sin (2012).

From the three examples it can be argued that the demand of the bride price, traditional law forbidding marriage between close relations and Christianity's norm of oneman, one wife and no divorce collaborate against marriage.[26]

Culture and the church also work in collaboration against single women's involvement in the ministry of the church. According to single Woman B:

> Culture influences everything that has to do with women. Culturally a woman has no say in the midst of men. If a Church attempts to give a single woman the opportunity to be actively involved people will begin to ask, whose wife is she? How sure are you of her stance? People doubt everything about the single women(2012).

Divorced Woman D argued that it is culture that drives the practice of care in the church. She, however, noted that there is a positive aspect of culture in the role it has played in curbing the problem of divorce when she said, "It is culture that the church is following not the Bible. Culture is not bad because it plays a great role in the stability of marriage, but it also has made the church not to care for those of us who are single" (2012). This view on the collaboration of the church and culture is also affirmed by the assertion of Reverend Bulus Mana, one of the COCIN clergy, that in many culturesof Nigerian it is only when a man fulfils all the cultural and traditional rites which include the paying of dowry that a woman is said to be his wife. For Christians it is when in addition to the payment of the bride price, and the marriage is finally solemnised in the church,that a man and woman can be pronounced as husband and wife. He maintains that marriages are surviving in Jos to a large extent because Christianity has had a significant influence on people. Therefore, people have exercised patience in the midst of marital problems. Christianity has taught people not to divorce but endure and to forgive and even forget. He argues that cultural factors also play a role. If a woman discovers that much has been paid for her dowry or that her children will suffer, she will remain in an abusive marriage (2012).

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[26]This argument is not concerned with the issue of the rightness or wrongness of the bride price payment, marriage between close relation, or the remarriage of spouses whose partners are still alive. The major issue is the fact that these are factors that contributed in promoting singleness in the lives of the individuals concerned.

It can be inferred that religion and culture have helped to keep marriages in Jos and Nigeria at large, and subsequentlyhave helped in curbing the rate of divorce. However, in some cases religious demands and patriarchal culture have worked against single women marrying. As discussed in Chapter Two, parents may use their power of control over their daughter's choice. According to a member of the CYF focus group one of the factors that account for singleness in women in Jos is the parents' unnecessary cultural demands on their daughters' suitors (2012). This assertion is corroborated by a member of the CMF focus group's argument that singleness in Jos is as a result of some parents wanting to choose for their children or do not accept their daughter's choice of a spouse, hence they will not give their consent. He stated that "some parents are still operating in the past and they want to use the methods that were used during the days to get wives or husbands for their children today" (2012).

In the COCIN, the cultural value that views marriage as the mark of being responsible and the church tradition that one must be married before being accepted into ministry, is detrimental to single people. According to Never-married Woman A, she had a relationship that was about to end in marriage, but the church's tradition of marriage before ordination destroyed it. She stated that:

> I had a serious relationship with a young man who was in church ministry. The church wanted him to marry so that he would be ordained, but I was writing my exams and wanted him to wait until I finished. Because he was desperate for the ordination he went ahead and got married to another lady. I heard that things are not working well for them. Anyway, that is his problem, not mine (2012).

6.5 Belief in the involvement of spiritual forces in human affairs

Another theme that emerged from the field data was that of the belief in the involvement of a supreme being and spiritual forces in human affairs.In most Nigerian cultures the belief in the involvement of spiritual forces in determining the destiny of individuals is prominent. People seek solutions to life's challenges and problems within the framework of the religious and spiritual, and this lies at the core of human life.According to Never-married Woman A:

> Many single ladies leave the church for other churches and ministries in search of husbands. I have been told by friends to go to so and so church and ministry, but I feel that God's time will come. If God will not do it for me then I better not worry myself(2012).

It can be deduced that the motive behind the patronage of these ministries and churches is the strong belief these single women have in a supreme and powerful being. It may also be

connected with the belief that God responds promptly to people's needs in these ministries or churches. Jithoo and Bakker have arguedthat traditionally, Africans view the world in terms of a community comprising humans, spiritual beings and ancestors.There is a strong belief that the interactions among these determine the self-understanding of the individuals and what it means to be a member of the community(2011:150). Similarly, Ruane,Kasayira and Shino affirm that "traditional African people ...define problems ... in terms of disharmonious social relationships and spiritual enconters..." (2011:130). Mndeme observes that because African culture has a very strong perception of religion, people incorporate a spiritual and higher authority into their struggle and pursuit of wholeness and well-being(2008:49).

The examples of Never-married Woman B (2012) and Never-married Woman D (2012) on how they deal with sexual tension and the case of Never-married Woman A (2012) affirm the above arguments. According to Never-married Woman B, sex was a problem for her but she has learned that God is in control and that he knows why he instructs against sex outside marriage. She said people insinuate in their comments that she is too old for marriage, and some even suggested ways of finding a husband. Some misjudge her and say that she is selective or indecisive, while others compareher with women who are younger than herwho have children. She added that:

> Someone once said to me,'If you refused to marry and give birth to children, you will train other people's children.' No one tries to know what is wrong or know your situation to assist. Sometimes one is forced to respond harshly. But I have come to accept the fact that God knows what is best for me. All I try to do is to avoid things that will bring back the past (2012).

Never-married Woman D stated "One of the challenges I have is sex. I am not a virgin and have experienced sex, but I have asked God to deal with it" (2012).The issue of sex and women outside marriage needs to be approach from the dimension of a liberative understanding of human sexuality, which recognises and empathises with single women's sexual needs rather than a narrow one that judges and ignores those needs. Single women have been taught that sex must be practiced within marriage, and thus feel guilty when they do have it outside of marriage yet they have sexual needs but they are not married, how do they deal with that. Single women do not always have to live in bondage to guilt for the choices they make. The church has often imposed a sexual moral standard on all people without taking into consideration that they have a right to make their own moral decisions. Allowing single women to make personal decisions about their sexuality will encourage autonomy and responsibility. If the Church remains unresponsive to this need, single women

will continue to shape their own sexual freedom. For instance, a study of contraceptive practices in Nigeria conducted by Monjok, Smesny, Ekabua and Essien indicate that single women patronise patent medicine shops. This is because they are usually not accepted at government family planning clinics because of the societal disapproval of sex outside marriage. They maintain that this lack of access to contraceptives and family planning services results in unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions among unmarried women, especially young adults (2010:14). This argument is supported by Bennet that the failure of the Government to acknowledge the contraceptive needs of single women reinforces the cultural and religious confinement of sex to marriage and the insistence that females must be virgins at marriage (2005:36). While the message of premarital chastity remains strong in the church, single women still struggle with the need for sexual fulfilment. This raises the need for sex education programme in the COCIN. Bennett argued that single women's "competence and willingness to engage in sexual community and reproductive/sex education are crucial factors in their realization of sexual autonomy" (2005:119). Society often has double standards on sexual morality, characteristic in its condoning of sex outside marriage for single men and condemning the same in single women. However, the feminist framework of thought challenges the querying and dismantling of any imposition and/or structure that does not encourage the fundamental human right of women's ownership of their bodies. According to Phiri the church must rid itself of all aspects that oppress women (2005:40), especially single women.

According to Never-married Woman A (40 years old), many people, including a 'man of God', told her that her singleness was not ordinary because according to him a curse has been placed on her by someone in the family. While some had suggested that her parents should investitgate the issue, the 'man of God' has advised her to seek deliverance to break the curse (2012). This belief in divine intervention is further affirmed by the responses of the other single people to the question regarding how they handle the challenges faced as a result of their singleness. For Divorced Woman C, prayer has been her most valuable asset and strength in her weak moments(2012). Single Man A states that he has remained unmarried because as the first male child, he has the responsibility of providing for his younger siblings. Coming from a poor family background, he paid his way through school and now he is sponsoring his younger siblings. This has not allowed him to think of marriage, but he is 'trusting God to change matters' for him(2012).

The inference that can be drawn from the narratives of Never-married Woman A and Single Man A, and the assertion of Divorced Woman C is that because these single people believe that God will intervene, their singleness is not a personal decision or choice. It also implies that to a certain degree, singles themselves view their singleness as a problem that deserves divine intervention. These singles believe that their situation is not permanent and live in hope that perhaps they will find a partner in the future.

This concurs with Demarinis'argument that belief systems influence human life and relationships, and consequently, their responses to life situations(1993:18). It also supports Marias' argument that "people's spirituality impacts on the various aspects of their lives including their ... interpersonal behaviour" (2006:53).However, one can argue that although the above responses from the six divorced women appear to show their faith demonstrated in the total reliance on God, a closer observation would detect a silent desperation. This is because the church has taught them to think and respond that way. Nevertheless, one can also argue that in addition to that, an appropriate response for the church is to intervene in ways that are much more realistic and redemptive, by supporting the decisions that these women make to escape from their oppressive situation.

The following table shows some of the phrases single, never married and divorced women used to describe their perception of their single status, and their belief in the intervention of a higher power in human problems.

Table 5.2 Phrases used by single women to describe their status

Respondent	Age	Region	No of Children	Phrase
Never-married Woman A	40	Dadin Kowa	none	I leave everything in God's hand.
Never-married Woman B	37	Zarmaganda	none	God knows what is best for me.
Never-married Woman C	36	Fwol-Vorok	none	I am trusting God.
Never-married Woman D	39	Dadin Kowa	none	I always ask God to change things for me.
Never-married Woman E	28	TCNN	none	I am waiting on the Lord.

Never-married Woman F	25	Hwolshe	none	I hold to God's promises.
Divorced Woman A	50	Lo-Raku	3	I trust God.
Divorced Woman B	60	Rahwol-Kanang	4	I commit everything to God.
Divorced Woman C	47	Low Cost	3	I am looking up to God.
Divorced Woman D	35	Fwol-Vorok	2	I know with God's help things will change.
Divorced Woman E	48	Dahwol-Dangwong	4	I look up to God.
Divorced Woman F	26	Fwol-Vorok	1	I look to no one but God.

The above table indicates that the six never married and six divorced single women interviewed consider their single status as a problem that needs God's intervention, since they are unable to find acceptance in both society, and particularly, the church. Never-married Woman B anticipates God's intervention in the form of providing a husband. According to her God is preparing a better future for her and in God's appointed time she will have a family of her own. She states that she devotes her time now to church activities because she is aware that once she starts a family she will not have the time she has now (2012). Divorced Woman C anticipates reconciliation with her ex-spouseone day. She said she is looking up to God to act and she has not given up because she believes that one day God will bring him home.

Similarly, two of the single women interviewed indicate that they have resorted to utilising their time in spiritual inclined activities. According to Never-married Woman B, being involved in the church as a chorister and usher keeps her occupied after office hours (2012). Similarly, Never-married Woman D said she is seriously contemplating the possibility of doing mission work. Although she is aware that the COCIN does not have single women missionaries, she is thinking of joining any Christian organisation that recognises single women missionaries(2012). Hence, it can be deduced that these people's spirituality serves as a coping mechanism. These women are also encouraged by the assurance that their present situation is not a permanent one, but that there is a higher force that can act to change their lives for the better. This supports the findings of some studies that have documented the role of spirituality in increasing the individual's emotional coping ability (Tuck. et al., 2008; Clark, et al., 2003; Puchalski, 2001; Simoni 2000).

Another dimension to the belief in the involvement of spiritual forces in human affairs is indicated in the case of Divorced Woman D who explained the failure of her marriage thus:

> Right from the beginning my parents did not accept my relationship, but I refused to heed their warning. We are related to my husband and in our culture it is a taboo to marry from the same extended family because the ancestors are against it. We eloped and I thought if we do that they would accept it, but instead they disowned me. They never took the bride price and in our tradition once the bride price is not paid the marriage will never be blessed. Although we had two children from the marriage, a curse was running in the family. My husband became irresponsible and abusive and we were always fighting (2012).

The assertion of Divorced Woman D that her marriage was under a curse points to the argument that in many African tribes marriage is sacred and involves the supernatural. Thus, the violation of a taboo invites the anger of the ancestors or the supernatural (Chemhuru and Masaka, 2010:121; Arthur, 2001:47). However, it can be pointed that the notion of being cursed is a superstition that is often accompanied by the cultural ideology of witchcraft and bewitchment. This is harmful and destructive because it weakens the human agency making it unable to take responsibility for and action to remedy the situation. According to Ademowo, of the Afe Babalola University, Ade Ekiti, Nigeria, and the project's director, Humanist Association for Peace and Social Tolerance Advancement (HAPSTA), superstitious beliefs expressively violate the right of persons, stunt scientific knowledge, hinder critical and creative thinking, encourage servitude to religious leaders, demonstrate a lack of tolerance and respect for others and hinder the utilisation of present resources for future benefit. In the case of single women, the belief that they have been cursed prevents them from seeking realistic and clinical assistance that might help them (n.d). It also tends to obstruct the single women's interpersonal relationship as they become suspicious of others. The church somehow has promoted these superstitious beliefs by not encouraging people to seek realistic and clinical or therapeutic help. The church must come to terms with the impact of superstitious beliefs on the well-being of single women and work out ways that would empower single women to address their needs and as well as deconstruct such harmful beliefs.

6.6 Self-perception and self-image of single women

The findings of this research indicate that single women struggle with their self-perception and self-image in a context where marriage defines a woman's identity. Thus for these women, being a wife and mother is central to their female identity. The six divorced participants women interviewedindicated that they wished that their marriages had not ended.

For instance, Divorced Woman F expressed regrets that her marriage came to an end because she left to take a break from an abusive marital relationship (2012). Two (33.3%) participants ages 26 and 35, expressed interest in remarrying, one (16.7%), age 51, anticipates a reconciliation with her husband. Anothertwo participants (33.3%), ages 54and 60 said that considering their age, marriage is out of the question. One participant (16.7%), age 50 said that being twice divorced she has had her share of marriage. Some single women in their response to the question on how they feel about their singleness alluded to a feeling of inadequacy because of their status. Divorced Woman D stated that her divorced status has placed pressure on her to consider that marriage will make a difference. In her own words:

> Few people respect me, but many do not because I am a divorcee. Sometimes I feel pressure to remarry to earn respect. Nobody cares whether your marriage is a success or not, all they want is to see you have a man as your husband (2012).

The above responses indicate "how culture conditions people's understanding of reality at a particular time and location" (Siwila, 2011:24). From the statement of Divorced Woman D one can infer that in Jos, being married is more important than the nature and quality of the marriage. The COCIN has a responsibility to correct this by teaching the importance and dignity of single women outside marriage. Human dignity does not depend on a person's status, race or gender. This is similar to feminist thought that individuals deserve to be accorded human dignity irrespective of their status (DeMarini, 1993).

Single women, particularly the divorcees may also feel estranged from friends, colleagues or even other family members. The divorced woman may experience a feeling of failure, and therefore isolate herself away from other people. According to Adult Child of Divorced Marriage A, when her parents divorced, people's attitudesforced her mother to changeher social relationships. Her mother had to be careful to whom she spoke so that she would not be tagged as a "home-breaker" who could not keep her home and was out to prevent others from keeping theirs. The fact that her mother was single with children to take care of also 'qualified' her for demeaning remarks and actions from men and women alike. It also made her vulnerable to all manner of advances by men. Thus, her mother kept to herself, even away from her friends(2012).This confirms the conception that an individual's self-esteem is related to his or her social relationships (Heatherton and Wyland, 2003:220). Some findings have shown that women may derive their self-image from belonging to a kinship group (Gaetano, 2009; Barlow, 1994), especially in a marital relationship. Similarly, drawing from

the Ontario Court of Appeal (2003), Duncan, has argued that marriage enhances "an individual's sense of self-worth and dignity" (2004:662).

The sixnever married women interviewed said their desire for marriage is personal and not the result of persuasion from either parents or friends. For instance, Never-married Woman D, said that although she was approaching her forties, she was not placed under stress either by her parents or siblings to get married. Nonetheless, she felt that marriage wouldbe fulfilling as this was a personal dream of hers. She stated that when she saw her friends and their families it reminded her of her desire to have a family of her own. She said, "I envy them" (2012). According to Never-married Woman B, she had relationships that did not work. Some were also mistakes that she made which have affected her and informed her present situation. She believedthat carelessness contributed to her being single because she refused to listen to the counsel of people who were close to her and who wanted to help her. She thought marriage would always come but she had discovered that it was not always the case (2012). Never-married Woman A said she felt bad about her single status because people accuse her of wanting to marry a rich man, but the men that approached her were married. She maintained that sometimes she felt she was not beautiful or good enough for single men. She concluded, "I asked God whether I am only good for married men" (2012).

This theme of self-perception and self-image is extricably tied to that of self-blame. Listening to the voices of these women indicated that a number of them blame themselves for the marriages and relationship that had not worked. Considering that self-sacrifice has been feminised and women have internalised this in such a waythat success for a woman depends on her ability to make relationships, especially marital relationships work. This self-blame is damaging to self-esteem and dignity. Culture and religion have assigned the woman the role of moral educator (Suda, 1996) and 'redeemer' of damaged relationships and situations, even of those she might not have contributed in creating. This argument is supported by Miles who asserts that the notion that a marriage must be saved at all cost, and the person designated to be the 'saviour' of the marriage is usually the woman, has always been used to make women take the blame for marital problems(2002:57-58). This is similar to the feminist argument that patriarchal beliefs have been used to place women in a disadvantaged position. As feminist theologian Uchem observes, the male ego is so fragile that in marriage, women may take on the role of subordinates, or cooperate with their oppressors to protect their husbands' fragile egos (2001:54). This is arguably what happens when single women blame themselves for

relationships that have not worked. Although the position of moral instructor and/or redeemer appears to accord some form of importance to the woman, the underlying motive is not the recognition of the significant contribution of the woman but a way of not only inferiorising her commitment and competence, but also of maintaining male control over her. As Suda argues, women have been kept in a perpetual subordinate position to that of men (1996:76).

One may deduce, therefore, that single women in the COCIN interpret their experiences and self-worth in the context of the social, cultural and religious norms. Lartey makes the following observation:

> We are in a real sense creatures of culture and creators of experience. As such we must pay close attention to the social and cultural locations of all persons. Gender, race, class and culture – all constructed features of our experience – are the lenses through which we live and interpret our reality. Our faith, ethics, norms and preferences are shaped within identifiable cultures and honed within specific societies and communities (2006:89).

It has also been observed that cultural factors such as childrearing, intrafamily roles and social expectation influence the individual's self-concept and self-image(Jithoo and Bakker, 2011:145; Alarcon and Folk, 1995). Beya observes that because the basic upbringing of the female child is oriented to motherhood, the single woman often feels deprived in not having children (2006:165). Although single women may crave for children of their own, having a child out of wedlock is not an acceptable practice in Jos. Thus, single women often experience tension between the desire for children, and what the society thinks of single mothers. According to Never-married Woman B (2012),37 year old, she fell pregnant when she was twenty two, but had to terminate the pregnancy because she did not want to disappoint or disgrace her parents and relations and has lived with regrets ever since. Every time she saw a 14- year -old child it stirred feelings of guilt and regrets. This also implies that single women are aware of their stigmatised status and acknowledged the disadvantaged position of singleness.

Fundamentally, age is also linked with marriage and single women's self-esteem. The participants referred to age as a strong barrier to marriage, particularly for women. According to ReverendPolycarp John:

> Education has affected the age of marriage, because of schooling, a lady may spend her marriageable years studying and when she is ready to marry, she is considered old for boys her age. Infact, men prefer younger women. So age can be a real barrier to women getting married. I suggest that any woman who is interested in marriage should consider this when she is pursuing her education (2012).

A member of the CMF focus group stated that girls desiring to continue their education tend to delay marriage. He said that age is something that girls forget will catch up with them when they are realising their personal ambitions. According to him, once a girl reaches thirty years of age men do not desire her for marriage because there are years in which a woman becomes attractive and men desire her for marriage. But once she exceeds this age men do not want her for marriage or even for any serious relationship (2012). According Never-married Woman D, the issue of marriageable age for women, this age has an expiry date because people believe that every adult female must get married. She stated that:

> People keep asking me 'when are you going to get married'? Last year when we went to the village for Christmas someone said to me, 'Do you want to expire?'They believe that there is a certain age in which a girl must get married or she will expire.A women fellowship member once said to me 'Even with your university education you have not gotten a man to marry? If you can't find a husband come let me give you my husband' (2012).

Although expressed differently, all sixnevermarried women indicatedthat they regretted not agreeing to marriagewhen they had the opportunity to do so. Three participants (50%) indicated that when they consider their present circumstance, issues that informed their earlier decisions not to get married would not count. For instance, Never-married Woman C felt that if she knew things would turn out the way they had, she would have convinced her parents that she was ready for marriage or at least allowed the man who was interested in marrying her, to introduce himself to them (2012). According to Never-married Woman B, if she had listened to the counsel of people who had wanted to help her, she would have had a family of her own (2012). Never-married Woman A explained that women who are educated do not want to remain under the control of a man. They feel they can take care of themselves. But these women are few, and she was not among that category. She maintained that so many women who make the decision to live as single woman do it because they are compelled to do so by circumstances. She asserted, "Last year I told myself that once I get admission I will go to school and forget this thing called marriage, because nothing seems to be working for me in terms of relationships" (2012). This agrees with Gaetano's argument that single women who perceive barriersto getting married may "adjust their desires to meet the reality of a constraint marriage market" (2009:7).However, Reynolds suggests that the attitude of women towards their single status is a factor in how others view them. She maintains that single women can either "choose to construct their singleness very positively … or talk unashamedly about their desire for a relationship, and risk being constructed as deficient and 'desperate,' and marked by their failure to already have a man" (Reynolds, 2008:73).

Single women often face a conflict between being the symbol of morality and the reality of finding a husband. A member of the CMF focus groupexplained that men are intimidated by women who have attained high academic, occupational and moral standards. This corroborates the assertion of Never-married Woman A that men are intimidated by a single woman's spirituality. According to her, men in the church do not want to marry church girls and girls cannot approach a man for marriage because it is culturally wrong. Even when a girl meets a man she is interested in she cannot approach him. She explained that young men use sex as an incentive or bait for marriage when they understand that a woman is desperate for marriage. She stated that one of the men she dated told her that she could not get a husband by being a virgin and out of desperation she gave in, but it did not turn out as she anticipated (2012). This implies that men are intimidated by women of high moral standards, even as society expects the woman to be the custodian of morality.

This concurs with the assertion that in Africa, because "marriage is the primary site for women's struggle for self-determination and equality" (Mifumi, 2010: n.p), it may be perceived as a booster of self-esteem. Some studies have shown that societies that place value on women's relationship status, particularly marital relationship, often stigmatise against people who are not involved in relationship(Sanchez and Kwang, 2007; Conley and Collins, 2002). Sanchez and Kwang have argued that heterosexual women often derive their self-esteem from romantic relationships and that women's self-esteem is affected by their activities and interpersonal relationships(2007:401). Such notion that women cannot do without marriage must be interrogated using feminist tools. In today's modern world women are self-sustained, therefore, can exercise their right to the choice of lifestyle the want without succumbing to religious or societal pressure.

However, the responses of some single women indicate that women may also derive self-esteem from other things aside from marriage. For example, two of the never-married and three of the divorced women interviewedacknowledge that the educational and vocational skills they acquire have provided a source of identity and self-esteem for them. They claim that because they are not financially dependent on others, it has given them a level of recognition in society and among their relations. Divorced Woman D explained that:

Although things have not been easy with me, I have a job that is helping me to take care of myself and support my parents and younger ones. They respect me and listen to my counsel. In fact, anytime there is a problem they call me first (2012).

6.7 Pastoral ministry as a male prerogative

According to Mombo and Joziasse, leadership and priestly roles have been denied women such that in most churches while men take charge of the pulpit and front seats, women occupy the pews (2012:183). This assertion reflects the picture of the COCIN congregations. The belief in the priesthood of all believers is central to the COCIN's doctrinal beliefs (COCIN Constitution, 2008). However, the COCIN, like most church denominations categorises people into clergy and laity, with the clergy viewed as the most significant category. As a result of this ministry is left in the hands of a few people whom the Church assumes should minister to the larger group. Furthermore, not only is pastoral ministry presumed as the exclusive of few people in the church, it is strictly the calling and vocation of men. According toReverend Kachala,the COCIN is tolerant of women ministry, but not as pastors. They can be involved in other aspects of ministry such as teaching Sunday school, women fellowship and act as resource persons in seminars and workshops(2012).

Another example of the perception of pastoral ministry as strictly a task that must be undertaken by men is a comment made by a TCNN Student (2007) in his argument against women involvement in pastoral ministry. According to this student the involvement of women in pastoral ministry is against the Scriptures. He said that the Scripturesare clear enough on this issue. There is no record of a woman priest in the Old Testament or any woman pastor in the Bible. He statedthat Jesus chose twelve disciples and all of them were men. Therefore women's clamour for inclusion in pastoral ministry has its roots in the secular world. It is the agenda of women liberation and a shift from God's design. He warned that the church must bewareof joining the world in distorting God's programme. He concluded that women liberation will destroy the church and set people against God's order for the church (TCNN Student, 2007).[27] Furthermore, the Pauline texts such as 1Corinthians 11:3-16; 14:34-

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[27]This comment was made in 2007 by a student during a discuss in a class in an elective course I taught on the role of women in the church. I was assigned this course when I newly started teaching in the seminary, and I only taught the course for one semester, which was not enough for me to gain an indepth knowledge of the subject. At a point I was almost convinced that the student was right having come from the background where women are not priests and in which the role of women in the church was not an issue for discussion. In addition, being trained in a male-oriented theology I was as ignorant of the subject as my student, and needed more exposure on the concerns of women and the Church myself. Even to date this course has never been taught consistently. It keeps appearing sporadically, because priority is not given to it. The TCNN is an institution owned by sixteen member churches, and only three (18.8%) of these churches ordain women.

35 and 1Timothy 2:11-15 have often been interpreted in support of the exclusion of women in church ministry. According to Shut (2012:13), a COCIN pastor, the subjugation of women by male authority is divinely ordained and taught by different inspired teachers of the Word. He maintains that because the man has authority over the woman, no woman is permitted to teach a man. However, women can teach other women and children. This gender distinction and patriarchal - motivated restriction is an obstacle to women's spiritual attainment (Daniel, 2010:132).

The above viewsprovide understanding of the perception of pastors about the involvement of women in pastoral ministry. They also portray the underlying assumptions guiding the pastoral ministry in the COCIN and the larger Nigerian context. These views suggest that maleness is viewed as a normative with regards to pastoral ministry. The belief that Jesus had only male disciples and apostles is an issue that is often used to argue for male clergy pastoral ministry. However, this is not peculiar to COCIN, for instance, the Catholic church in its 1976 Vaticant declared that there is no evidence in theScriptures that Jesus ordained or even considered any woman, not even Mary his own mother, for the priesthood (Clifford, 2001:143). It argued further that there must be a 'natural resemblance' between the priest and Christ, therefore, the maleness of the priest is a reflection of the sacramental mystery of Christ and the Church (Daniel, 2010:128). Consequently, the conclusion is reached that priests must of necessity be male (Hinga, 1992:186). It has also been argued that the patriarchalisation of Christology informs the belief that the male is the normative of humanity and the only ideal representative of Christ, therefore, access to the divine is based on male apostolic teaching and priestly office(Reuther, 1983:124-126). The maleness of the incarnate Christ has been used to teach a doctrine of maleness as a reflection of the fullness of the image of God, and a determinant in the discourse on the ordination of women. This confirms the feminist argument that the Bible has been used in some situations to wound. According to Masenya, "the oppressive Bible interpretations, which prevent women from exercising their God-given potential, have enable male preachers to use the Bible as a wounding sword" (2005:51). She argues that for the church in African to model liberation, the Bible must be allowed to be the "spiritually liberating resource" it is meant to be (2005:55). This is particularly so for single women who are doubly put at the margin.

However, the above conceptions have been criticised on the grounds that a broader perspective of the life of Jesus reveals that his mission and ministry, and not his gender defined his person. He is saviour and healer of a broken humanity, the sustainer, the voice of the voiceless, the liberator of the oppressed (Hinga, 2006:190-191). Thus, as Ruether correctly argues, the significance of Christ was not his maleness, but his humanity(1983:137). Rakoczy's reminder that the incarnation of Christ is not a matter of gender but relationship, is a matter for reflection(2004:101-102). The event surrounding the climax of his ministry in Mathew 28 (which also forms one of the theological beliefs underlying pastoral ministry in the COCIN already discussed in Chapter Four) suggest that Christ would want his church to respond in love and support of each person's sense of calling, than restrict them on the basis of gender, race or class. Similarly, supporters of ordination have argued that the mutuality and partnership of man and woman as God's co-creators implied in Genesis 1:26-27, their full ownership of their creation in the image of God, their equal redemption through Christ, and the rite of baptism is an affirmation of the equality in both spiritual and physical vocation (Clifford, 2001:125). Jewett argued three decades ago that women have been unduly kept out of the ordained office for no reason other than that they are women. He argued that "ordination presupposes…that there is a theological dimension to one's entry into the Christian ministry: one is called of God to the office…" (1982:14).

Although viewed in the context of female priesthood in the Catholic Church, Raab's suggestion that female priests will bring changes in the church that would "manifest themselves in an institutional level, thus creating a vision of a feminine church" (2000:235). When applied in the context of this study, the ordination of women will give rise to the COCIN that is more inclusive and presents a complete picture of the church. Besides, as Goviden suggests, the inclusion of women in the ordained ministry and leadership is a demonstration of their equality in grace and a renewed humanity(1994:296). This is in agreement with the feminist views that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is sinful and wicked. Nadar argues that the church needs to repent and be contrite of its discrimination against women in the ordained ministry. She urges that "it is crucial that this act of repentance and contrition be followed by reconciliation and restitution whereby the Church restores women to their full and equal participation and authority in its ecclesiastical mission, structures, and worship" (2005:19).

Furthermore, thechurch has used the difference between men and women to exclude women from participation in the ordained ministry. Similar arguments such as that of Thomas Aquina, that biology and the divine law naturally deny women the capacity for the priesthood, and any public office in the church (Kung, 2005:67) is still used against women's ordination today. The anti-ordination adherants also arguethat women by nature are too emotional, and often lack the physical strength needed to carry out difficult physical tasks. According to Reverend Vongjeng:

> The Church believes women are there because they should be there. Women should not attempt to be there as men,because they are not men. Even those that are elected in the council of elders do not have anactive role. In some places they are there to cook and serve food when there is a meeting. They are not involved in the discussion. Women see men as the solution to everything, so even those whoare capable look up to men for decisions. Women define and place themselves in complementary and supplementary positions. Men are biologically stronger than women. It is natural for men to lead and for women to follow. Although I do not hold the same view I believe that there are some emergencies that require physical strength that a pastor may be called to deal with that a woman cannot do. (2012).

The assertion that 'Men are biologically made stronger than women' supports the cultural and religious belief that women are weak, therefore unable to serve as ministers. A concept which Olajubu argues has also been transferred to the sphere of intelligence and intergrity(2003:8). Yet, biological differences do not presuppose intellectual inferiority of the genders.

Moreover, the majority of people, including women, have reservations against women's participation in church ministry, especially the ordained ministry. As a pastor's wife I have observed that women tend to be hostile towards any woman that execute a task which they identified with pastoral responsibility. The story of my being 'attacked' by an elderly wife of a clergy will support this assertion. An elderly woman accused me of getting too involved in the pastoral work, beyond my limits as a pastor's wife. She added that because I teach at a pastors' school does not mean I should also perform pastoral duties, which according to her the Bible clearly assigned to men. This perception of the place of women in relation to the priest function reflect the the framework of thought that African community and family, including the church, are structured according to patriarchal principles which tend to oppress the women (Phiri, 2005:30) and stance in what being church is. According to Nadar, "the way in which women view themselves…both in the home and the church- dictates the extent and levels to which women are willing (or allowed) to advance in the church" (2003:213).

The COCIN has made some significant changes in relation to the status and role of women. Women serve as preachers, theological educators and heads of educational institutions , amongst others. Yetwomen have not fully taken advantage of the opportunities for ministry, or aspired for the ordained ministry, which unfortunately defines ministry in the COCIN.Single Man C's response to the question on the role of women affirms this assertion. He commented that:

> Women in the COCIN have not been proactive about women ordination. It may surprise you to know that men are the ones talking about women ordination. No woman in the COCIN has come out to address the issue. Even those of you that teach in theological institutions who should speak, are not doing so (2012).

Reverend Vongjeng concurs with the above assertion when he stated that women are content to be where they were oriented to believe is their place in the church. Therefore, they do not aspire for what he calls "high church related services." He further explained that many women work to excel in their professions but not in the church because they have been oriented to see ministry as a man's reserve. Thus, women who try to enforce their position in the church are often vehemently opposed by other women. Momanyi observed that women have often acted as custodians and perpetrators of the patriarchal order (2007:17). Thus, are sometimes the major obstacle to achieving progress for fellow women who want to respond to their calling. Women's desire to submit tend to negate their initiative and leadership potential (Baur, 1994:481). Soothill concurs with this in her argument that, because women tend to access power via their relationship with men, they may employ the rhetoric of submission to avoid threats to church authority, which is dominated by men(2007:119). These arguments are supported by feminist thinking, that women working in solidarity lead to a redefinition of their identity and paves the way for self-liberation (Phiri, 2005:34).

6.8 Gender -based discrimination and stereotyping

Another theme is that of gender-based biasagainst women. The participant observation indicates that single women, especially the divorcees suffer discrimination and stereotyping from their married counterparts. For instance, the CWF which is supposed to minister to other women denies divorced women membership. In one of the local congregations a woman was returned the money she had paid for the fellowship uniform because the leaders claimed they were not aware that she was divorced. Single women and children of divorced marriages were asked whatthey regarded as challenges and whether they had noticed any structures of inequality in the church. The responsessuggest that women generally face social, cultural,

emotional and spiritual discrimination and stereotyping because of their gender, but single women experience even more of that because of their status. According to Divorced Woman A, there is gender inequality in the way the church and society treat women. Men are regarded as people to be reckoned with. Women are not. Men do not make mistakes and if they do, the women are to blame. What a man does and no fuss is made over it will be viewd as disastrous when a woman is the culprit. Anything that goes wrong is laid at the feet of women and they are linked with anything unscrupulous. Women are silenced and cannot seek justice or help over issues that burden them (2012).

Never-married Woman A maintained that there is inequality in the way single women are treated even by their family members when she asserted that:

> Single women are only recognised if they have money. Married women are highly respected even a young girl who is married is more respected than the unmarried woman. Consciously or subconsciouly, married women are held in high esteem. Even with my parents,the respect accorded my younger sisters who are married is not shown to me. Even as the firstborn and a woman at 40, I am always the errand girl because I am not married (2012).

This corroborates Dell's argument that "parents of single adults… struggle with attributing full maturity, responsibility, and even trust and confidence to their unmarried adult children" (2000:317). According to Adult Child of Divorced Marriage C,married women, whether they are young or old, are treated with dignity and respect because they are seen as being responsible. But a divorced woman, whether young or old, is regarded as a loose woman. People wonder how she can live without a husband, but the men are not viewed in the same way (2012).The above statementsare clearly based on gender-based discrimination apparent in Jos.

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC), defines gender-based discrimination as:

> [D]iscrimination based on a person's gender… which more oftens affects girls and women. Because of gender discrimination girls and women do not have the same opportunities as boys and men for education, meaningful careers, political influence, and economic advancement (2012:n.p).

This definition indicates that gender discrimination affects women more than it does men. Although no country can lay claim to being free from gender-based discrimination, Nigeria is one of those countries where it is much in evidence. Gender- based discrimination is not an exclusively women related problem, because men are also discriminated against, however,

this study is concerned with discrimination against women. Thus, the above definition is adopted because it agrees with the feminist framework used in this study which argues that gender-based discrimination or inequality is the problem of discrimination against women.

Gender discrimination is reflected and perpetuated through the cultural, social, economic, religious and political structures of the Nigerian society. A form of gender discrimination that single women face in the COCIN, which has been mentioned in Chapter Three, is the denial of the spiritual right to lead worship services and to be elected as elders. According to Single Man B single women are deemed as ungodly, impure and unworthy of being entrusted with any 'holy' responsibility. They are not allowed to conduct a church service because they are seen as sinful and worldly. He maintains that the relationship between single people and the church is underpinned by African culture. It is built on suspicion, fearand lack of trust. No matter how gifted or talented a single womanmay be, if she does not have the 'seal' of marriage she is not given approval(2012). Single Man A shares the same perception of the relationship between the church and singles when he claims that there is inequality in the church. He argues that single people are not treated like members of the church. They are just there to swell the ranks of worshippers on Sunday. Single people are not elected as elders or even as committee members. Even when they are appointed it is as a last resort, because a married person is not available. For the single woman the situation is even worse, because even if she is the only qualified person in the congregation she will never be elected as an elder or made a committee member. The church would rather elect or appoint an arbitary or nominal married man than elect a single woman as elder or committee member.

One can argue that in the spirit of social analysis the church must develop a historical conciousness and become critical of its historical legacies to liberate single women and other marginalised groups to a state Holland and Henriot describe as "historical objects, empowering them to become its subjects ..."(1984:22). Oppression, whether in the form of discrimination, stigmatisation or stereotyping, is the denial of a person's humanity - it dehumanises. This concurs with feminist views that culture contains elements that are oppressive, particularly to women. Therefore, for single women to be liberated, culture must be liberated first (Kretzschmar, 1991; Phiri and Nadar, 2006). According to feminist theologian Miller-McLemore, pastoral ministry must learn to deal with "behaviors that perpetuate underserved suffering and false stereotypes that distort the realities of people's lives" (2001:194).Similarly, Dreyer argues that for the Christian community to be a truly

liberating community, it must expose distortions in society, which are the consequence of power discrepancies that cause problems for women. She maintains that this must begin with one's view of the Scriptures and its interpretation (2011:2). According to Coll dehumanising structure and practices affect both the powerful and those with less power because:

> [W]hen the systems operative in a culture are demeaning and dehumanizing, a vicious circle is set in motion in which women and men are prevented from developing the full humanity to which they are called. At the same time fractured humanity is incapable of creating a society that is truly human (1994:82).

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented an interpretation of the participant's understanding of singleness, and how it has impacted on the pastoral ministry of the COCIN to single, never married and divorced women. Seven major themes emerged from the participants responses to interviews and focus group questions.The discussion has indicated that socio-cultural and religious factors have played a major role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes toward single women in the area of study. These have certainly affected how ministry to single women is undertaken in the COCIN.Marriage is culturally and religiously viewed as a social and moral requirement, which demands the participation of every adult. As a result of this expectation, women often construct an identity around marriage because it provides them with dignity and recognition. The perception of marriage as a remedy for sexual tension has created uncertainties for the single woman's sexual morality. The findings also show that the community has a strong belief in marriage as an instrument of moral transformation and in the good of marriage for children.

Apparently, there is a correlation between how the COCIN and society view women in Jos. In its practice, the COCIN seems to reproduce the inequality and discrimination against single women that is inherent in the society. Comparing the socio-cultural andchurch attitudes towards singleness leads to the conclusion that it is difficult to draw a distinction between the cultural and religious perception of single women in Jos. Although the intolerance of divorce is diminishing, there is no significant change in the the COCIN's attitude towards divorced women because divorce is viewed as going against God's will.Culture and church tradition have impacted the practice of ministry to such an extent that in their effort to uphold sociocultural norms, doctrinal beliefs, teaching and traditions of the church, pastors are often insensitive to the plight of divorced women and their children. It

was also found that single women struggle with issues of self-esteem and their religious beliefs are used as a coping mechanism and a motivation for a positive outlook on life.

Pastoral ministry is viewed by both men and women as the prerogative of males.Although the COCIN is tolerant of women ministry, the policy of the church has failed to create a space for women in the pastoral ministry. Some biblical texts emphasise the maleness of Jesus and the fact that Jesus had only male disciples and apostle, which have always been strong points of reference in favour of maleness as a normative with regards to pastoral ministry in the COCIN. While this chapter has relied on a social analysis and feminist cultural hermeneutics frameworks to offer an interpretation of the social perception of singleness, Chapter Seven will discuss the response of the church, that is, the possible approaches and strategies in undertaking pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Pastoral ministry to single women in the RCC Gigirng, in Jos

7.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the views of single women on their experiences of singleness as well as perceptions of single women in the COCIN and the larger Nigerian society, as discussed in Chapter Six. In this chapter, frameworks of feminist pastoral theology and social analysis are used to assess the needs of single women and to discuss the participants'suggestions on the effective and appropriate strategies for pastoral ministry to single women in the RCC Gigiring, Jos. Thesesuggestions are built around the participants' perceptions of pastoral ministry as care through counselling, transformative teaching,prayer, advocacy, discipleship, seminars and workshops and visitation as practical methods for the execution of pastoral ministry to single women. Considering that many women are single because they have divorce their spouses, strategies that can prevent marital crises and instability, as well as promote healthy marriages and strengthen family relationships will be discussed. In this respect, pre-marital and post-marital teaching and counselling are discussed. This study seeks to answer the research question: what has been the extent to which the COCIN pastors have offered pastoral ministry to single women? The questions that will assist in answering the research question posed in this chapter are: how do the COCIN pastors and congregational members provide nurturing and support to single women to enhance their self-esteem and personal dignity? How significant are pre-marital and post-marital counselling and teaching in promoting healthy marital and family life as well as preventing marital failure?

7.2 The meaning of pastoral ministry

Pastoral ministry describes a wide range of services and caring activities in the context of the church. Pastoral ministry in the COCIN could refer to terms of service and care, which include both church administration and pastoral functions. It connotes service within the context of the activities of care that have as its goal the well-being of the whole person. Seminary lecturers were asked to share their understanding of pastoral ministry. The

responses indicate that all four lecturers (100%) link pastoral ministry to care. According to Reverend Vongjeng:

> Pastoral ministry is shepherding care, nurturing and protection of God's flock. It involves doing what God would want us to do. Carrying out our mandate and calling to meet the spiritual, social and physical needs of those he has entrusted in our care" (2012).

For Reverend Gonlur, pastoral ministry means "care and giving leadership to believers. It means shepherding God's people in the pattern God wants." He explained that the major focus of pastoral ministry is preaching, teaching, counselling, prayer, visitation and encouraging people in need. In line with the vision of the church the pastoral task is that of equipping the people of God to grow in Christ (2012).

Similarly, two (50%) of the lecturers also see a connection between ministry and service. According to Reverend Pokol:

> Pastoral ministry is about care and rehabilitation of the broken. In a broken world God is in the business of rehabilitating and recreating humanity back to what humanity lost in the fall. Therefore, pastoral ministry is holistic service that takes care of the spiritual as well as the physical needs of people, thereby caring for the whole person (2012).

Reverend Luka stated that pastoral ministry is God's calling to individuals to be involved with him in caring for and service to humanity. He explained further that "central to the practice of ministry are care, restoration and hope, which take care of both the spiritual and physical concerns of the flock of God" (2012).

These four seminary lecturers' perceptions underscore care and service as basic components of pastoral ministry. Significant also is its association with the response (rehabilitation and recreating) to the spiritual, social and physical need of people in the context of the activity of faith. From this it can be deduced that pastoral ministry entails the participation of the whole community of faith in the care and transformation of individuals and the community. This is in agreement with Cunningham who defines pastoral ministry as "that situation which accommodates the collaboration in equality and complementarity of dedicated men and women within the ecclesiastical structure of parish life in response to the needs of the people of God" (1972, n.p). Patton put forth a similar argument in his assertion that the dynamics for care are not limited to professional clergy, because different conditions inform the exercise of pastoral care in communities. He argued that care can be offered by competent and creative

"persons committed to the work of caring for others..." (1993:3). Patton's argument underscores the value and centrality of committment to the care of others in pastoral ministry.

Fundamentally, pastoral ministry is service in the context of the activities of care for those who are in need. In this study the term 'pastoral ministry' is not restricted to the work of the pastor as an office holder or a full time ministry, but is given a broader meaning which includes the personalised services that are geared towards promoting the spiritual and physical wholeness of another person as well as enhancing interpersonal relationships in the community.Therefore, the shepherding (acts of care) ministry is not to be understood as a reserved task of the ordained minister.As Southard pointed out "many persons can do what ... pastors do....the task of pastors is to equip these persons for ministry and support them through administration and example"(1975:7).

7.3 Assessing the needs of single women

7.3.1 Emotional needs

In Jos, marriage enhances a woman's well-being as it provides her with emotional, social, physical, and financial support. Undoubtedly, single women in Jos tend to lack the emotional support that marriage provides. This absence of primary support systems such as husbands heightens single women's sense of need and vulnerability, making them easy prey to manipulators and other 'social predators.' Their situation is further compounded by the society's perception of their need for emotional support as less important than that of people in marital relationships. Six divorced women and four adult children of divorced marriages were asked how they felt about divorce. The responses of the four (100%) adult children of divorced marriages and eight (66.7%) single, never married and divorced women had to do with descriptions of emotions. According to Never-married Woman E, single women often lack intimate and close friends with whom to share their emotions with. She explained thus:

> One of the challenges I face as a single woman, which I believe many singles also face is someone to share your pain and good news with. Sometimes one has it rough at work and when one comes home there is no one to give one the emotional support, that is, someone to help diffuse the tension that you have bottled up from work. You see in our society people treat single women in a way that tells you not to expect respect from anybody because you do not have a husband. I believe if one was married things would be different. People have respect for married women (2012).

Similar narrations of single women's emotional experiences indicated that single women experience situations that cause them emotional distress. For example, the responses of

divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages describe the emotional stress divorced women and their families go through. Divorced Woman A narrated her experience thus:

> At the iniatial stage when my marriage ended I felt bitter about not having someone to share my life with, which is something most divorced women pass through at the initial stage. Because this is my second divorceI asked myself whether God has not designed me for marriage. Why did he allow me to have children? I was angry with myself and with everybody. I had no children in my first marriage and three in my second marriage. My life was surrounded by a lot of confusion. When I started having problems in my first marriage I became impatient and frustrated. There was no one to counsel me. If I had, things may not have been the same. I might still be in the marriage. I went into another marriage and had three children from it. The second marriage did not last because my husband seemed not to be interested in the marriage. This time I endured all sorts of abuse for fear of what people will say. I thought that since my first marriage did not work people will blame me for the failure of this one. I went to school and concentrated on my studies as an escape from the problems I was facing. Later my husband divorced me and set the children against me and shut me out of their lives. He poisoned their minds against me and blamed me for everything and even denied divorcing me until I found the letter of divorce and showed the children. Relations tried to intervene to no avail. It took some time before the relationship was restored with my children and now they are living with me. But now I am wiser and I will not let any man hurt me again. I am committed to living my life to serve God and will not allow the issue of marriage to disturb me. I have a change of mind-set and see things from a different perspective now. What I struggle to do is to make life better for myself and my children (2012).

The above account from Divorced Woman Aencapsulatesthe turmoil that occurs after divorce. It also indicates that divorced women may look for escape and find solace in other endeavours such as pursuit of education, job or religious commitments. All the divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages indicated that they felt bad about divorce. The table below shows other phrases divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages used to describe their feeling about the divorce.

Table 6.1 Phrases divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages used to describe their emotions after divorce.

Phrase	Number of participant	Percentage %
Confusion, anger, bitterness, frustration and fear	6	60%
Regret	1	10%
Abandoned and rejected	3	30%

Total	10[28]	100%

The response to the question on how divorced women and adult children of divorced marriages felt about the divorce indicated that six participants (60%) comprising three divorced women and three adult children of divorced marriage, experienced divorce as a state of confusion, anger, bitterness, frustration and fear. According to Divorced Woman A (2012), when she realised that her second marriage had also failed she felt bitter and confused. Adult Child of Divorce Marriage A stated that she could not comprehend the dramatic change in their family life (2012). Adult Child of Divorced Marriage B, the youngest of four children, explained that when her parents divorced she felt confused and wondered if she did not deserve happiness like other children (2012). Adult Child of Divorced Marriage C stated that she felt sad and confused because one day she found herself and her siblings living with their father and step-mother and no- one explained what was happening (2012). Divorced Woman B stated that she was angry and frustrated with herself and the people she thought would have helped salvage the marriage (2012). According to Divorced Woman F, aside from feeling that the man she married had wasted her time, she was also afraid for herself and what the future held. She explained that her work in a hotel was not what she wanted but she had to do it to take care of herself and her son. She had registered to rewrite her Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) to further her education but it was not easy to manage her studies and her employment. She was afraid she might not do well in her studies and particularly in the SSCE examination (2012). Divorced Woman B stated that her decision to take a break from her abusive marriage often plagued her, especially when others told her that she should have been patient for the sake of her children (2012).

As the table shows, one divorced woman and two adult children of divorced marriages (30%) experienced divorce as abandonment and rejection. Divorced Woman D explained that when she left her marriage many people avoided her and she felt like she had a contagious disease. She maintained that her biggest challenge was proving to her parents that it was better to remain single than go through the experience of another failed marriage (2012). According to Adult Child of Divorced Marriage D, he did not feel the impact of his parents' divorced until he was enrolled in primary school and was asked to pay school fees. His parents were not there to meet this important need. He explained that his grandmother tried to pay his school

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[28]Six divorced women were asked how they felt about being single because of their divorce. Four adult children of divorced marriages were asked how they felt about their parents' divorce. The table indicates their responses to the question.

fees but because she did not understand the value of education she felt it was a waste of time and resources to continue (2012). Adult Child of Divorced Marriage A narrated that when her father sent them to her maternal grandparents with the promise that he would return to collect them, she did not know that it was going to be the end of her life as she had known it. She explained that they did not see or hear from him for four months. The next time they heard from him was a letter he wrote to their mother telling her she was no longer his wife and that when he was settled he would fetch the children, but he never did (2012).

As discussed in Chapter Six, divorce has an emotionally damaging effect on both women and their children. Some studies argue that divorce has both psychological and legal implications. Since divorce involves significant loss similar to that resulting from death, divorced women may go through an experience that is similar to the grief caused by the death of a loved one(Ernest, 2003; Hayes and Anderson, 1993). Some studies of emotional process of divorce observed five stages that are similar to that of death and grief: Denial, loss/depress, anger and ambivalence, re-orientation, and acceptance and integration. However, these stages do not follow the same sequence in every individual(Hayes and Anderson, 1993:84-85, Wiseman,1978).Similarly, Scanzoni and Scanzoni have argued that divorced individuals go through "a time of transition and grief" (1981:651). Often, people have mixed feelings – whether to sympathise or congratulate the divorced persons. In addition, support to go through the mourning process and build a new life is lacking. Drawn from Krantzler (1973), Scanzoni and Scanzoni state that divorce is 'the death of a relationship', therefore, it is essential for divorced persons to have a grieving period in order to have "emotional healing just as when an actual person dies" (1981:651). For some women, divorce has put them on what Amato describes as "a downward trajectory from which they might never fully recover" (2000:1269).

Some scholars have linked the experience of stress in dysfunctional marital relationships to their religious beliefs (Acolatse, 2011; Ahron, 2007). This also resonates with the views of some participants in this study. For instance, Never-married Woman A stated that the faith of people determine their response to divorce. She explained thus:

> Some people remain in abusive marital relationship because they feel coming out will land them in hell fire for doing what God hates. On the other hand, some marriages are a threat to life and some feel remaining in such life threatening relationships will tamper with their spiritual life so it is better to opt out of it. So the issue of divorce depends on the person's faith (2012).

According to Acolatse Christians experience the stress of divorce more acutely because of their calling to "a life of reconciliation and for whom marriage is viewed as the ultimate location of the reconciled and reconciling life" (2011:1). Thus, the process of adjusting may take longer because of the conflict between personal experience and religious belief. Single women experience emotional problems which pastoral care can assist them to deal with. Divorced women pass through mixed and stressful emotions that counselling can help to alleviate.In order to help divorced people adjust to their new, and often alien status, Ahrons suggests that therapists should emphasise life courses and family system perspectives when helping divorced families(2007:62).

The findings of this research with regard to how single women feel about their singleness indicate that the six never married women struggle with the emotional distress of unpleasant past relationships. For instance, Never-married Woman A said that sometimes she is tempted to believe those who said her singleness is caused by someone in the family because she has had four relationships that seemed promising but never did. She explained that two of the relationships ended mysteriously and the other two were abusive and had ended unpleasantly. She stated that in one of the abusive relationships the man initially seemed to be different from the others and gave her hope, but later he became very abusive and even raped her on two occasions (2012). According to Never-married Woman B, she had mixed feelings about her singleness. She explained that sometimes she longed for a marital relationship, but whenever she remembered that she had had relationships that had not worked she felt that she was better off being single (2012). Never-married Woman D asserted that she regretted her single status and thought that God was punishing her for her past mistakes. She explained that she did not want to enter into a relationship that may not work (2012).

Single women tend to bear their emotional pain and suffering in silence. Never-married Woman E attributed the single women's resolve to bear their emotional pain alone to the community's perception and attutudes on singleness. She narrated that:

> I have learned from experience to keep my problems to myself because when you share your problems people gossip about it rather than help you find a solution. In our society gossiping about single women is the stock- in-trade of some people. I once shared a problem with someone I thought would understand but was surprised and disappointed that it became the topic of gossip. Some people even said if I was married I would not have found myself in the situation I was in. As a result of this nasty experience I have stopped sharing my problems with people especially those who are married (2012).

7.3.2 Social needs

In Jos, singleness is considered as a sign of failure. Even today, divorced women are scorned for bringing shame on their families and the society. As indicated in the participants' contributions in Chapter Six, in Jos people's perception of divorced women is highly judgmental. Among other things they are perceived as those who have either acted in ignorance or rebellion against the biblical requirements of marriage. The field research data indicate that because women tend to be influenced by social and religious perceptions, single women may tend to off-set negative attitudes and public misconceptions in one of three ways, that is, isolate themselves, become preoccupied with their work or maximise social interactions. Three (25%) of the single women interviewed indicated that they isolate themselves. Five (41.7%) indicated that they are preoccupied with their pursuit of education or jobs or businesses. Four (33.3%) indicated that they maximise their singleness through engaging in social activities.

The tendency for divorced women to isolate themselves is affirmed by Adult Child of Divorce A who narrated that her mother isolated herself following her divorce (2012). Divorced Woman C stated that she tried to isolate herself to avoid the gossip about her failed marriage but it had not been easy to do so because the culture of the Berom does not support that kind of lifestyle. She maintained that she attended social functions because culture requires her to participate. She stated that the traditional culture of her people requires her as a senior daughter to organise her juniors whenever there is a function in the extended family. Furthermore she even attended celebrations that were organised by her in-laws (2012). According to Never-married Woman F apart from work most of her time is spent in the church and her weekends at home. She explained that there is a lot of gossip about single women. As a result, she decided to set some boundaries for herself and limit her social interactions. She explained further that:

> I have made a decision to cut down on my appearances in social gatherings. Unless it becomes very necessary I do not just attend every wedding and other social function. When people see you they begin to question you. The first thing that comes to their mind is when you are going to marry. No one cares to know your story. Marriage answers all things for our people (2012).

Furthermore, single women tend to lack the primary support that a spouse provides. Essentially, the responses of participants suggest that the loss of a spouse can be equated with death. Therefore, divorced women are more likely to experience the stress associated with the

absence of a primary social supporter, that is, a husband, than those who have never married (Shenk and Christiansen, 2009:15). This is because they have once enjoyed the benefits of having the support of a husband but have lost it through divorce. This gap, however, can be filled through involvement in social support groups and other helping relationship. A social support network can be an effective approach to ministry to single never married and divorced women because it can serve as a path to counselling and psychotherapy, particularly to those whose singleness is a stressful life experience. A social network is a structure of relationships that links individuals with others. Cohen, Gottlieb and Underwood defined defined social support as "any process through which social relationships might promote health and well-being" (2000:4). They identified response through the provision and exchange of emotional, informational, or instrumental resource to people who are passing through stressful experiences as processes for health and well-being. It has been argued that social support "provides people with a forum to share a wide range of issues and to receive support from others dealing with similar issues" (Kim, et al., 2008:518).Informal social relationshipsand networks such as family, friends, colleagues and acquaintance can provide direct or indirect support for single women. Two(33.3%) of the single, never married participants affirmed that their families have been very supportive, but admit to having inner conflict, coupled with pressure from outside their immediate family relations. Never-married A stated that her parents, especially her mother, have been her number one support. She felt free to confide in her mother. But when she was raped she did not tell her, not because she could not; she did not want to hurt her (2012).

Some studies have emphasised the importance of networking in providing social support for single women (Ibrahim and Hassan, 2009; Pescosolido, 2008). According to Pescosolido, network interactions influence individuals' beliefs, attitude, behaviour, actions and their outcomes(2008:210). Similarly, Ibrahim and Hassan argue that the support of family and friends helps single women to cope with the challenges of negative perceptions and attitudes towards their single status(2009:402). It can be deducedfrom these that social groups provide an enabling environment for individuals to experience love, a sense of belonging and acceptance. The church can provide resources of support networks aimed at adding to single women's well-being, and helping single women adjust to their changed social status. They can also be assisted to establish new networks of support (Hayes and Anderson, 1993) particularly networks that promote Christian values and holistic Christian living for single people.

Furthermore, because most single women in the city are away from their extended family, they tend to be removed from the support and unifying bond that the extended family relationship provides. Belonging to a social group decreases their social isolation and gives them a sense of community.Social networks functions to assist in inducing opportunities, monitoring, interdependence and emotional support (Pescosolido, 2008; Wehrli, 2011). Relationship with others is crucial to the value, worth and the over all well-being of the human person (Cohen, et al, 2000). Thus, having the support of a wider group can make single women become more aware that they are valued members of the group. When applied to pastoral ministry in the context of this study, this challenges the church to explore the utilisation of both formal and informal support systems to reach out to single, nevermarried and divorced women.

7.3.3 Financialneeds

Various literature have included single women in the category of those most at risk of poverty (Wolf and Soldo, 1988; Cancian and Reed, 2009). In Jos, the woman is regarded as part of her husband's possessions.Therefore, when there is marital disruption that results in divorce, the woman loses everything. In this study, it was found that divorced women are likely to experience financial instability more than their never married counterparts. The six divorced participants confessed that life has been financially challenging for them because they had to fend for themselves and their children. However, the severity of this loss of financial support for some of the women is lessened by their engagement in government employment and other vocations that earn them a living. These women are able to experience a certain level of financial security and independence. For instance, Divorced Woman A stated that although things would have been better had she remained married, she has a job that can sustain her family financially (2012). Divorced Woman E, a senior civil servant, asserted that:

> I remain grateful to my parents for sending me to school and for God for providing me with a job. I do not know what I would have done. Although I knew that my marriage was a mistake right from the beginning I never knew it would turn this bad. I had only one child from my marriage, but when my marriage ended I adopted three others. Even though I know that two hands are better than one in managing a family I have no complaints because God is helping me. Apart from my government work, the poultry business I am running is also a great financial help (2012).

Similarly, single, never married women who are employed face less financial challenges when compared to their unemployed counterparts. Never-married Woman B a senior staff member in one of the institutions of higher learning in Jos explained that her single status has

not had any negative effect on her financial life because she is gainfully employed and spends her income the way she likes. She stated, "I have more resources to spend on myself and also assist others because I have limited responsibilities" (2012).

A number of studies on divorceare in agreement that divorce has a detrimental effect on the financial life of women (Amato, 2004; Fagan and Churchill, 2012; Reilly, 2009; Smock, Manning and Gupta, 1999). This is because women are more likely to experience financial loss than their husbands. Single women have limited opportunities for employment in the COCIN. It is even more difficult for a divorced woman to obtain a job in the COCIN. Adult Child of Divorce stated that the church does not consider the financial needs of divorced women. She narrated the following on the attitude of some the COCIN members and leaders towards her mother's divorced thus:

> My mother was a church worker before her divorce. There were times the issue of her being a divorcee was leveled against her holding certain offices. Some even wanted the Church to sack her. There is nothing on the ground in the Church to help divorcees and their children spiritually or otherwise. Theyare left to their own devices and initiative for survival (2012).

Reverend Dashem, the secretary of the RCC Gigiring explained that the insensitivity of the COCIN to the plight of women who are divorced has left them with no option but to approach non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for help. The marital status of the woman, he said, is crucial in church employment. As a result of this the church hardly employs single women particularly those who are divorced. Some pastors are afraid to employ a single woman because of the doubts that people have about such a relationship. He maintained that the closeness of the work creates scepticism in the minds of the congregation, which encourage pastors not to employ single women. Thus, the absence of consideration given to the financial needs of single women by the church is affecting them negatively (2012). Although ministry in the COCIN is built on the theology of the church as the family of God, where members' physical, social and spiritual needs are cared for as discussed in Chapter Four, the lack of concern for the financial needs of single women has not demonstrated this important point. This neglect of an essential need of one part of the church negates its place as the primary locus of support to its members (Sunderland, 2003).

In Jos, a woman who is perceived to have acted against social norms is stereotyped and marginalised. Single women often suffer disproportionate employment opportunities (Weiss and Gardner, 2010). The single woman is more likely to face gender-based, employment-

related discrimination than her married counterpart. This is based on the assumption that those who are married have dependents, therefore need jobs more than the single person. However, the appropriateness and validity of such assumption is questionable. As Weiss and Gardner (2010) state, "Unmarried women workers are often the sole breadwinners for their households and families, and many have children, elderly parents or other relatives to support financially and through caregiving" (2010:3). This is not far from the truth in the context of the RCC Gigiring, Jos. The majority of divorced women are in fact the breadwinners and heads of their households. In reality, the protection of joint investment of couples in Nigeria is non-existent. The wife is assumed to be part of the property of the husband, therefore in the event of divorce she is left with nothing because she does not have any rights to property. Consequently, women are often left to fend for themselves and their children and other dependents who may be relatives of the man or woman. The church more often than not remains silent on such issues because it regards these matters as private.

As has already been discussed in Chapter Two, education has equipped many single women to serve as financial decision makers as well as take care of their siblings and aged parents. Despite the society's perception of single women as irresponsible, many families depend on their unmarried daughters to provide care and financial support. Many of them are often the financiers of their siblings' education. For example, Never-married Woman D said that being the first of four orphans she had to work hard to take care of her younger siblings. She explained that her father's two brothers have not been able to assist because they did not go to school and only had menial temporary jobs to support their own families. She maintained that because education is the only way to change their circumstances, she was doing her best to see to it that her siblings obtain the level of education that will give them a better future (2012).

Thepastoral ministry of the COCIN cannot afford to distance itself from the socio-economic realities present in the society as doing so will be detrimental to its mission, which is the preaching of holistic salvation and the equipping of believers to be self-supporting (COCIN Constitution, 2008:6). Therefore, the COCIN must provide single women with opportunities to improve their socio-economic conditions.

7.3.4 Spiritual needs

As mentioned in Chapter Six, the belief in the involvement of a supreme being serves as a coping mechanism for single women. Every group in the church has unique needs, but in the COCIN single women are lumped together with other groups without considering their uniqueness. The responses from both personal interviews and focus group discussions indicated that the absence of specific pastoral ministry to single women has impacted negatively on their spiritual life.The pulpit-pew interaction where attempts to address the needs of singlewomen are left to chance in sermons and other exhortation speeches that characterises the COCIN ministry to the single women, has no direct impact on them. In such a situation single women are left to search for meaning and hope, which is the essence of spirituality, elsewhere. The COCIN in its pastoral ministry has failed to understand that women's spiritual inquiries are at the heart of their search for meaning,thus, the church has a responsibility to empower the oppressed by bringing liberation to them (Nueger, 1991).

In this study, it was also found that single women in the COCIN RCC Gigiring, Jos are disadvantaged because their single status restricts their access to opportunities for spiritual development. For instance, a participant of the CWF focus group maintained that "single women are left to fend for their own spiritual well-being, which is not often favourable becausesometimes they go to the wrong places" (2012). Reverend Polycarp John stated that:

> COCIN's church structure and policies are not friendly to single women. For instance, if a woman is divorced she cannot participate in communion. The women fellowship is only for married women. This is a programme that should be designed to meet the needs of the different categories irrespective of status. In their working place many of these women are respected but in the church they are seen as not responsible enough to deserve any attention. In the case of divorced women the church is not interested in asking these divorced women how the divorce came about. Rather, they are condemned (2012).

According to Reverend Dashem the absence of pastoral ministry to single women tends to make them think they are spiritually inferior and theologically incorrect in their understanding of the Christian faith. He explained that single women tend to be careless about their spiritual life and often make unsuitable decisions because of the perception of the church about them. He suggested that the church should help single women to understand that marriage is not the ultimate goal in life because an individual can still serve God outside marriage (2012). Never-married Woman E explained that the spiritual nourishment and support she lacks in the church is compensated by the teaching and care she receives from the

ministry[29] she attends (2012). For Never-married D, ministry has been her source of spiritual nurturing because it addresses the issues of singleness. She explained that her pastor is comfortable with the ministry she attains because she discussed it with him and sought his consent first (2012). Never-married Woman B, however, is suspicious of ministries.She stated that she does not patronise ministries because she is satisfied with the spiritual nurturing she receives from her church. She explained that ministries make single women more vulnerable to the manipulation of people who carry out their private agendas under the guise of helping people or Christian ministry (2012). Apparently, single women in COCIN suffer what Neuger describes as "damaged spiritual self-esteem" (1991:155) because they have not experienced it as a place where they can find healing, empowerment and complete wholeness.

Religious beliefs and spirituality have been identified as crucial elements in the over-all health of the individual.Several studies have argued for the necessity of spiritual care in psychological health(Pulleyking, 2005; Miller, 1999). This implies that the care of persons must include what Marais calls inviting "God's voice in therapeutic conversation" (2006:53). Dreyer describes spirituality as"a comprehensive life orientation that determines one's identity. Spirituality includesevery dimension of human life. It is about one's entire human existence as an authentic person inGod's presence" (2011:1). This assertion challenges theCOCIN to the task of making available spiritual and biblical life-related teachings to single women.

The full development of an individual's spiritual potential takes place in the context of warm human relationships in the congregation (Clinebell 1995:99). In the case of the COCIN, single women join ministries where they feel accepted, cared for and experience an atmosphere where their spiritual potential can be developed. According to Never-married Woman E, she attends ministry because it has helped to improve her spiritual life. She explained that in ministries people have opportunity to grow through what they gain from full participation in the activities, but it is not so with the church, because the church places

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[29]Ministry (ministries) in Jos is a common term that has come to be used for Christian fellowships outside the organized church setting. There is a proliferation of these fellowships and some of them have metamorphosed into church denominations. A lot of what is known as Pentecostal churches in Jos started as ministries. At their initial stage these ministries lay great emphasis on teaching, bible study, visitation and counselling. This has often been viewed with suspicion as it is sometimes understood as a strategy to attract members. In some quota ministries have come to be perceived as some kind of spiritual supplement, a place where members receive nurturing. Consequently, pastors may advice member to attend ministries that they believe their (ministries) doctrines are in agreement with their denominational beliefs. Ministry patronage has often been a source of conflict between some COCIN church leaders and members.

emphasis on one's marital status (2012). Single women should be encouraged to expressed their emotional and spiritual concerns without feeling spiritually intimidated.

7.3.5 Relational needs

The six never married women acknowledged that they had relationships that they anticipated would end in marriage. Relationship is vital to counselling and psychotherapy, and is a basic block of human experience that maps individuals' connection with others(Ross, 2003:47; Pescosolido, 2008:208). Relationship in this sense is not restricted to the one-on -one formal context of caregiving, but to the interactions between and among people living in a community. However, this raises the question of the type and quality of the relationship. This also agrees with the assertion that an individual's self-esteem is related to his or her social relationships (Heatherton and Wyland, 2003:220), and that women's self-esteem is affected by their activities (Sanchez and Kwang, 2007:402).

The responses of single women challenge the Church to be gender responsive by creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of their lived experiences. The table below shows the words the participants used to describe the relational needs of single women.

Table 6.2 Relational needs of single women

Type of relational need	Number of participants	Percentage %
Acceptance	11	20%
Comfort	5	9%
Encouragement	9	16.3%
Respect	17	30.9%
Security	5	9%
Support	8	14.6%
Total	55	100%

A greater percentage of participants (30.9%) indicated that single women need to be respected. Respect provides a sense of self-adequacy and promotes self-esteem and dignity. The need for acceptance is next with 20% and encouragement follows with 16.3%. Accepting

single women is an affirmation of their dignity and provides a space where they can act as full participants in the community of faith. According to a female member of the CYF focus group what single women expect from people is to comfort and not judge their actions or disappointments. She explained that people often misjudge the decision of the woman where there is a failed relationship (2012).

A key need of single, never married and divorced women is the support of family and friends. Because divorce is viewed as a sin and rebellion against socio-cultural norms, divorced women often lack the support of others, even their families. Personal observation of the attitude of people towards single women shows that other women perceive single women, especially the divorcee, as a threat. A divorced woman's relationship with men is sometimes the topic of discussion. According to Hayes and Anderson when divorce happens spouses may be required to redefine their personal life and social network. They argue further that friends of the divorced couple may tend to take sides or see the divorced person as a threat, which may result in divorced women having fewer friends and relationships in their community(1993:86).

7.4 Methods of pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN

7.4.1 Advocacy

Reverend Sunday Patrick, one of the pastors in the COCIN, stated that pastoral ministry entails advocacy with and pursuit of the liberation and empowerment of those who are marginalised and neglected. He explained that the COCIN's advocacy should have its goal the advancement of an enabling environment in which the spiritual, social and financial status of single women will be improved. He maintained further that the COCIN is trying to emulate the governments' steps to reform the position of women. Women may be included in some aspects of the church leadership, but the same 'reforms' have not been extended to single women (2012). This is an indication that no particular attention has been given to single women as a category.

This assertion is supported by the contribution of Single Man D who stated that the COCIN should play an advocatory role between single women and their families, especially those who may be facing silent rejection because of their single status. He explained that in most

Nigerian cultures family members are often key supporters during stressful events. Therefore the church should encourage its members to accept those who are single in their families even if the singleness is caused by divorce. He said, "It is essential for both families and church to be committedto ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of single people so as to improve their overall well-being" (2012). This view supports the argument of the feminist pastoral theologian, DeMarinis that by virtue of a person's humanity everyone is entitled to care, respect and dignity irrespective of sex, race or status (1993:17). The involvement of the church in advocacy for single women will lend support to the feminist rejection of the traditional division between issues of care (the personal) and justice, the political (Held, 1995:128).

The church is viewed as a liberated community which seeks to free people from whatever is oppressive (Cochrane, et al., 1991:96). However, the question has often been raised as to whether women experience the church as a liberating space. Single, never married and divorced women often experience the church and society as environments that make them more vulnerable. Thus the church becomes an insecure space. The COCIN as a community of believers needs to engage in advocacy for women, and serve as agent of the transformation of individualsin a holistic way.It needs to re-examine its theology which favours patriarchy, to a theology of gender equality. This would require that the COCIN changes its policy on the ordination to include women. An area of advocacy that requires the attention of the church, particularly in Jos, is gender inequality that permeates human relationships and religious and cultural practices. Men and women must pursue human solidarity and commitment to transformation.According to Miller-McLemore, an empowering pastoral ministry entails advocacy on behalf of and tenderness towards the vulnerable(2001:194). Elsewhere she argues that when viewed from a liberation perspective, pastoral care "is about breaking silences, urging prophetic action and liberating the oppressed" (Miller-McLemore, 1999:91). The COCIN pastors must reconsider their commitment to those who desperately need someone to hear their stories. It must be a commitment that involves making available resources and means of empowering them. Advocacy is a response in search of justice for single women from stigmatisation, stereotyping and marginalisation. This must be initiated by the church because a just environment provides and makes available resources that make care possible (Lartey, 2006).

7.4.2 Counselling

Counselling is a helping relationship that has as its goal growth, interpersonal competence and personal wholeness (Collins, 1993). As has been mentioned in Chapter Six, wives are often blamed in instances of marital failure.Therefore, a liberating care and counselling of single women must help them to overcome theirperception of being solely responsible for marital disruption or even its end. For example, Divorced Woman C said that before her husband left, one of his complaints was that she was not being submissive to him (2012). The church reinforces the concept of submission through gender biased counselling that conveys to women the notion that their lack of submission is the cause of their marital problems. After such counselling encounters women facing marital problems often leave with a feeling of guilt and shame, and an overwhelming feeling of failure. Submission has been spiritualised and used to 'flog' women into feeling spiritually inadequate. Consequently, many women sink into further powerlessness as they try to take responsibility for what is happening to them. Single women need guidance to investigate and evaluate their cultural and religious perceptions of their experience. Pastoral counselling assists in providing emotional support, teaching coping skills and designing future plans.Counselling of single women that fosters wholeness must empower them to be actors in their own situation, and be able to take a stance (Acolates, 2011). According to Nasimiyu-Wasike, there is need for divorced women to access counselling and temporary financial support. They need to be assisted in re-establishingtheir self-esteem and educated to rejecthumiliation, ridicule and psychological and physical torture (1994:115). She argues that "Without encouraging divorce, the church should allow marriages that cannot be reconciled to dissolve. Christ never sanctified suffering, rather he alleviated it whenever and wherever he encountered it" (1994:115).

Hislop observed that although pastors may try to help women, this counselling is often clouded by assumption, premature judgment and quick advice. Pastors may be desperate to address the problem and fail to advise women about the choices they have and that the choice they make will reflect the value and worth they place on themselves as well as assist in empowering others to do the same. She outlined reasons why women should counsel women, as follows:

- Women best model femininity.
- Women generally process pain different from men, that is, women understand women.

- Women have natural nurturing abilities.

- Women have spiritual gifts needed to pastor.

- It will reduce the risk of emotional or physical adultery between pastors and female parishioners

- It will provide pastoral staff resources, and

- It is biblical (2003:26-30).

Similarly, Moessner argued earlier that what a woman wants is to experience the church as a space where the theology of grace and hope can shape her identity, and a place of connectedness with the family of faith. She maintained that women desire to be connected with the family of faith. Therefore, when denied that which connects them spiritually, they feel estranged from the body of Christ (2002:217-218). What they need from the pastoral ministry of the church is "a theological presence, a listening, supportive, nonthreatening and compassionate presence" (2002:18). Providing an environment for single women to experience the church as a space for grace and hope implies that single women's voices must be heard. Godby describes voice as ability to overcome fear. She maintains that "voice and autonomy are related in the sense that they both point toward an ability to know what one thinks, what one likes and dislikes, how one feels. They are both indicative of self-definition" (2003:299), therefore, important to women's development.

Counselling as an art of pastoral ministry to single women must support and facilitate the process of growth, healing and complete wholeness. Reconciliation, which is a possible result of forgiveness, should be encouraged for divorced women. According to Worthington, "damage can be repaired in many ways, but complete healing and restoration can only come through forgiveness and reconciliation" (2003:13). However, Baker urges that issues that caused the divorce must be dealt with prior to reconciliation. Reconciliation with pending issues does not bring about healing, but is like a clean dressing over a gangrenous wound (2011:93). Some studies have emphasised the need for counsellors to focus on helping couples deal with problems that arise in the area of communication (Esere and Omotosho, 2011; Askari, Noah, Hassan and Baba, 2013). Askari, et al. maintains that "teaching communication and conflict resolution skills had significant positive effects on the mental health" (2013:91),of the couples studied.

Studies in intervention strategies have emphasised the value of group counselling and therapy over individualised care (Loewy, 2002; Greggo, 2011; Erdman, 2009). In a study of groups and why they work well, Erdman observed that the interaction among group members maximise opportunities for change because members benefit more from each other than from an individual counsellor. Although the focus of Erdman's article was on describing "therapeutic factors that constitute mechanisms of change in group intervention" with emphasis on rehabilitation of people with aural and audiologic impairment, the principles can be applied in counselling of people that are experiencing personal crises or have suffered a significant loss. According to Erdman, the group counselling or therapy creates an awareness of the universality of human experience. In addition, "discovering that one is not alone or different from others triggers an immense sense of relief and minimizes the tendency to catastrophize one's disability (sic) or illness (sic)" (2009:18). She lists other factors or mechanisms of change, and by extension, benefits of group counselling and therapy as: instillation hope, impartation of information, altruism, imitative behaviour, group cohesion, interpersonal learning, development of socialising techniques, recapitulation of the family, catharsis and existential factors (2009:18). Similarly, Yalom and Leszcz have also identified the same values of resurgence of hope, corrective recapitulation of primary support, opportunities for demonstration of compassion to others and group cohesiveness in group counselling (2005).

According to Shulman, a professor and dean emeritus at the School of Social Work, University of Buffalo, mutual aid in group counselling is vital because it provides assistance in a reciprocal manner. Members receive help through the help they provide to an individual member (2011). Studies have shown that women experiencing personal crises respond positively to group counselling. The report of a study to evaluate the outcome of group counselling for traumatised women, such as politically persecuted women, women living in slums and single women, indicate that women's level of empowerment improved after group counselling (Mondiale, 2007:10).

The principles and dynamics of a group are identifiable in both group counselling and the communal contextual paradigm of care. They both share essential components such as cohesion, sharing experience, joining forces to attain goals and mutuality expressed in concern for the well-being of the group or community members. They are both community and context-centred. The counselling programme of the church must not seek only to

transform and empower single women but also cultures. Pastoral counselling that shares the values of social analysis and feminist-oriented pastoral theology – personal and social transformation – seeks not only the transformation of individuals, but also that of culture and the church as part of the counselling process (Holland and Henriot, 1984; Nueger, 1996).

7.4.3 Discipleship

Discipleship is a relational process that encourages mutual influence. According to Single Man C, the way the COCIN treats singles, especially women has discouraged some of them and they have become inactive in the church. Many of them feel there is no point in trying to make an impact where one's efforts will not be recognised. Many feel it makes no difference whether they are there or not. As a result,they have channeled their energy to other interests, some of which are unproductive. He explained further that pastoral ministry in the COCIN places much emphasis on marriage and family. Even programmes that are organised for youths by the few pastors who attempt to offer some form of ministry to single people emphasise preparation for marriage. He therefore suggested that:

> The church should have a holistic approach to Scriptural truth and true kingdom lifestyle. Deliberate discipleship of young women singles' programmes with balanced emphasis on values and virtues alongside education, career and counselling, inspirational talks, camps and retreats and encouraging women to be committed to some responsibilities in the church and the society are some practical ways the church can best minister to single people (2012).

Other participants emphasised the need for the church to provide a definite forum where individual single women can have someone they can look up to. That is, someone who will support and journey with them in their different experiences. According to Reverend Luka:

> Women play a vital role in the COCIN. The structure of the church provides room for involvement in groups, but this has not been utilised effectively to reach different categories of people, particularly single women. Older women are supposed to discipleand mentors the younger ones, but this is not the case. Since there is no definite programme of ministry to single women, it is difficult for people to be committed to helping them (2012).

The church should encourage the values of traditional collaborative activities that enable women to help one another as single women (Kimilike, 2008). The significance of small group fellowships in discipleship was also echoed in Greggo's argument that fellowship promotes partnership and common belonging, which empowers others to enjoy meaningful relationships with God and their fellow human beings, the essence of discipleship (2011:255). Christian counseling has been linked to discipleship and spiritual transformation. According to Clinton et al., discipleship and counselling share the same goals (2011:14).

7.4.4Prayer

According to Msomi, as a therapeutic mechanism and an expression of religious feeling, prayer plays a significant role in African Christianity (2008:249). As mentioned in Chapter Six, the belief in the involvement of God in the lives of people is dominant among single women. Prayer is one of the ways single women believe God can be invited into their lived experiences. This was expressed in some participants' call for prayer to be used as a strategy to reach single women. Divorced Woman D explained that prayer has been her strength since her husband refused to accept her back when she left to take a break from his abuse. She said, "Many times I have prayed and fasted that my husband would see reason and allow me to go back. I have a prayer partner and my pastor's wife has been very supportive in terms of prayer and even material assistance" (2012). A prayer group can also serve as a support network for single women. Nasimiyu-Wasike suggests that divorced women should be encouraged to form support groups. She argues that "Talking about their problems, praying together, encouraging each other can lead to healing and rehabilitation" (1994:115). Thus, prayer is significant in a single woman's journey because it provides a moment of catharsis or emotional release. Although some of these women believe that prayer could change their circumstances in some miraculous way, prayer for many of them is a channel through which deep emotional pain is released. This argument is supported by the results of a research conducted by Dr Puchalski on the role of spirituality in health care. The findings of the study indicate that prayer was the most common and frequently used non-drug method of pain management. This underscores the place of prayer as a coping mechanism for those facing difficult life experiences (2001:353).

Adult Child of Divorce A whose experience of divorce was most traumatic, said that the prayerful life of her mother formed her Christian life. She stated that there was a time she attempted to take her life but the prayers of her mother restrained her. She said, "My mother has taught me through her prayer life to be more and more reliant on God's grace for all things" (2012). According to Adult Child of Divorced Marriage B their pastor hardly visited them. But when he came they were encouraged by the prayers he offered. She explained, "There was a time my sister was sick and the pastor came and prayed for her. That day we felt loved and very much encouraged" (2012). This agrees with the assertion that prayer helps people cope with pain and promotes "well-being and a greater sense of significance and purpose in life" (Towns, 2011:142).

According to a participant of the CMF focus group the church should encourage members to pray for single, never married and divorced women and their families. However, he cautioned that such prayer must not necessarily be done in public, as many pastors do. He argues that when pastors ask single women to stand up for prayer in public it intimidates them. Another member concurred with the idea of making prayers for single women a private issue when he stated that because people assume that single women go to church to search for husbands, pastors should prayerfully devise ways to help single women without making them feel intimidated. He adds that pastors should be more involved in the visitation of single people, and encourage them to share their problems, and then pray for them without all the members being privy to their personal issues. He further suggested that pastors should not only pray with them once and stop there, but also ask if there are particular needs that they can continue to pray for (2012). The need to 'protect' members through keeping what they share confidential is observed by Lawson in his assertion that:

> Realizing that much of what is shared during a visit may be confidential… shepherds are reminded to never share prayer requests without permission. The importance of maintaining a confidence is crucial to the ongoing…shepherding relationship (2005:117-118).

7.4.5 Seminars and workshops

According to Reverend Mana, seminars need to be organised by the church to create awareness and remove prejudice and ignorance. The COCIN needs to work on a broad- based pastoral ministry. Reverend Datiri stated that the church should organise seminars and workshops at pastors' conferences to address concerns of single women and other related issues that affect different categories of people in the church (2012). Reverend Dashem observed that the COCIN pastors are unable to organise seminars for single women because they lack knowledge on gender issues, since their ministry training did not address gender specific issues. He explained that it is natural for pastors to concentrate on the area they have received training. He suggested that seminars should be organised on issues of singleness at the pastors' conference to create and improve pastors' awareness of the single state, and to pursue the goal of building the single women's spiritual, social and financial life. He suggested further that pastors should be encouraged to also organise such seminars at the PCC, RCC, and LCC levels to reach grassroots until people become aware of the challenges of single people and are able to help reduce their stress. He argued further that the church should help single women to understand that marriage is not the ultimate in life because an individual can still serve God outside marriage (2012).

The above observation has shown that pastors and the structures of the COCIN are not equipped to understand and appreciate the difficult experiences of single women and the redemptive news of the Gospel to their situation. The implication is that the COCIN must redefine its pastoral practice by being actively supportive of women's struggles. It implies that it might needs to work with other organisations that promote women's interests like women's groups, theologians and gender activists to conscientise the leadership and pastors of the COCIN on women's rights, dignity and situations. It also means that the church would have to exceed denominational differences and work together with churches that have programmes that are designed specifically for single women. Although discussed in the context of the experience of Black American single women, Austin's affirmation of the need for the revisiting of previously held beliefs about women and singlehood is relevant to the context of this study. Austin argues that making the male the reference point in the life of a woman devalues the woman's temporal and spiritual relationship. He urged that rather than making women marry at all cost, single women should be encouraged to be accountable to others. They should be encouraged to engage in what he describes as "the single blessedness" and "the cultural practice of othermothering"(Austin, 2012:19).

Kimilike states that an empowering pastoral ministry to women in Africa requires "contextualised theological teaching and campaign" (2008:65). Workshops for single women should be empowering interactive sessions and discussions that explore the areas of action which will assist single, never married and divorced women to build and sharpen their coping skills, maintain and strengthen meaningful vertical and horizontal relationships, as well as identify and develop appropriate means of communication.

7.4.6 Transformative preaching and teaching

Shaull wrote that education is "the practice of 'freedom', the means men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (2005:34). In the relationship and ministry of the church to single women, transformative preaching and teaching can serve both the purpose of disseminating biblical truth and social support (Daniel, 2011).

Much of the COCIN's teaching on marriage has centred mainly on texts such as Genesis 1:28, 2:18 and Ephesians 5:22ff. The emphasis in the interpretation of these texts has been man's responsibility to procreate, the role of the woman as man's helpmate and the wife's responsibility to submit to her husband. Mncube observes that the biased use of the Scriptures, which supports discrimination against women in the church today, is connected to the history of interpretation. She maintains that church tradition tends to stress the secondary creation of woman out of man rather than the creation of man and woman at the same time and both in the image of God as recorded in Genesis 1:26. She further observes that passages in the New Testament which control and repress women are emphasised over those that imply liberation for women (1991:355). Nadar has observed that the Bible has often been used for oppressive purposes; therefore the teaching of the church should counter oppression by drawing out the liberating norms available in the Scriptures (2005:28).

An analysis of the church leaders' responses to the question on their assessment of the church's teaching on marriage and family indicate that it has been grossly inadequate. According to Reverend Yilkpuba, the teaching of the church has not met the needs of single women, because the emphasis has been on marriage (2012). Reverend Datiri stated that what the COCIN needs to do to enable an effective and appropriate pastoral ministry to single women is to seriously task itself in sound biblical teaching that is geared toward deconstructing the conception of ministry as solely a male domain.He maintains that a starting point is to disabuse the minds of the COCIN members from thinking that it is unacceptable to involve women fully in pastoral ministry (2013). The *Consultation on the responsibility of women in Africa today*, held in April 11-19th,1963 at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda under the theme *Christian women of Africa share in responsibility* observed in its report that the church in its teaching promotes adouble standard of morality for men and women. It pointed out that:

> In church-teaching and in women's groups alike, women are repeatedly told of their changing and growing responsibilities in the home and towards their children; men however, are generally not helped to understand the fundamental changes equally taking place in their lives as head of the family, home-maker, husband and father, and the new responsibilities which emerge from these for them (WCC, 1963:33).

This observation made five decades ago still holds true for the teaching of the COCIN on marriage and family relationship. According to Reverend Kachala, the preaching and teaching of the church on marriage and family is generally haphazard and one- sided. Women

are often bombarded with what can be called 'traditionally motivated messages' by pastors. Single women need proper understanding of the purpose and plan of God for their individual lives (2012). As Moessner has argued, the church has the responsibility to empower women with the preaching, teaching and counselling that demonstrate grace and hope. She stated that "a 'horizon of hope' is crucial for the pilgrimage of women who have known travail, travesty and tragedy" (2002:217).

The messages from the pulpit should challenge congregants to evaluate their commitment to the spiritual, emotional and social well-being of others in the believing community.Furthermore, the COCIN preaching must be liberating and empowering. The emphasis on liberation has the support of both feminist and social analysis frameworks of thought. According to DeMarinis, appropriate pastoral care of people that leads to liberation from oppression requires the recognition and nurturing of their relational and religious instincts (1993:35). Women's experience is crucial to the theology of the church (Rakoczy, 2004). The importance of theologians and pastors including women's voices in the theology and pastoral practice of the church is affirmed by Cooper-White when she states:

> This means being attentive to including and empowering women's voices in my (sic) research, and in my (sic) contexts of teaching and ministry; it means lifting up women's issues in my (sic) writing and preaching; and it means working on my own (sic) gender-and other culturally ingrained biases, and seeking collaborative partnerships across such socially constructed divides (2008:18-19).

7.4.7 Visitation

Visitation is a core element of both African and Christian communal living. According to Gorsuch visitation is an act of ministry that has as its aim nurturing pastoral relationship that enhances "connections between the congregation and its wider community" (1999:2). She states that visitation must not be crisis and problem- focused but an intention to nurture in faith. She points out that non-crisis and problem- focused visitation differentiates between the capable pastor who responds to crises and the caring pastor who nurtures the life of faith. It is also a demonstration of regard for the worth of individuals and the opportunity to discuss personal faith and its public expression (1999:4-5).

In the COCIN, visitation is a key component and activity of pastoral care. Pastors and congregation members visit to encourage one another. Yet, single women who are often in dire need of this encouragement are the most deprived in the church. Visitation is a means of

establishing a caring relationship and preparing members to share their deep concerns and intimate information during time of crisis with their pastor. Single women often feel abandoned by the church and many leave for other churches that have shown that they care through their visitation. The responses to the question on participants' suggestion on how the COCIN can exercise ministry to single women, indicate that next to preaching and teaching (29.09%), ten (18.1 %) of the participants perceived visitation as a method the church could employ to reach single women.

However, some participants identified socio-cultural influence as one of the hindrances to visitation of single women. According to Reverend Mana, the social and cultural environment in which the COCIN in Jos exists does not encourage single women to receive male visitors. People always view the relationship between a male and female as sexual. As a result people read different meanings into visitation of a single woman by a male pastor (2012). The researcher's observation and personal discussion with some pastors indicate that they have thesame perception. Pastors often have mixed feelings about visiting single women because of what people will say and the stories of some pastors' encounters with single women. As already pointed out in Chapter Six single women themselves often misinterpret a pastor's act of care towards their well-being.

According to Holland and Henriot, the first moment in pastoral praxis known as insertion locates pastoral response in the lived experience of the individuals (1984:9). Visitation by the pastor or church member can serve as a moment of insertion into single women's feelings, what they are going through and how they are responding to it. A moment of insert leads to social analysis, which leads to theological reflect that creates opportunity for pastoral planning. A moment of visitation can pave the way for single women to share intimate details of their lives, thought experiences and emotions and help the pastor to identify areas of individual and congregational response. In addition, it would enable him to lead the congregation in designing an effective short and long term responses to ministering to single women. Compatibility can be seen between social analysis and feminist pastoral care in their concern with the 'lived experiences of people.' The lived experience of people is a core value and place to begin social analysis. Responding to human suffering is a key element of feminist pastoral concerns. Its concern is the well-being and liberation of people, particularly women from all forms of oppression. According to feminist pastoral theologian Cooper-White, the reality of human suffering necessitates a pastoral response, that is, intentionally

resisting anything that hinders the awareness of women's oppression. This, she states, "must begin with embodied human experience" (2008:18).

7.5 Preventing marital crisis and instability

Both written literature and the responses of participants have shown that many people are finding marriage a stressful experience and for some it has resulted in divorce. This has been attributed to such factors as lack of adequate preparation for marriage, the method in which the marriages were contracted (Nyako, 2012; Wells, 2001), tension arising in the process of trying to create meaning of the marital relationship (Gottman, 1999), the inability to utilise the positive resources and values of traditional marriage system (Kyalo, 2012) and social and financial loss (Carrol and Doherty, 2003; Waite and Gallagher, 2000).

According to Judge Nyako, in Jos, the divorce rate is high among young adults because the foundations on which most of the marriages are based are fragile and faulty. She said that couples in this group are prone to entering into the contractof marriage as a result of pregnancy, or what is known as "leather bag marriage."[30] She stated that:

> When girls become pregnant the parents take them to those responsible and force them to get married. Many of them are young girls who are yet to finish school, and know nothing about marriage. Entering into marriage is entry into a new and sometime strange phase of life because two people from different backgrounds are coming to live together. Many of these young people are not prepared for the challenges that come with marriage (2012).

Gottman has made a similar observation in his assertion that marriage is a journey through meaning. The way a marriage works is determined by the extent to which couples create shared meaning and deal with conflict (1999:173). He maintains that:

> The formation of a marriage and a family involves the creation of a new culture that has never existed before. Even if the two people come from the same racial, ethnic, and geographical background their families of origin will be very different, and so their union will inevitably be the creation of a new world of meaning (1999:109).

To address the problem of marital instability and divorce, some studies have suggested pre-marital education(Caroll and Doherty, 2003; Kapolo, 2001).The data from the field indicate that participants share the same sentiments. According to Reverend Kachala, the starting

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[30]When a couple decides to marry without the consent of their parents, or formalising and fulfilling traditional requirement, such a marriage is known in Jos as *leather bag* marriage. The word 'leather bag' to an average Nigerian does not bear the same understanding as leather products which are often expensive but means a plastic or polythene bag, which symbolises something cheap. A girl who decides to elope with her lover may not be considered as a married woman until the necessary traditional requirements are met. Marriages requirements can be very demanding and expensive and most young adults may decide to get married to compel their parents to demand less. Others who contract 'leather bag' marriages are young people who are madly in love.

place for dealing with marital issues in the church is preventative measures. Although the COCIN requires that those who wish to be wedded in the church must undergo pre-marital counselling for at least six months, not many pastors take this seriously. He stated that the church concentrates only on premarital preparation without giving equal attention to post-marital challenges that may arise. Consequently, after marriage, couples are left to struggle on their own and many are unable to handle the conflicts that may arise. He explained that:

> Many Christian homes are dysfunctional today because not many marriages are focused on raising good and healthy families. Although current trends indicate that all is not well in many Christian homes, not many couples seek help from their pastors because many of them see it as a sign of spiritual failure. Because the church has over- spiritualised marital problems, a lot of people do not want their pastor to know that they have problems. I strongly suggest that the church should focus on conducting programmes that promote healthy marriages so as to reduce the rate of divorce prevalent among Christians. The need for preventive problem-solving must be taken seriously. Pre-marital counselling, when followed with post-marital counselling will equip couples with skills for handling the marital problems they are bound to face (2012).

However, it must be pointed out that the COCIN must shift from its male- centred approach to a more constructive programme of pre-marital and post-marital education in which the curriculum content is gender balanced. The church must design a curriculum that assists both the husband and wife to work toward building and maintaininga healthymarital relationship, rather than the traditional form of teaching which stresses the wife's sacrificial commitment while not making a similar demand of the husband.

Studies on divorce prevention have indicated different emphasis, but a number of these have been interested in strategies and benefits or outcomes (Adegoke, 2010; Fraenkel, Markman and Stanley, 1997). According to Fraenkel, Markman and Stanley, the rationale for divorce prevention programmes is to "provide couples with core skills and concepts for handling the inevitable disagreements and problems of married life before these arise. These programmes should assist couples to avoid the emotional costs that accrue from unresolved, repetitive and often increasingly nasty arguments…" (1997:250). It can be deduced from this argument that education of couples is a more desirable option than the curative or therapeutic approach the church has often adopted.

Other studies have emphasisedthe significant position religious values,beliefs and activities hold on healthy marital and family relationships (Hawkins and Fackrell, 2009; Regnerus, 2011;Mwiti and Dueck, 2006; Brandbury, et al. 2000). For instance, Hawkins and Fackrell

found that religious values and activities such as upholding the sanctity of marriage and couples praying together were valuable predictors of marital satisfaction and stability in the research sample (2009). For Mwiti and Dueck, "building marriages on biblical and positive indigenous cultural value systems will provide the roots that we need for marital and also communal resiliency" (2006:164). Regnerus warned that "the more family brokenness occurs inside the church, the less powerful the narrative about the goodness of marriage is going to be" (2011:28).

7.6 Toward a gender- inclusive pastoral ministry

An inclusive pastoral ministry underscores the importance of community because it is characterised by acceptance, belonging, commitment and support. It promotes and demonstrates the spirit of shared responsibility, accountability and cooperation. A gender-inclusive approach relocates the focus of ministry into communal contexts (Graham, 2006:860). In a gender- inclusive pastoral ministry there is opportunity for individuals to identify and utilise their potential to the maximum. According to Buthelezi, Bishop Emeritus, "the passport to the place of receiving God's gift is opportunity in education, employment and general development. To deny a person these opportunities is to displace him (sic) from his (sic) God-given place; it is to alienate him from the wholeness of life" (1990:100). The full participation of single women in pastoral ministry will enable their general development and experience of wholeness of life.

Although, as already indicated in Chapter Four, the communal concept of ministry is not foreign to theCOCIN.However, it has not taken conscious steps to utilise the virtues of community in its ministry. Many single women in the COCIN are care givers but their contribution in this important aspect of the church's life is not recognised. The COCIN needs a gender- inclusive approach so as to broaden pastoral ministry and move away from the prevailing male vocation, which is characteristic of the westernised missionary models and notions about pastoral ministry. As Graham points out, every believer is entitled to an opportunity to be involved in community formation. She maintains that "the gathered community may also be the agent of Christian practice, either in its enactment of ritual functions, or by its emphasis on the shared ministry of the laity" (2006:859). A communal dimension of ministry is what is needed to counter the clericalisation of and centralisation on single male individuals in the pastoral ministry in the COCIN. Communal involvement

creates opportunity for accessing the available and needed human resources that promote healing for those facing despairing situations. As Hislop aptly argues, it takes the full participation of everyone in the community, "the personal walk of the woman in pain, and the support of others who understand –to bring …healing" (2003:156).

7.7 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter indicates that firstly, divorce poses serious emotional challenges for women and their children. However, the COCIN has not taken this into consideration in its pastoral ministry. The majority of pastors have failed to see single, never married and divorced women as those deserving of the attention in their practice of ministry. The single status restricts single women's access to opportunities for spiritual development. In addition, the teaching of the church has made many women believe that it is impossible to serve God outside marriage.

Secondly, although the single women in the COCIN crave a relationship with others, they become overly concious of their single status and consciously construct an identity through other means. Therefore, they miss out on opportunities that become available for significant relationships with potential suitors. Similarly, the data has also shown that religious belief is a key factor in women's interpretation and experience of singleness. A single woman's spirituality is a vital coping mechanism in a society that elevates marriage. Although the church appears to neglect the spiritual needs of single women, single women have devised their own spirituality in such activities as prayer and fellowship in ministries.

Thirdly, the church has maintained a double standard of morality for men and women. This creates an environment for marital dysfunctionality that may lead to divorce. A preventive approach to dealing with marital concerns has the potency of strengthening familiesas well as reducing marital problems that may lead to divorce. Essentially, teachings on marriage in the COCIN have not addressed the issues of concern for single women, thus impeding on their social, spiritual, emotional and overall well-being. In addition, indigenous African culture, the lack of knowledge of gender issues and church policies have impeded on pastors' ability to adequately and appropriately offer pastoral ministry to single women.

The overall analysis of this chapter has shown that although responding to human need is a key element of pastoral ministry, this has not been optimised in the exercise of ministry to single women in the RCC Gigiring, Jos. Instead, patriarchal ideologies and cultural practices have influenced the social perception and attitude towards single women and shaped the experiences of single women. It is therefore argued that a gender-inclusive pastoral ministry in which men and women are involved in communal pastoral ministry has the potential to transform the COCIN.

CHAPTER EIGHT

General conclusion and summary

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a summary and the conclusions reached based on the findings of this study. It brings together the concepts, themes and insights drawn from all preceding chapters and suggests themes for future research. It also suggests, in the light of the findings of the study, areas the church should act upon to facilitate and promote effective pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women.

8.2 Chapters summary

This study consists of seven chapters which focused on the research question:what has been the degree to which the COCIN pastors have offered pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women? The study is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the background of the study. It examines the impact of culture, westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and singleness. It includes an exploration of the missional development of the COCIN, its structure, theology of marriage and role of women and how these have impacted on the churh's pastoral ministry to single women. It also contains and evaluation of the pastoral training of the church and argued for an engendered theological education. These were covered in Chapters One to Three. The second section deals with the practical application of the pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN. In this section an examination was made of of the pastoral training of the COCIN covering the theological beliefs underpinning it, the methods of training, major themes from the field research and how pastoral ministry is executed to single women in the COCIN. These are presented in Chapters Four and Six to Seven. Chapter Five explained the research design including methodology and methods employed in the study. This chapter serves as a link between theory and practical. The study presented four objectives, namely: to assess the impact of the Nigerian culture, westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and singleness; to examine the impact of the church structure and exclusion of women on their contribution to pastoral ministry in the COCIN; to analyse the form of pastoral training the COCIN pastors receive to

ascertain its adequacy in equipping pastors to deal with gender related complexities and to evaluate the kind of pastoral care given to single women

Chapter One contains a general overview of the study. The chapter begins by providing the personal and academic motivation for the study. The problem statement, the objective, the significance of the study, locating the research in literature, principal frameworks,the research design and definition of key terms were also discussed. It was argued that because marriage is deemed to be the ideal life in Africa, singleness is seen as a deficit. Although females are socialised to see marriage as the essence of life and also trained along domestic lines to enable them to function as wives and mothers, social trends have impeded on the realisation of this goal. Despite the presence of inspiring programmes aimed at promoting marriage and healthy family living, the growing number of single, never married women and of disfunctional families and marriages that end in divorce require the attention of the church.

This chapter also contains an attempt to locate the research in existing literature. This was addressed in three parts namely: i) marriage and family today; ii) pastoral care and concerns of women and iii) women and the church. The literature indicated that the institution of marriage and family in Nigeria today is different from what it used to be. Social changes have impacted on marriage and family and even on women's perception of some marriage practices. The literature also indicate that given the change in family dynamics, which often create conflict, the need for pastoral care and counselling has become critical. To address this some pastoral theologians suggest a communal contextual and an integrative approach to pastoral ministry. The absence of gender perspective in most pastoral care literature was observed and addressed by Kimilike (2008) and Ndossi (2008). It is argued that including a female perspective in pastoral ministry will deconstruct misconceptions and misrepresentations of women as well as provide a proper understanding of women's experiences and the value of communal living. With respect to women and the church, it was argued that the church has not been proactive in challenging and easing the burden of oppression that women face in Africa. Thus, a liberated church is one that acknowledges God's call to every individual, irrespective of gender and status. The discussion of the three theoretical frameworks indicates that in as much as they are useful to the study, they do have limitations. For instance, the social analysis lacks a gender component; the feminist theories tend to overstate women's experience making it the norm for theological engagements. When riddled with sentiments, radical feminist theories have the potential to be hostile toward men. Sommers argues that:

> Feminist ideology has taken a divisive, gynocentric turn, and the emphasis now is on women as a political class whose interests are at odds to that of men. Women must be loyal to women, united in principled hostility to males who seek to hold fast to their patriarchal privileges and powers (1994:24).

For the communal contextual paradigm it observed that an over- emphasis on community has the potential of idealising it, making community an end in itself. It can hinder the nurturing of the individual's gift and potential (Greenslade, 2001).

Chapter Two examines the transition of marriage and family life patterns in Nigeria today. This chapter presents a historical overview of family life patterns in Nigeria, a discussion of contemporary marriage and family in Nigeria, factors militating singleness and the impact of education, westernisation and urbanisation on marriage and family. The discussion indicates that although acts of marriage such mate selection, gender roles, taboos and divorce and marriage types such as wife inheritance, polygamy, female-husbands and male-wives in Nigerian traditional settings addressed the problem of singleness, they were discriminatory to women but favourably biased towards men. Even in contemporary setting marriage practices placed the woman at a disadvantage position. For instance, the payment of the bride price which is an integral aspect of marriage practice has assumed an economic dimension which in some cases has been a factor in the delay or outright cancellation of marriage and domestic abuse. Thearrival of western education saw to some extent the reversal of roles and responsibilities which were culturally prescribed as acceptable for men and women in the society. In the case of urbanisation, the data indicate that it has influenced the introduction of new social relationships and family patterns, which often conflict with traditional values. Consequently, western education and urbanisation have necessitated the construction of new identity.

In Chapter Three a historical overview of the COCIN was presented. The discussion in this chapter indicates that as a missionary- founded church, contemporary COCIN structure, policies and practice reflect its missionary influence. The discussion also indicates that basic to the theology of marriage in the COCIN is the understanding of marriage asa divine institution; a sacrament; a social institution; a heterosexual institution; the locus for procreation and child raising and a foundation for family. However, a critique of the COCIN's theology of marriage indicates that the teaching on marriage and singleness has been skewed and lacks a balance. In terms of practice, adequate teaching on marriage is lacking, thus marriage practices have been a source of conflict among members.

Constructively, in a context of increasing gender-role confusion, the COCIN theology of marriage encourages the retaining of the concept of humanity's complete identity as created male and female. This chapter also contains an examination of the role of women in the COCIN. The discussion indicates that patriarchal ideologies have played a major role in promoting gender inequality in the church. Although women were involved in mission work alongside men, their work was not foregrounded and they were not included in leadership roles. The missionary practice of women's restriction found the patriarchal nature of African culture fertile for maintaining its male-gendered privilege in pastoral ministry. Thus, this exclusion of women from pastoral function has impacted negatively on the pastoral ministry of the church to single women. I concluded the chapter by arguing that in to be the agent of liberation and the community of faith that God desires, the COCINmust deal with the mechanisms that support patriarchal structures and ideologies, and utilise people's gifts and calling irrespective of gender and status.

Chapter Four presents an analysis of the theological education and pastoral training of the COCIN. The meaning and perception of theology and theological education as used in the study and the theological beliefs underpinning ministry were discussed. An exploration of the methodology and strategies the COCIN uses in its pastoral training was undertaken. In this chapter the feminist framework of thought guided the discussion. The discussion of the theological beliefs that support the church's pastoral ministry indicate that the Great Commission is viewed not only as a call for every believer to be involved in advancing the Kingdom of God, but also as an instrument in curbing social ills. Although women participate in the production of knowledge in the COCIN, they have limitations as to their involvement in its interpretation and application. Since ministry training is carried out by men, the practice of ministry has not addressed the the specific needs of women, but the general concerns of men and women. Equally, the excessive emphasis laid on the priestly office has rendered other aspects of ministry insignificant. The members' prompt response to the needs of others, especially during a crisis, is a demonstration of the belief in the church as a family. However, it is uncertain whether single women experience the church as a family. The COCIN views the church as a flock of sheep which every member is both a shepherd and a sheep. This implies that pastoral ministry is not the exclusive of a single individual.

The discussion of the strategies and methodology of the COCIN education indicate that the church uses Theological Colleges, TEE and Bible Schools to prepare its pastors for ministry.

However, an evaluation of this training shows that gender studies are lacking in the curricula of these schools. The analysis shows that because gender studies are not part of the curricula of the church's theological and pastoral training, many ministers of the COCIN lack the understanding of women's experiences. Consequently, many of the COCIN pastors are unable to deal with gender problems that arise in the execution of their pastoral ministry. Similarly, the centralisation of ministry on ordained clergy has rendered lay members of the church inactive in this area. In this chapter it was argued that an integrative, biblicaltreatment of gender and pastoral ministry in the church's theological education and ministry training has the potential of making the COCIN to reflect on what it means to be a church. Consequently, it was suggested that an engendered curriculum will lead to the following: challenged patriarchal ideologies and dominant assumptions about theology and the place of women; affirmation of the role of women and the partnership of men and women in the church; creating opportunities to access literature on a wide range of women issues; provide an in-depth insight in contextual pastoral training; empowering and transforming women; expression of a wider range of human experience and the encouragement of mutuality between men and women in the pastoral ministry of the church and demasculinising theological education and pastoral training in the COCIN. Although the COCIN has a well-developed TEE programme, it has not utilised the human resources that the products of TEE because of policy and structural issues.

In Chapter Five, the methodology of study was explained. It presented how the data was collected and analysed. The data was collected using the analysis of existing literature and the primary sources of in-depth interviews with church leaders, seminary lecturers, single, never married and divorced women, single men and adult children of divorced marriages and focused group discussions with CWF, CMF and CYF. The data was analysed descriptively using the social analysis, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care and communal contextual frameworks.

Chapter Six consists of pastoral themes in ministry among single women of the COCIN that emerged from the field data. Seven themes were drawn and discussed. The data indicate that social and moral significance are attached to marriage. Theology, cultural values and norms of the society influence the perception and attitude of people towards single women, hence a woman's honour and dignity finds its bearing in marriage. Marriage is a means of fulfilling the biblical injunction to procreate and a means of maintaining sexual morality, therefore it is

assumed that single women stand outside God's will. The public perception of single women is negative because it assumes single women have failed morally, socially and religiously. The findings also indicate that socio-culturally women in Jos are likely to derive security and prestige through marriage.However, it was argued that in a modern world women can choose to remain single without being labelled. It has shown that singleness in Josis not just conditioned by circumstances; it is alsoa response necessitated by social change. Although singleness in some literature has been associated with excessive individualism of western culture, the study sample indicates the contrary. Singleness for the single women participants was not voluntary or a matter of personal choice but circumstances,or what Lasch has described as "a thorough-going disenchantment with personal relations" (1979: 383) has forced upon them. In a context where marriage defines people's identity, women depend on men for their social status. Consequently, conforming to the social norm of marriage provides social acceptance, which in turn enhances women's positive self-perception and self-image. However, the feminist framework used in this chapter challenged a revision of such socially constructed ideologies and conception of singleness. The discussion in this chapter clarified the necessity of renewed thinking and action in contemporary pastoral ministry.

Chapter Seven contains a discussion on the execution of pastoral ministry to single women in the COCIN. The data in this chapter derives mainly from the field study, but related literature has been used to interrogate how the COCIN pastors exercise pastoral ministry to single women. The finding suggests that pastoral ministry to single women in the RCC Gigiring can be effectively addressed by utilising the practical tools of advocacy, biblical teaching,counselling, discipleship, prayer, seminars and workshops, and visitation. The responses of single women and adult children of divorced marriages indicate that although divorce involves significant loss similar to that resulting from a death, the emotional needs of divorced women and their families are not addressed in the pastoral ministry of the COCIN. Thus, they are unable to experience the emotional healing they need. With respect to the social, financial, spiritual and relational needs of women the data indicate that these have been completely ignored in the execution of pastoral ministry in the COCIN RCC Gigiring Jos. This neglect has not only caused single women to rely on assistance outside the church, but has also influenced a strong leaning towards fellowships outside the COCIN. In this chapter the place of pre-marital and post-marital teaching is identified as an important method of addressing the problem of marital dysfunction and divorce. It was argued that the church can utilise both traditional and biblical resources to promote healthy marriages and to

assist couples in dealing with marital problems. The responses of the participants to the question on how pastoral ministry to single women is carried out and the possible ways single women can be ministered to indicate three findings: firstly, there is a conflict between what the church professes to be the responsibility of the pastors to members and what pastors do in practice. Single women have been left out of the church's ministry because of the socio-culturally influenced perception that single women's needs are not as important as those of the married woman. Additionally, there is a lack of gender perspective in training of pastors that will equip them to address gender issues in ministry practice. Secondly, it confirms the argument in Chapter Four that the absence of gender studies in the pastoral training of the COCIN impedes on the preparation for ministry practice. Thirdly, it also confirms the assertion that because ministry is clericalised and centred on the ordained ministry, pastoral ministry to members has been narrowed thereby being unable to impact on the lives of single, never married and divorced women.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter of this study, contains the summary, conclusion and identified areas for further research. In this chapter the insights and discussions that emerged from the study are highlighted, thus attempting to answer the research question: what has been the degree to which the COCIN pastors have offered pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women?

8.3 Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions are reached by revisiting the four objectives of this study namely: to assess the impact of the Nigerian culture, westernisation and urbanisation upon marriage and singleness in RCC Gigiring in Josm to examine the impact of the church structure and the exclusion of women on their contribution to pastoral ministry in the COCIN, to analyse the nature of pastoral training the COCIN pastors receive and whether it equips them to deal with gender related complexities and ministry to single, never married and divorced women and to evaluate the nature of pastoral ministry rendered by the COCIN pastors to its female members, particularly single, never married and women.

The COCIN often experiences a tension in holding its beliefs and practice together. There is a gap between faith, which affirms the belief in the priesthood of all believers and the equality of men and women, and practice, which manifests in the exclusion of single women in pastoral ministry of the COCIN. The evaluation of the role of women in the COCIN in

Chapter Three indicates that culture is deeply embedded in the practice of the COCIN. The COCIN's perspective of women in relation to participation, which necessitates the sharing of power and control, is no different to that of the society. The COCIN seems to deny the reality of patriarchy and its effect on women. In its practice, the COCIN seems to reproduce the inequality and discrimination against women that is inherent in society. Thus, it can be said that pastoral ministry in the COCIN reflects Muthiah'sassertion that:

> Often there is a gap between our theology and our ways of living. We struggle to hold together our beliefs and our practices. In our local congregations, we claim certain faith commitments but then we often live in ways that are inconsistent with these claims. These aspects of s our beliefs, our practices, or both need to be modified(2003:167).

Similarly, the absence of women in the priestly aspects of pastoral ministry in the COCIN negates the means of pastoral support for single women.The COCIN, like many mission-founded churches in Nigeria focuses its pastoral ministry on the married individuals and families. This tends to perpetuate public prejudice against single women. Feminist thought challenge a re-envisioning and construction of the environment "where empowerment and interdependence are understood as essential for human existence" (DeMarinis1993:3).

Within the COCIN this envisioning and constructing would require that the perspective of women is reflected in the pastoral ministry of the church. It means a reconstruction of ministry and previously held disempowering views of the role of women in the church.Apparently, pastoral ministry in the COCIN is predicated by gender inequality. This problem can be addressed appropriately by the inclusion of women's voices. As Kanyoro and Oduyoye argue, "until women's views are listened to and their participation allowed and ensured, the truth will remain hidden, and the call to live the values of the Reign of God will be unheeded" (2006:1). The COCIN needs to find alternative biblical voices that deconstruct the conception of ministry as solely a male enclave. Equally, the church's preaching needs to take a new social focus that confronts the negative attitude towards single women and other marginalised groups. The prophetic voice is seriously lacking in the pastoral ministry of the COCIN because it has failed to condemn cultures that are oppressive to women. Instead, the church itself has allowed culture to dictate its practices and attitude towards single women. The messages that come from the pulpit should challenge members of the COCIN to evaluate their commitment to the spiritual, emotional and social well-being of others in the believing community.

As is indicated in the discussion in Chapter Six there is a strong alliance between the church and culture. The COCIN can turn this collaboration toward constructiveengagements by utilising positive aspects of traditional care and counselling of families and community. Women in traditional contexts are known to be a valuable agency for care and counselling of other women. With the responsibility of ministry assigned to male pastors in COCIN, women were marginalised in their role in care giving. Yet women have unique characteristics, behaviours and needs that can only be addressed appropriately by another woman. As indicated in Chapter Six, culture places some limitations on men's exercising of certain aspects of ministry. This is a gap that can appropriately be bridged by women because they understand the experience of other women. Feminist theologians believe that gaps like this can be addressed by including female perspectives. Ndossi suggests that "Christian ministry needs to include the female perspective when attempting to solve women's problems. This inclusion will make it possible for women to be healed by the perspective and experiences of other women" (2008:45). Hislop points out that a woman is the best counsellor and care provider for another woman because women understand on a different level to men. Being counselled by another woman minimises vulnerability and enhances the connection that women essentially need (2003:76). When women are included in the pastoral ministry of the church they would be encouraged to develop what Austin calls an "othersistering" (2012:20) culture in which women are able to care for other women.

In addition, the COCIN can engage in dialogue with communities to create awareness that will assist family members, the church and society to support single women. Such dialogue can motivate recognition that single women are normal and complete human beings with dignity and worth, irrespective of their status. The implication for the pastoral ministry of the church is that single, never married women can be encouraged to participate in the creation of life in the community of faith and in the larger society. Instead of ignoring the contributions of single women, the COCIN can encourage them to engage in active ministry such as taking care of orphans, the homeless and neglected and abandoned children (Soothill, 2007; Lartey, 1994). Single women's full participation in the life of the church will make them feel committed to a responsibility in the church, thereby being also givers and not just receivers of ministry.

Apparently, even the COCIN is facing the crisis of value. It is cut between keeping to the missionary tradition and form of ministry it has inherited and trying to create values that fit

with the present changing context. Furthermore, education, westernisation and urbanisation have put a strain on families and created a context of identity crisis for individuals. The urban family is forced to reconstruct a new identity. Apart from struggling to cope with socio-economic challenges, families have to always battle with how to reconcile traditional and urban values.

With the introduction of education, the position and role of women have been transformed both in the home and larger society. Women today have greater freedom to make personal choices and more opportunities to pursue their dreams. However, this transformation of women's role has its consequences for single women, part of which is the delayed or postponed marriages. Although there has been a significant change in the value, norms and practices related to marriage, there has not been any significant change in the desirability of marriage among single women in Jos. Social desirability for marriage is still high. However, the data indicates that the church has not provided an alternative to these present challenges. This confirms Waruta'sargument that in Africa "the teachings of Christianity have failed to make any acceptable provision for young...maturing persons who for no fault of their own never got opportunity for ...marriage" (2000:93). Thus, his suggestion that the church must come out with concrete answers to the problems faced by "persons affected by the situation of involuntary singleness" (2000:93) is a point that must be taken into serious account. The COCIN must recognise that there are single women that may never get married and there are broken marriages that may never be restored. The new realities of urban life underscore the need for pastoral ministry to urban dwellers, especially single women. It calls for the church to champion the cause of helping members to cultivate a new culture as well as attune itself to the changing nature of society and the context in which it exercises its pastoral ministry. In this regard, pastoral ministry can only be meaningful if it takes into serious consideration the context, that is, the experiences of single women. Contextualisation of pastoral ministry in this respect would mean taking into account the social, cultural, economic, and religious structures that place single women in the traditional position of marginalisation, stereotype, stigmatisation and other conditions that make their single status a great challenge. It would also involve taking into account theimpact of social change of socio-cultural beliefs, values, norms, customs and practices relating to marriage and family. Lartey observes that "Societal and cultural factors influence the shape and form of all caring activities" (2006:2).

Pastoral training in the COCIN has greatly impacted on traditional communal interpersonal relationships of care in a way that shifts care from being a communal engagement to an individual clergy centred ministry. The absence of gender concerns in the curriculum of ministerial training has left the COCIN pastors handicapped in the exercise of pastoral ministry to single women. The challenge for the church is to have a ministry preparation that adequately addresses pastoral issues in contexts, that is, the lived experiences of the people pastors minister to. There is a fundamental need for reorientation and reconstruction of new perceptions of theological education in the COCIN. The changing nature of society and the church underscores the need for an inclusive theological formation that promotes the training of both clergy and lay people and of men and women for ministry. The number of single women who train alongside their male counterparts has increased significantly, but the ethical questions that remain to be answered are why train these women for a position that is not available to them? Why equip them with skills for a ministry that they would not be allowed to practice?

Apparently, there is a dire need for the COCIN to engage with social realities in its theological reflections. From the available resources, contemporary situations and Christian experience of the reality of life, the COCIN can discover aspects of the Gospel and church leadership to which it has not previously given serious consideration. As Msomi has cautioned, "Theology must not remain in isolated fragments nor on the periphery, but must be a dynamic system constantly engaged with …the context and the practice of ministry" (2008:247). In their ministry practice pastors can develop a theological approach to ministry that goes beyond theories they have learned in the seminaries. They may consider paring with other pastors to provide a kind of education that enhances ministry competence. Pastors must make an effort to move away from the traditional approach to ministry which encourages long-range mentality and embrace an approach that supports "competence-building continuing education for ministry" (Robers, 2004:128), which includes working with others.

The the lack of gender-inclusive pastoral ministry in the COCIN for single, never married and divorced women has led to spiritual, social and even financial deprivation of women in the COCIN. Apparently, the mainstream pastoral ministry that the COCIN offers its members does not adequately address the needs of single women. The pastoral ministry of the church to single women in the RCC has not provided a liberative space for single women. Although single women may be members of the church they have not been treated as equal members.

According to the single women interviewed in this research, the church needs to be gender responsive by creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of single women's lived experiences. The restoration of the single women's identities is crucial to pastoral ministry. To answer the question of how best the COCIN RCC Gigiring Jos can minister to single, never married and divorced women, Nuzzolese offers a valuable suggestion in her assertion that the church considers the utilisation of communal form of ministry because it best bridges the gap between the marginalised and the mission of the church. A support network promotes is life transforming for both individuals and community because it has the advantage of the pursuit of common goal, common vision and the power of community. She points out thatsingle women can be ministered to "through support groups, community education and advocacy" (2010:37). Thus, "endorsing a 'justice-seeking and justice-making' dimension to care could be a more prophetic form of ministry" (2010:29). Affirming the support for a contextual communal approach to pastoral ministry, Msomi argues that "in the spirit of the New Testament, which relates well to the deep African appreciation for community, pastoral care becomes the calling of the whole congregation" (2008:236). Therefore, the call to be actively involved in the caring, nurturing and healing in the community of faith can only be realised through communal engagement. In an urban area where single women are away from extended family support, the church can be a "surrogated extended family" (2008:241).

Utilising the laity, while advocating for the ordination of women will broaden the scope of ministry and ensure that in future of the COCIN will have ordained women ministering to single women. Using the perspective of the communal contextual paradigm of pastoral care, which encourages the involvement of everyone, single, nevermarried and divorced women will be provided with pastoral ministry. Instead of stereotyping, marginalising and sometimes ostracing single women, the church should encourage the creation of a network of support that begins with the family and extends to the community. Feminist pastoral care of single women challenges COCIN to foster a specific support group for divorced. What divorced people need from the church is not judgment for their actions, but the understanding of their distress and need for healing. Divorced people need the church to offer programmes that will help them to rebuild their lives and experience the fullness of life as Christ intends for his children. Having a support group is important to curb the problem of single women patronising ministries where they sometimes fall prey to the manipulation of deceitful teachers and prophets.The secular world, often, using biblical principles,champions the cause

of empowering women in different facets of life. If the world values the empowerment of people the church cannot afford to be insensitive. It must provide structures in which women can be empowered both spiritually and physically to contribute to the body of Christ, irrespective of their marital status. This empowerment must start with building single women's self-esteem through acceptance of their status. Acceptance of single women in the COCIN would denote an affirmation of their dignity and would provide a space where they can be full participants in the relationship of giving and receiving in the community of faith.

The concepts of g*aya*and *kawaye* or *committee of friends,*when applied in pastoral ministryin the COCIN, will ensure that many more people are ministered to. Rather than confining ministry to the few ordained ministers in the many congregations of the COCIN, communal care will provide more results than the individual care offered by pastors. Communal contextual practice of pastoral ministry to single women would promote the virtues of the traditional concept of *kawaye*. Single women can be ministered to by their peers and older women who share the same interests. This concept of communal support does not only facilitate growth in the individual but whole congregation.

Communal contextual pastoral care in this context is about building a strong pastoral ministry that will transform the lives of single women and the church as a believing community. Communal care within a church setting makes the church real in the lives of people and clarifies its transformation goal to the people. By addressing the pastoral concerns of the different categories of people in its congregations using a communal contextual approach, the COCIN will become an alternative community in which single, never-married and divorced women and other neglected groups will be empowered to live life in its fullness. As Graham notes, the feminist reconstruction of pastoral theology point to a revision that provides new sources for healing and community. This restores pastoral activity to a broader perspective that encompasses not only individual care, but a diverse set of pastoral practices. The communal involvement demonstrates greater mutuality in equality of all in the pastoral endeavour as well as helps single women find the church as a vital source of community experience (2006:855). Engaging in a communal contextual care reflects a believing community that teaches and practices biblical pastoral ministry (Stitzinger, 1995:145). It is thus evident from this study that the COCIN needs to re-examine its theology of ministry and what constitutes the nature of its pastoral ministry to the different categories of people in its congregation. The COCIN must integrate the realities of social change in its practice of

ministry. It must heed to Tillich's proposal that the ministry of care must be viewed as the responsibility of the whole community of believers. He counsells:

> Each of you has liberating and healing power over someone to whom you are a priest. We all are called to be priests to each other, and if priests, also physicians. And if physicians, also counsellors. And if counsellors, also liberators. There are innumerable degrees and kinds of saving grace (Tillich, cited in Clinebell, 1975:72).

8.4 Suggestions for further research

In view of the above findings and conclusions, three areas for further study have been identified. Firstly, there is need for further study on traditional forms of spousal selection and how its principles can be integrated in contemporary context. Relevant literatureon traditional and contemporary spousal selection (Dobošiová, 2009; Batabyal, 2004; Okonjo, 1992) is available. This literature discusses ways in which societies provide answers to the problem of singleness. There is need for research on the impact of spousal selection in traditional societies and contemporary matchmaking services on addressing marital issues. Such a study can explore how this concept can be integrated into the church's pastoral practice today. It may also focus on how the principles of traditional marriage practices and contemporary marital enhancement services can be utilised in pastoral ministry to strengthen marriage and family as a religious and social institution. It can also explore ways of increasing the likelihood of young women who want to marry to find partners and how culture and religion can work to de-stigmatise the status quo to free single women from ridicule. Implementing this will assist in helping to discover how traditional societies dealt with the issue of singleness and understand the rising trend of singleness. Waruta notes that there is the need for the church to be more involved in the creation of families by "providing an environment upon which young persons may not only find their marriage partners but also guiding them to discover each other in a healthier manner than the current individualistic ...approach practised by most people..." (2000:100).

Secondly, further research is needed to explore the phenomenon of singleness in Africa. The study could explore other single groups such as single men and single mothers. However, one study that is linked to the present research is a study that needs to be conducted on single men as a category of singlehood. It can investigate the decline in men desiring to marry and how this impacts on the availability of men and the single women's access to marriage. Some studies have shown that wars, crises and disasters impact on the gender ratio, giving rise to

singleness in the community. According to Froide, "a skewed sex ratio, resulting in higher numbers of women than men, could lead to more single women" (2008:46). Jos has witnessed series of crises in recent years which have resulted in numerous deaths (Walker, 2012; Emelonye, 2011; Iorpuu, 2009). The assumption is that in most crises the gender ratio is higher for men in terms of casualties. A study is needed to ascertain the extent to which this is true in Jos and what impact this has on marital relationships.

Thirdly, there is need for research on the competence of the COCIN pastors who minister to the community. A question that would need to be investigated in such a study is what is the COCIN doing to improve thecompetenceand effectivenessof its clergyand pastoral ministryin its congregations? The strong leaning of members to ministries outside the church underscores the need for pastors to develop new skills to encourage congregational transformation. Kimilike observes that contemporary challenges have brought about a scenario in which pastors experience "a crisis of confidence about how they can meaningfully minister in today's environment in Africa" (2008:69). Based on the importance of building competence in ministry practice, Roberts suggests that whatever the church does, it "must be done with an eye toward learning more about the kinds of education that encourage innovation, exploration, and continued learning in leadership" (2004:121). Similarly, a study on lay ministry is required. The church has depended heavily on the clergy for leadership, pastoral care and counselling. A few people do everything in the church and ministry is understood as an 'us' and 'them' activity (Willhauck, 2004:154). Further study is required on the role of lay people in pastoral ministry. Such a study may explore ways in which lay members can be trained and empowered for the ministry of care in the church. Willhauck posits that lay theological education encourages "mutual exploration of commonalities and implications for daily life" (2004:162). The church needs to expose its pastors and congregants to theological enterprise that is not confined to the personal but is extended to the social. As Kujawa-Holbrook and Montagno points out, "pastoral care is inextricably linked to justice and compassion" (2009:1). Therefore investigation is needed into the methods or models that can be used to achieve this goal of a theological education and ministry that combines the pursuit of justice and personal transformation.

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Interviews and focus groups

A. Adult children of divorced marriages

Adult Child of Divorced Marriage A. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vworok, 23 July.

Adult Child of Divorced Marriage B. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Loh-Raku, 15 January.

Adult Child of Divorced Marriage C. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Gigiring, 13 April.

Adult Child of Divorced Marriage D. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Rahwol Kanang, 23 July.

B. Church leaders

Reverend Dr Dachollom Datiri. (2013).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Rahol-Kanang, 29 January.

Reverend Dr Obed Dashan. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Bwandang, 20January.

Reverend John Yilkpuba. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Dadin Kowa, 30 January.

Reverend Festus Dasham. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Hwolshe Gigiring, 17 July.

C. Clergy

Reverend Bulus Mana. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Kwakwi, 20January.

ReverendIliya Kachala. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Gindiri, 12 January.

ReverendPolycarp John. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Gyel, 10th February.

ReverendSunday Patrick. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, TCNN, 13 August.

D. Magistrates

Judge Ladi Nyako. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Gada Biu, 10 January.

Magistrate Talatu Gada. (2011). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Township Street, 12 December.

E. Seminary lecturers and theological educator

Reverend Joseph L. Dalyop. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, GTS, 12 January.

Reverend Paul L. Gonlur. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, GTS, 11 January.

Reverend Benjamin Pokol. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, GTS, 11 January.

Reverend Moses Vonjeng. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, GTS, 12 January.

Tarphena Dashan (2013).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, TEE office Jos, 28 January.

F. Single, never married and divorced women

Divorced Woman A. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Loh-Raku, 14 January.

Divorced Woman B. (2012). Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Rahwol-Kanang, 8 February.

Divorced Woman C. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, PIPC Quarters, Jos, 14 February.

Divorced Woman D. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vorok, 12 January.

Divorced Woman E. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Dahwol Dangwong, 17 January.

Divorced Woman F. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vorok, 18 January.

Never-married Woman A. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Bukuru, 28 February 2012.

Never-married Woman B. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Zarmaganda, 18 March.

Never-married Woman C (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vorok, 21 January.

Never-married Woman D. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Dadin Kowa, 18 January.

Never-married Woman E (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Rahwol Kanang, 23February.

Never-married Woman F. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Lo-Raku, 28 January.

G. Single men

Single Man A. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vworok, 5 December.

Single Man B. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vworok, 8 December.

Single Man C. (2012).*Interview*, Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vorok, 19 December.

Single Man D. (2012).Recorded *Interview* with Rahila Jakawa, Kambel, 5 December 2012.

H. Focus groups discussion

COCIN Men Fellowship. (2012). Recorded *Discussion* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vworok, 15 January.

COCIN Women Fellowship. (2012).Recorded *Discussion* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vworok, 18 January.

COCIN Youth Fellowship. (2012).Recorded *Discussion* with Rahila Jakawa, Fwol-Vworok, 20 January.

Others

Reverend, Alex Joseph. (2012). God's standard for marriage. *Sermon*. COCIN Rantya.

Reverend, Dawuda Jakawa. (2011). Marriage is designed for completeness and partnership. *Sermon*. COCIN Gwol, Barkin Ladi.

Reverend Dr. Obed Dashan. (2013). Those who walk with God, work for God. *Sermon*. COCIN RCC Dadin-Kowa.

TCNN Student.(2007). *Class discussion*, TCNN Bukuru.

Appendices

Appendix A (i)

Informed consent document

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (SRPC),
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus,
Private Bag X01 Scottville 3209,
Republic of South Africa.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Informed consent

I am doing a Doctoral research in Pastoral Theology. I need to gather information that will help me carry this out. I will conduct interviews and have focus group discuss where applicable. I hope that you will be able to provide me with useful information to do so, but I need your consent. I promise that I will maintain confidentiality in the whole process. Your identity will either be protected by the use of code name/number or you will have the choice to remain anonymous. Both the interview and focus group are voluntary and you have the choice to withdraw at any time you so wish.

The working title of the research work is: "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." The choice of this title was informed by three things.
1. My interactions and experiences of counselling single women both in the church and school.
2. An incident during a graduating class fellowship meal, where a single woman criticised the speeches made for addressing the needs of married people only.
3. The bold accusation a single woman made in her contribution to a discussion in a Christian Education class when she said, "The church is not doing anything to help us single, rather they are creating problems where there are none."

From these I realise that many of these single women are facing a lot of challenges that both the church and our pastors' training institutions are doing little or nothing to help them. As Evangelicals we believe in the Gospel and the Christian ministry, but the attention given to this is not proportionate to our belief. These are the hypotheses I want to investigate and the information you provide will help me do that.

I need you consent and time to be interviewed or participate in a focus group discussion. The interview will last for 40-45 minutes unless there is need for follow up. The focus group discussion will take 50-60 minutes. I will use a micro cassette recorder to record information after which I will delete them from my system after analysing them.

Participating in this research will help you to contibute to the practical ministry of the Church. If the Church accepts the outcomes of this research as a useful document, then you would be part of the transformation story. As a member or leader of the Church, we have a responsibilty to see that practical pastoral ministry is offered to every category of persons in the church. This work will enable the Church to understand the causes of the problem and how to deal with them.

For any inquiry my contact address and that of my supervisor are given below:
Mrs. Rahila Leng Jakawa.
Email:rahilaleng@yahoo.com
Cellphone:+27715835621,+2348034119490
Residence: COCIN Fwol-Vorok (Anglo-Jos) adjacent PIPC quarters.
Supervisor: Dr. Raymond Kumalo. Email: kumalor@ukzn.ac.za

If you agree to be interviewed or to participate in the focus group discussion, please sign the consent form agreement below.

I...(Fill in your name), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant   Date

....

Appendix A (ii)

Informed consent document for church leaders, clergy and magistrates

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (SRPC),
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus,
Private Bag X01 Scottville 3209,
Republica of South Africa.

Dear Sir/Madam,
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

I am a doing Doctoral research in Pastoral Theology. I need to gather information that will help me carry this out. I will conduct interviews I hope that you will be able to provide me with useful information to do so, but I need your consent. The interview is voluntary and you have the choice to withdraw at any time you so wish.

The working title of the research work is: "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." The choice of this title was informed by three things.
1. My interactions and experiences of counselling single women both in the church and school.
2. An incident during a graduating class fellowship meal, where a single woman criticised the speeches made for addressing the needs of married people only.
3. The bold accusation a single woman made in her contribution to a discussion in a Christian Education class when she said, "The Church is not doing anything to help us single, rather they are creating problems where there are none."

From these I realise that many of these single women are facing a lot of challenges that both the church and our pastors' training institutions are doing little or nothing to help them. As Evangelicals we believe in the Gospel and the Christian ministry, but the attention given to this is not proportionate to our belief. These are the hypotheses I want to investigate and the information you provide will help me do that.

I need you consent and time to be interviewed. The interview will last for 40-45 minutes unless there is need for follow up. I also need your consent to use your real identity. I will use a micro cassette recorder to record information after which I will delete them from my system after analysing them.

Participating in this research will help you to contibute to the practical ministry of the Church. If the Church accepts the outcomes of this research as a useful document, then you would be part of the transformation story. As a member or leader of the Church, we have a responsibilty to see that practical pastoral ministry is offered to every category of persons in the Church. This work will enable the Church to understand the causes of the problem and how to deal with them.

For any inquiry my contact address and that of my supervisor are given below:
Mrs. Rahila Leng Jakawa.

Email:rahilaleng@yahoo.com
Cellphone:+27715835621,+2348034119490
Residence: COCIN Fwol-Vorok (Anglo-Jos) adjacent PIPC quarters.
Supervisor: Dr. Raymond Kumalo. Email: kumalor@ukzn.ac.za

If you agree to be interviewed and your identity be used in the document, please sign the consent form agreement below.

I...(Fill in your name), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I consent that my names and identity be used in the research.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant   Date

....

Appendix B

Ethical clearance letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Research Office (Govan Mbeki Centre)
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN, 4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

18 January 2012

Mrs R L Jakawa (211520908)
School of Ministerial Studies (Pastoral Theology)

Dear Mrs Jakawa

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/1349/011D
PROJECT TITLE: Pastoral Ministry to single women in Church of Christ in Nigeria in Regional Church Council, Gigiring, in Jos Metropolis.

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

cc Supervisor Dr Raymond Khumalo
cc Mrs Beulah Jacobsen

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Appendix C

Questions for church leaders

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to these questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design a pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. What is your understanding of marriage? What is your understanding of divorce?

2. How would you assess the status of marriage and family in Jos today?

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness in the RCC Gigiring today?

1. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single,never married and divorced women?

4. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

2. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single,never married and divorced women?

5. What is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the Church's pastoral ministry to single women?

6. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

7. What is your assessment of the theological education the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to preparation for ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

3. How has the church exercise pastoral ministry to single,never married and divorced women?

8. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

9. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research.

Appendix D

Questions for seminary lecturers

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to this questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. Briefly state your understanding of pastoral ministry.

2. Do you have provision for gender studies in your curriculum?

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness today?

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single,never married and divorced women?

4. How do you approach issues of pastoral ministry to single women in your lectures?

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

5. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church executes pastoral ministry to single,never married and divorced women?

6. What would you say is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the church's pastoral ministry to single women?

7. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

8. What is your assessment of the theological education the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to preparation for ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

9. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

10. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research.

Appendix E

Questions for clergy

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to these questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design a pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. What is your understanding of marriage? What is your understanding of divorce?

2. How would you assess the status of marriage and family in Jos today?

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness in the RCC Gigiring today?

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single,never married and divorced women?

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

6. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single,never married and divorced women?

7. What would you say is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the Church's pastoral ministry to single women?

8. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

9. What is your assessment of the theological education the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to preparation for ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

10. As a pastor how do you exercise pastoral ministry to single,never married and divorced women?

11. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

12. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research.

Appendix F

Questions for magistrates

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to these questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design a pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. Briefly state your understanding of marriage and divorce.

2. What is the legal understanding of marriage and divorce?

3. In your assessment what would you say is the rate of divorce today?

4. What are the documents or records that back this?

5. From your experience of dealing with cases of divorce what are some of the causes of divorce?

6. Under what conditions can the court grant divorce?

7. What effort does the court make to see that a marriage does not end in divorce?

8. What would you say is the attitude of the Nigerian society towards divorced women?

9. What would you say is the relationship between culture and how the society views divorced women?

10. In your view what impact does the failure of marriages have on the Nigerian society?

11. What in your view are some of the remedies to the problem of divorce in our society?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research work.

Appendix G

Questions for single, never married women and men and divorced women

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to these questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design a pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. Briefly state your understanding of marriage and divorce.

2. What is the understanding of marriage and divorce in your culture?

3. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

4. How did you come about your singleness?

5. How do you feel about it?

6. What are the challenges you face as a result of being single?

7. How do you handle them?

8. How has your single status impacted on your spiritual, social, and financial life?

9. How does your Church offer ministry to single people?

10. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church executes pastoral ministry to its members, particularly single and divorced women?

11. Do you observe any structures of inequality in the Church? If so, what are they?

12. What impact does this have on single people?

13. In what ways do you think the Church can best minister to single people?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research work

Appendix H

Questions for adult children of divorced marriages

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to these questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design a pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. Briefly state your understanding of marriage and divorce.

2. How did your parents come about their divorce?

3. How did you feel about it?

4. How has the divorce impacted on your life and interpersonal relationships?

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

6. What role did the Church play during your crisis time?

7. What are the challenges you faced as a result of your parents' divorce?

8. How do you handle them?

9. How does your Church offer ministry to single people?

10. Do you observe any structures of inequality in the Church? If so, what are they?

11. What impact does this have on single people?

12. In what ways do you think the Church can best minister to single people?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research work.

Appendix I

Questions for focus group discussion

Introduction

My name is Rahila Leng Jakawa. I am a PhD student of the above institution. I am conducting a research on the topic, "Pastoral Ministry to Single Women in Church of Christ in Nigeria, GigiringRegional Church Council, Jos,Nigeria." I appreciate very much your time and willingness to respond to these questions. Your input will be very useful to this research as it will help us to understand your main concerns in this area, and also enable us to design a pastoral ministry that will address this concerns.

1. What is your understanding of marriage and of divorce?

2. How would you assess the status of marriage and family in Jos today?

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness in the RCC Gigiring today?

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single,never married and divorced women?

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

6. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single and divorced women?

7. What is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the Church's pastoral ministry to single women?

8. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

9. What is your assessment of the training the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to their pastoral ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

10. What is your opinion of how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to and divorced women?

11. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

12. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research.

Appendix J

Sample of transcribed interviews

A. Transcribed interview with a church leader

1. What is your understanding of marriage? What is your understanding of divorce?

Marriage is a covenanted union. It is God's plan and meant to be for life. Divorce is a break of marital relationship and vow that leads to unfaithfulness to God and each other. Divorce happens because of ignorance of biblical principle and cultural values attached to the everlasting nature of marriage. When people get into marriage divorce, should not be contemplated and the stability of marriage requires commitment to family. Individuals are products of their cultural environment and their heredity.

2. How would you assess the status of marriage and family in Jos today?

Marriage and family is in grave danger. Factors such as urbanisation, poor economy, job separation, cost of raising children and rapid change are putting a lot of pressure on families. Temptation is higher now than it was ten or twenty years ago.

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness in the RCC Gigiring today?

The economy is one of the main reasons people are not getting married today. The bride price among several tribal groups is rising every day. Other reasons are fear of marriage, emerging theologies and ideologies and social constructions such as independence and individualism which are making more people not be interested in marriage.

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single, never marriedand divorced women?

They are not accepted, integrated or respected. I can boldly say that culture, compounded by myopic theologies have a big influence on social attitude toward single women. The society blames them for social problems. They are seen as independent social criminals.

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

Education and urbanisation have both negative and positive impact on the society. Education and westernisation have created interest in western values that were not carefully selected. It has destroyed a good sense of shame. Positively, western education has opened people to self-actualisation. People are liberated to think for themselves. It has helped in improving intercultural interactions. Helps spouses to value their partners and liberates people from the domestication of culture. Urbanisation has taken people from their roots and community life. It has created new communities that have both positive and negative implications for people. Urban life affects family cohesion, which are compounded by urban stress, economic handicap and modernity.

6. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single, never marriedand divorced women?

The Church does not have a deliberate ministry to single women. They are treated in lump sum with other groups. Our culture and pastoral training compounded by theology has not allowed for such ministry. People frown at pastors getting closer to single women. Therefore, pastors are sensitive to what people would say. Sometimes single women themselves are suspicious of any pastor that attempts to get closer to a single woman. For example, I saw a single woman that I felt needed guidance, I drew close to her. But her friends were not comfortable and I suspect they were talking. I had to call them and explain to them that I saw their friend as a daughter who needs help and nothing more.

7. What is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the Church's pastoral ministry to single women?

In COCIN women are verbally placed at a very high position, but not in practice. Women make great contribution in education both in the church and society. They are involved in outreaches, evangelism and they risk alot. Women belong to the community of people who are trying to draw the attention of the church and society back to the path of sanity and life. My mother was the source of stability in my life.Through her business she trained me through school and many women are doing the same today.

8. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

The church is not doing much, but individual pastors are doing bits and bits to offer ministry to single people. In principle the structure allows for ministry to all people irrespective of

gender, but in practice absent. We seem to be talking more than doing. Our teaching on marriage is not sufficient because we have not touched on all areas that need to be addressed.

9. What is your assessment of the theological education COCIN pastors receive as it relates to preparation for ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

I will simply say our theological education does not prepare our pastors for the present challenges we see today.

10. How has the church exercise pastoral ministry to single and divorced women?

There is no ministry for them. Like I said earlier, a few pastors are doing one or two things here and there.

11. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

This lack of attention is making single women to be moving from church to church and ministry to ministry. It has affected them both physiologically and psychologically. This creates a lack of acceptability. They enjoy social life mostly among themselves and find comfort in other things. Economically, they are strugglers and pursue things like education, business and other forms of endevour to better their lives.

12. What are some practical means through which the church can provide ministry to single women?

Friendship, fellowship, integration, value them for who they are and beware of the language used to address them.

B. Transcribed interview with a seminary lecturer

1. Briefly state your understanding of pastoral ministry.

Ministry means care, and giving leadership to believers. It means shepherding God's people in the pattern God wants.

2. Do you have provision for gender studies in your curriculum?

There is no provision in the curriculum for gender studies, but there is provision for gender issues in other courses. Courses such as wholistic Christian development and marriage and family make provision for gender issues to be discussed.

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness today?

Education, ratio of men to women, poverty, unemployment, educational, that is, girls reaching a hallmark in their educational pursuit, cultural barriers, male domination, incompatibility and lack of commitment to Christianity.

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single, never marriedand divorced women?

The society scorns women who are single because marriage is seen as a way of sustaining family and society. They are seen as useless and irresponsible. They suffer stigmatisation, suspicion, lack of respect. Culture says a woman must stick to her marriage whatever happens. Divorced women are seen as failures and a problem to other marriages and families. This cultural perception of marital relationship has been taken to the Church.

5. How do you approach issues of pastoral ministry to single women in your lectures?

I encourage pastors to take pre-marital counselling very seriously and not allow culture to dictate how they practice pastoral ministry. I also engage in counselling single women when the need arises.

6. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

Education has brought about the issue of feminism. Women are now fighting against their suppression by men. They are copying the negative trend from the west with so much emphasis laid on the quest for women's right. Gender roles are changing which leaves much to be desired for African family life. Women now want to share leadership with men. Westernisation and urbanisation encourage western lifestyle. Women are now civilised and sophisticated. Technology has made the world a global village so people are copying from other cultures both the good and the bad.

7. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church executes pastoral ministry to single, never marriedand divorced women?

Culture makes pastoral ministry to single women absent. There is a lot of insinuations, suspicion and constraints. Pastors stay away from single women to protect their image.

8. What would you say is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the church's pastoral ministry to single women?

No clear cut programme for single women. Individual pastors identify the area of need and try to meet them. The status of women is not at par with men. It is low. Women fellowship is seen as an appendage of the Church. Its role is not specified thus the issue of women ordination is not considered.

9. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

The structure of the church allows for single women participation but in practice it is not so. Single women are not elected into the council of elders. Women do not have specific pastoral task in the COCIN.

10. What is your assessment of the theological education the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to preparation for ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

Curriculum of pastors training institution does not give room for adequate preparations for pastors to meet the challenge of gender complexities. Our pastors are not exposed to gender issues. There is need to have a curriculum review to include contemporary issues like what you are doing. Singleness is a complex issue which needs to be addressed, because our training institutions reflect a bigger picture of our society. It is clear that culture determines how our pastors practice the pastoral ministry.

11. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

The absence of pastoral ministry to this group has made them to be alienated from the Church. This affects every aspect of their lives directly or indirectly.

12. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

The Church needs to equip pastors to handle ministry wholistically. Our curriculum needs to be strengthened to include gender related issues. Counselling of those preparing for marriage is very important to avoid occurances of divorce.

C.Transcribed interview with a clergy

1. What is your understanding of marriage? What is your understanding of divorce?

Marriage is God's plan. It is a gift to man and woman for fellowship. Divorce is disobedience to God's plan and standard for marriage. God hates divorce.

2. How would you assess the status of marriage and family in Jos today?

Marriage is still honoured, but threatened by so many things. Separation and breakdown of marriage between couples is on the increase, family life is not honoured and not many are focus on raising a good and healthy family. Many husbands and wives are working outside the home some even outside the places where their families are. Poverty, unemployment and distance is breaking marriages and families. African men are relinquishing their role as heads and breadwinners to their wives and this shift in roles is affecting the family. Nuclear family structure has affected family relationships.

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness in the RCC Gigiring today?

Education, age, career and profession. Women are now employed and some are professional who are paid very well and men feel intimidated by such. Some women have risen to the position that they outlast their community. No man in the community is up to her level so no one attempts to court her. In severe cases fathers look for husbands for their daughters – a prominent member of our community whose daughters were well educated approached a young man asking him to marry one of his daughters, but the young man felt intimidated by the educational level of the women. Men are afraid of being the stooge of such women. Other reasons for singleness are health, culture of stigmatisation, disappointments from past relationships, strictness of parents and religiousity. Some health issues that the community is not in the picture create room for suspicion. Some families are stigmatised for no reason. The past experiences of some family members are used against their relations. Men run away from over zealous sisters.

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single, never marriedand divorced women?

Pressure as to why they are not married, assumptions trail their every move, doubts, lack of trust, anger and unexplained pain, sadness, vain accusations of other family members and

others. The Nigerian society shows hatred towards divorced women. They have no place in the society or the Church and the attitude of people toward them is often judgmental and condemnation. Divorcees are seen as sinners and are good only for sex. They find it difficult to get a husband and often end up in polygamous marriages or getting married to irresponsible men. Stigmatisation is the word that sums the society's attitude towards divorced women.

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

Awareness, understanding, enhanced status of people and life, improved health, appreciation of counselling. On the negative side, separation of couples, family –child birth even when people are capable of handling larger families they go for smaller nuclear families. Technology has brough about a shift from human relationship to mobile phones and the internet. Clothing especially women wanting to be like westerners swingling between cultures –Africa, biblical and west. Urbanisation has brough about a lot of hustling and bustling. Rush life, lots of things to catch up with, lots of engagements. Class formation and people struggling to belong somewhere. Some men are sceptical of city girls. Some class of women,for example journalists, are more interested in the single life as they do not seem to see men that fit into their dream men. The take pride and comfort in their economic status, so are beyond approach.

6. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single, never married and divorced women?

Culture conflicts with biblical standard. Culture influences the Church such that its understanding of the pastoral ministry is very shallow. The pastoral ministry of the Church has not really gone down to the people. Pastors are unable to categorise people according to their needs and group. There is gross ignorance of what the church's pastoral ministry is about.

7. What would you say is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the Church's pastoral ministry to single women?

Women are confined to teaching Sunday school, preaching in the women fellowships and a few of them are teaching in theological institutions. Women's involvement in pastoring is a thing of the future but not now. There is a mass engagement of women in theological

education like the TEE and other distant learning. Residential studies is not structured to accommodate single women. In the past single women were involved in the COCIN Women Fellowship (CWF), but this died along the line. The CWF needs to incorporate single women into its programme as a branch of the fellowship. Subgroups should be revived,but pastors seem to be afraid of the volume of work there is. Pastors seems to have preference for certain groups over others.

8. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

The structure is not accommodating to women. Teaching is general, haphazard and one sided. Often women are bombarded with what is traditionally motivated messages by pastors.

9. What is your assessment of the theological education the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to preparation for ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

Grossly inadequate. Nothing is targeted towards this area. Pastors are not trained very well to pastor congregations. Our pastoral training is certificate and not ministry oriented. Core course that have to do with pastoral work are not given the attention deserved. Not many theology students have gone through pastoral training and many of them are release into churches as pastors. Not all people that go through theological education can be pastors, but the Church has not been able to categorise people for effective execution of ministry.

10. As a pastor how do you exercise pastoral ministry to single, never marriedand divorced women?

I engage in pastoral counselling, pulpit teaching, visitation, encouragement to people who are preparing for marriage beyond counselling −mini pastoral counselling. Creating close relationships with single ladies that will help them.

11. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

Negligible because so much emphasis is laid on marriage such that many of these girls run to ministries or pentecostal churches where attention is given them.

12. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

Biblical.Pastors must take an aggressive biblical approach to pastoral ministry. Preaching, teaching, counselling and caring for all. Training of pastors need to be ministry incline. The Church must understand the challenges facing it today. Curriculum of pastors training institutions need to be reviewed to meet the challenges. Programmes need to be designed to meet the need of people. Seminars, create waareness to remove prejudice and ignorance. COCIN as a Church need to work towards a broad based pastoral ministry.

D. Transcribed interview with a magistrate

1. Briefly state your understanding of marriage and divorce.

To me marriage is the consentual union of a man and woman, which is governed by social and religious norms of a given society. In Nigeria, the consent of parents and other relations is highly regarded for the health and stability of the marriage.

2. What is the legal understanding of marriage and divorce?

In legal terms, marriage is a contract between a man and a woman, involving person of the opposite sex. In Nigeria, a valid marriage is between a biological male and female. Monogamy and polygamy are the two systems of marriage recognised in Nigeria.

3. In your assessment what would you say is the rate of divorce today?

Divorce is on the increase in Jos, but the rate among Christians is lower than amongst Moslems. Islam is more tolerant of divorce than Christianity, because grounds for divorce in Islam are enshrined in its culture.

4. What are the documents or records that back this?

There has been an increase witnessed in cases of divorce in the courts between 2000 till date compared to the nineties.

5. From your experience of dealing with cases of divorce what are some of the causes of divorce?

To me the causes of divorce are unemployment,influence of urbanisation and Christianity's norm of one man, one wife, permissivenesss, crisis, religious, ethnic and tribaldifferences.

Other factors are lack of perseverance to see that marriages work or deal with problems that arise in a marital relationship, lack of feeding and other support from husband, barrenness and infertility, traditionlike the issue of the bride price and dowry, close relationship (in my culture one is not allowed to marry a close relation, cultural requirement due a relationship has not been met, interference in the marriage by in-laws and other extended family members, infidelity especially of a woman, lack of accomodation, abuse and domestic violence, drunkenness such as vomiting and other misbehaviour.

6. Under what conditions can the court grant divorce?

When a case has been established beyond reasonable doubt and it has been proven that the petitioner, that is the one filing for divorce cannot live with the respondent, then the court grants divorce.

7. What effort does the court make to see that a marriage does not end in divorce?

The court gives the couple opportunity to look for options and means of reconciliation. We donot just give them the divorce they ask for. Most judges would ask them to go and settle their problems at home. Divorce is only granted when they cannot settle out of court.

8. What would you say is the attitude of the Nigerian society towards divorced women?

Divorced women are seen and treated as people who are a problem to the society and the Church. They are accorded no respect and are looked upon with suspicion and mixed feeling. Divorced women are seen as persons who are incapable of taking care of their families, as people who lack patience and the Church does not see the divorced woman as a true believer. People always put up a false impression around them and no one gets to hear their stories. People are not really interested in knowing their stories for fear of doing something about it.

9. What would you say is the relationship between culture and how the society views divorced women?

The attitude of the society toward divorced women is informed by the cultural values and norms of the society. The society believes that a responsible woman is somebody's wife. Marriage gives a woman status in Nigeria.

10. In your view what impact does the failure of marriages have on the Nigerian society?

The impact of the failure of marraige is more family breakdown. The institution of marriage is bastardised, westernisation has brought about tolerance for sex outside marriage and some women are sleeping around with men who are not their husbands.

11. What in your view are some of the remedies to the problem of divorce in our society?

The remedy to divorce is patience on the side of both couple, submission on the part of women, forgiveness and reconciliation, carrying out one's duties in marriage and following biblical injunction. However, women must seek legal counsel if their marriages are life threatening.

E. Transcribed interview with a single, never married woman

1. Briefly state your understanding of marriage and divorce.

Mutual understanding between a man and woman. Some people remain in abusive marital relationship because they feel coming out the will end up in hell fire for doing what God hates. Divorce is when a marriage does not work again. Threat to life and some feel remaining in an abusive relationship will tamper with their spiritual life so it's better to opt out of it.

2. What is the understanding of marriage and divorce in your culture?

People believe that every girl that is grown up must get married. People keep asking me when are you going to get married? Last year when we went to the village for Christmas someone said to me, "Do you want to expire?" They believe that there is a certain age in which a girl must get married or she will expire.

3. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

Westernisation through the media, books, magazineshas encouragedsingle life. Women in the west choose single life. Some of them will prefer to give birth to children and take care of them on their own. Some will even go to orphanages to adopt children and they will take care of them. Some of them are women who have the fear of God and have passion for taking care of children. Some of them have the money and the resources to do it. Some chose singleness because they want to enjoy life. Education and westernisation encourage divorce because

some women want to copy the life of others. Probably a woman sees how her friend's husband treats her and she may become envious and want to be treated like that too by her husband. Some women that are allowed to school by their husbands may acquire education, and come back to disrespect and even dispise their husbands who have sponsored their education. Women who marry their peer hardly encounter the problem of divorce. Urbanisation brings people from the villages to the cities because that is where life is happening. Men are looking for high class women. There is competition in the cities. Men in the Church do not want to marry church girls. Girls cannot approach a man for marriage because it is culturally wrong. Westernisation and urbanisation have made life complicated for people.

4. How did you come about your singleness?

Family background. I started a relationship in secondary school that was really working. The guy wanted to come to see my parents but I refused because of the strictness of my parents. He wanted us to marry and was not ready to wait. Other relationships had not worked because it's either the guy wanted to sleep with me or it will just end. I had another serious relationship with a young man that was in ministry. The Church wanted him to marry so he would be ordained, but I was writing my exams and wanted him to wait until I finish, but he went ahead and got married to another ladies. I went into another relationship but it did not show any sign that it was going to work. I was raped by a man I went into relationship with.

5. How do you feel about it?

I feel bad. I feel that something is wrong with me.

6. What are the challenges you face as a result of being single?

People accuse me of looking for a rich man. My parents are so strict and do not allow me to go out. Married men are the ones that seem to be interested in me. I asked God whether I am only good for married men. My family does not pressurise me, but outsiders. Somebody said that my family is responsible for my not getting married. I am always encouraged by my younger ones and relations to wait for God's time.

7. How do you handle them?

I have learnt to leave everything with God. I look up to God for a break through. There are three things I asked of the Lord, he has answered two I am waiting for the third one, which is for God give me my own husband.

8. How has your single status impacted on your spiritual, social and financial life?

I have time to pray and study the work of God. I have godly people around me and the group I belong to has really impacted on my spiritual life. My social life is okay. I relate well with people. Financially I have no serious problem because I am working.

9. How does your Church offer ministry to single people?

The Church does not have any ministry for single people. Some pastors are trying on individual basis but not because the Church has something for single people.

10. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church executes pastoral ministry to its members, particularly single, never married and and women?

Culture says if you are not married it is a problem. Sometime girls are pressurised into marriages that are not really working for them. Culture dictates even the way other women relate with us single women. A women fellowship member said to me "Even with your university education you have not gotten a man to marry? If you cannot find a husband come let me give you my husband."Some single women are recognised because they have money. Married women are highly respected such that even a small girl who got married is so much respected than the married. Consciously or unconsciouly married women are highly esteem. Even with my parents. The respect accorded my younger sister who is married is not given me. Even as the eldest I am always the errand girl because I am not married.

11. Do you observe any structures of inequality in the Church? If so, what are they?

Single people are not treated like people who belong to the Church. The Church is only concern with issues of people who are married.

12. What impact does this have on single people?

Many single ladies leave the Church to ministries in search of husbands. I have been told by friends to go to so and so ministry, but I feel that if God will not do it for me then I better not worry myself.

13. In what ways do you think the Church can best minister to single people?

The Church should not emphasise marriage. The Church should encourage singles to be who they want to be. The concentration of girls is on marriage and they go to any extent to marry. The Church's emphasis on marriage encourages desperation. The Church needs to tackle the issues of sex because it is used as a bet for marriage. A forum for single women will help single women to feel accepted and cared for.

F. Transcribed interview with an adult child of divorced marriage

1. Briefly state your understanding of marriage and divorce.

Unity between two people who want to live together. Divorce is the separation between two people who are married.

2. How did your parents come about their divorce?

I come from a polygamous family and my mother was the second of three wives. I was only three years old when my parents divorced and I grew up with my father's first wife. My parents never told me why they divorced.

3. How did you feel about it?

I felt bad. I saw my parents trying hard to play the role of each other. I live with my mother now and I see her try to play the role of a father and this makes me feel bad.

4. How has the divorce impacted on your life and interpersonal relationships?

My parents' divorce had and still has a bad effect on me. I lacked confidence and I didnot know who to trust. I was cut in between my dad and mum. I love my mum and ever will remain grateful to her in life, but I am close with my dad, may be because I lived with him most of my growing days. The way I was treated by my step mother made me to grow up as a stubborn and unforgiving girl. There was a time I vowed to deal with her son when I grow up, but he was kind and loving to me and we grew close and relate very well. Things were not moving well but I learned to accept the situation. But I always wish things were different. I donot know if their divorce is for the better or not.

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

The three have both positive and negative impact. Education and westernisation have made people to know their rights and live better. It has improved the financial status of many people. Urbanisation has brought about separation of family members from their families, which gives room for other problems such as unfaithfulness, desertion and stuff like that.

6. What role did the Church play during your crisis time?

No role, because my mother was the second wife. Although she was legally married to my father, the Church did not consider her married.

7. What are the challenges you faced as a result of your parents' divorce?

Life was and still is a struggle. Although our father often gives us money but the bulk of the responsibility is on our mother. Sometimes she does not understand that we have other personal needs, other than food.

8. How do you handle them?

I have tried to make my mother understand but to no avail, so I have learnt to accept what she gives me and get more from my dad.

9. How does your Church offer ministry to single people?

No ministry for them. But sometimes they visit us.

10. Do you observe any structures of inequality in the Church? If so, what are they?

The church does not care for women and children of divorced parents.

11. What impact does this have on single people?

It makes some of them to be serious and some not. For my mother she is hardworking, she has the heart of a man. Focus and graceful, which signifies strength is a description that fits her very well.

12. In what ways do you think the Church can best minister to single people?

Prayers and visitation.

G. Transcribed discussion with a focus group

1. What is your understanding of marriage and of divorce?

Marriage is a covenantal relationship between a man and a woman that involves companionship and commitment to live together. Divorce is separation or the killing of marriage.

2. How would you assess the status of marriage and family in Jos today?

What we see today is disrespect for marriage. Our parents had good marriages, but today marriages donot last.You will see that people will get married but it will not last up to a month or two and it is dead. In the past parent would investigate and not allow their son to just go and bring a girl whom they do not know the history of the family, the girl or her people. This is because they were afraid that children willmarry someone that will bring a problem to the family, they investigated whether the girl is rude, stubborn or disrepectful, whether she steals etc. Secondly, the investigate whether there is witchcraft or the family is known for stealing, so that a bad seed will not be sworn in their family. When there is a good relationship between people they could arrange for their children to get married. This arrangement can be made even right from infancy.

3. What would you say are the factors that inform singleness in the RCC Gigiring today?

Parents want to choose for their children or do not accept their daughter's choice so they will not give their consent. Some parents are still in the past.They want to use the methods that were used during their time today. Some girls would choose not to marry any other man if their choice is not accepted. Another reason why men are not getting married is because they lack what they will take care of the wives with. Some young man are afraid to marry a woman that they will not take care of. Sometimes the young man may be the only one taking care of his family, which will not be easy for him to add another person. Sometimes girls want to continue their education and this tend to delay marriage. Some girls once they are cheated would not want to go into any other relationship again because they have concluded that all men are cheaters. Another reason is that the population of women is more than that of men. There is also the problem of age. Once a girls reaches thirty years men donot desire her for marriage again, because there are years in which a women becomes very attractive and men desire her for man. The way some parents live in their marriages put their children off.

When parents don't treat each other well children will not feel attracted to marriage. Parents can suggest to their childrent relationships with someone that they think is responsible. Suggestions on possible relationship can help young girls to think about marriage. When parents speak well of others, especially single men it can make their daughters to give it a try in relationships. Social class is another thing. Sometimes young men are intimidated by the social class of girls they love. For instance, well fenced houses scare men away.

4. What would you say is the general attitude of people to single and divorced women?

People do not trust them and see them as those who love money and are materialistic. There is a lot of secrecy around them. Some men see them as women they can take advantage of. In the case of divorced women people would not know why she was divorced but see these women as not responsible. Because if she were a responsible woman she would stay in her husbands home. People have no respect for them.

5. What in your opinion is the impact of the following on the marriage institution in the RCC Gigiring in Jos: i) education ii) westernisation iii) urbanisation?

Education has made women to contribute in running their homes. It has brought about waywardness amongst our girls, close to 80% of girls are in schools away from the watchful eyes of their parents. In the past it was not like this parents monitored what their daughters were doing. Allowing girls to go to school has given them the freedom to do whatever they want. Urbanisation has brought a problem in marriage because sometimes a man would come to the urban area and leave his wife in the village. Urbanisation promotes unfaithfulness in marriage. It separates family members and as a result closeness is affected. The influence of the media on children in the cities is very strong. In the urban areas there is a healthy competition as people want to improve their living standard, but on the other hand unhealthy competition with people wanting to be like others.

6. In your view what is the relationship between culture and how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single and divorced women?

Culture does have a place. Culture plays a big role and we cannot do without this culture. But sometimes culture makes the Church not to pay attention to some things. Take for instance, when pastors ask single women to stand up so that the church will pray for them to get husbands this intimidates them.

7. What is the role of women in the COCIN? How has this affected the Church's pastoral ministry to single women?

Women in COCIN have trained and encouraged other women to be good wives. Only those who have not used the teachings destroy their home. The opportunity that women did not have in the past they have now. Women have those who can teach. The different programmes they organiseespecially during the Women's Week help women a lot.

8. What is your assessment of the following in relation to the Church's pastoral ministry to single women: i) Church structure ii) policies iii) teaching on marriage and family?

We cannot say much about the structure and policies of the Church because that is the area of the clergy. They know what they are doing. But in the area of teaching on marriage and family pastors are doing their best. With regard to the area of single people we do not receive any teaching on this in the church.

9. What is your assessment of the training the COCIN pastors receive as it relates to their pastoral ministry to single women and gender complexities of ministry?

We think COCIN pastors are not trained in gender issues. We donot know if those things are included in their training but if they were it would have been seen in the way the carry their programmes. But we cannot say because some pastors are trying to organise single people in the church. Like our present Reverend is really trying in the area of handling the youth.

10. What is your opinion of how the Church exercises pastoral ministry to single, never marriedand divorced women?

There should be programme for this category of people for this people but there is none. But some pastors try there best. We do not know of any programme that is specifically done for single women but groups try to do their best. In our Church we see our present Reverend trying to help the different categories of people in the church.

11. What would you say is the impact of the Church's pastoral ministry to single women on their spiritual, social and financial lives?

What we can say is that the absence of attention given to single women is making them to run away from the Church. There are ministries all over the place and many of these women go there instead of the church. We cannot blame them because they have needs that the Church is not addressing.

12. What are some practical means through which the Church can provide ministry to single women?

Teaching.If it is possible anyone that wants to get married the Church should help with resources.The Church can try matchmaking, organise seminar and singles should be helped to know that it is not their fault that they are single. Problem with matchmaking is that it may not work. We have a culture here that if a pastor should ask to see those who are not married people will laugh. This discourages them. Itwill be good for the pastor and his wife invite single women for counselling. The pastor and his wife should prayerfully device ways to help these young girls without making them feel intimidated. People assume that single women go to church to search for husbands. Pastors should be more involved in visitation of single people, and in the course of their discussion can suggest possible match. Members should be encouraged to pray for single people. Single people should also be encourage to put shame away and seek help. Parents should also pray for their children.

Appendix K

Tables showing distribution of the participants

Table 1: Church leaders

Position	Academic qualification	Gender	Age
Vice president	PhD	Male	58-60
General secretary	DMin.	Male	58-60
Vice chairman	BTh	Male	55-59
Secretary	BDD	Male	43-45

Table 2: Seminary lecturers

Position	Academic qualification	Gender	Age
Provost	MTh	Male	45-50
Lecturer	MTh	Male	50-60
Lecturer	MTh	Male	45-50
Lecturer	MTh	Male	45-50
Provost TEE	MA	Female	50-55

Table 3: Clergy

Position	Academic qualification	Gender	Age
Clergy	MTh	Male	45-48
Clergy	BDD	Male	47-50
Clergy	MA	Male	45-49
Clergy	MTh	Male	35-40

Table 4: Legal practitioners

Position	Academic qualification	Gender	Age
Judge	BL	Female	50-55
Magistrate	BL	Female	50-55

Table 5: Singles

Position	Academic qualification	Gender	Age
Divorced woman	BSc	Female	50
Divorced woman	Primary school certificate	Female	60
Divorced woman	Diploma	Female	51
Divorced woman	Primary school certificate	Female	35
Divorced woman	M.Sc.	Female	54
Divorced woman	SSCE/WAEC	Female	26
Never-married	HND	Male	40
Never-married	B.Sc.	Male	33
Never-married	B.Sc.	Female	40
Never-married	Diploma	Female	39
Never-married	HND	Female	37
Never-married	B.Ed.	Female	36
Never-married	Diploma	Male	30
Never-married	NCE	Male	29
Never-married	Diploma	Female	28
Never-married	Diploma	Female	25

Table 6: Adult children of divorce

Position	Academic qualification	Gender	Age
Child of divorce marriage	M.Sc.	Female	37
Child of divorce marriage	PhD candidate	Male	50
Child of divorce marriage	Undergraduate	Female	20-22
Child of divorce marriage	Diploma	Female	22-25

Table 7: Focus groups

Name of Group	Number of participants	Number of male	Number of female	Age
Women Fellowship	7 participants	-	7	34- 60
Men Fellowship	7 participants	7	-	40- 65
Youth Fellowship	6 participants	3	3	25- 38