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**A STUDY OF CONFLICT
IN THE FILIPINO CHRISTIAN FAMILY
AND THE PLACE OF PASTORAL COUNSELING**

By

In Seong Son

**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Theology**

2011

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ABSTRACT

The family perpetuates society. Healthy family depends on healthy marriages. Family life is always accompanied by stresses and strains which may give rise to marital conflict. This may result in breakdown of the marriage, leading to problems for any children and also for church and society. During my fifteen years serving as a missionary in Mindanao Island, the Philippines, I have observed that many Christian marriages are under stress, so I decided to study the subject of marriage conflict in the Philippines with the purpose of understanding it better so that I can work out ways in which the church can help couples to have stable marriages. I am also interested in determining the place of pastoral counseling in helping Christian couples to overcome their marital problems.

This study begins with the presentation of what motivates me to conduct the research, my purpose and objectives. This is followed by a study of the Filipino family in its historical, cultural, religious and social context. In the next chapter practical theology and pastoral theology are described in order to lay a basis for the study of conflict in Christian families and the place of pastoral counseling. The method of the research is then briefly described. The centre of the thesis is a questionnaire-based survey in which 214 randomly selected married Christians answered a series of questions. Many of these questionnaires were completed by only one spouse of a couple, either husband or wife, but some were completed by both husband and wife independently. They answered a series of questions about their marriage and the frequency and causes of marital conflict and how they deal with it. The results of the survey are analyzed in detail. I go on to study the resolution of marital conflict and the nature and place of pastoral counseling before drawing up a suggested plan of action for local churches in the Philippines to help couples facing conflict in their marriages.

I believe that this research shows the need for such programs, including pastoral counseling, to be available in the churches to help prevent serious marital conflict resulting in breakdown of marriages. It is my hope and prayer that, with God's blessing, this will result in stronger marriages and stronger churches in the Philippines.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. The background and the motive of this study

Marriage is the basic and most important foundation of human society. A healthy marriage makes a healthy family.

Family functions to produce persons biologically and socially. It also plays an important role in the enculturation and socialization of children. Healthy family contributes to a healthy church and a healthy community.

But in the Philippines, where I have been working as a missionary for fifteen years, many couples and families suffer from conflicts, problems and breakdown. Although divorce is not permitted in the Philippines, there are two kinds of separation of married couples that are recognized by the Philippine Law, namely: annulment and legal separation. Marriage annulment is a legal procedure in the country that would nullify the bond of marriage, as if the union never existed. A marriage is invalid if one of the grounds for annulment is met. The grounds for annulment¹ are set forth in the Philippine Family Code. In legal separation, the couple lives separately but without the dissolution of their marriage. Both parties are still married to each other; therefore they cannot marry someone else. Legal separation is granted by the court if it is filed for on the grounds stated in Article 55² of the Philippine Family

¹ Renato R. Pasimio, *Family Code of the Philippines* (National Book Store, 2004), 34-35: **a.** Consent was not given by the parents for those above 18 years old but below 21 years old. **b.** Mental illness (at the time of marriage, either party was of unsound mind). **c.** Fraud (if the consent of either party was obtained by fraud, unless such party afterward, with full knowledge of the facts constituting the fraud, freely cohabited with the other as husband and wife). **d.** Force, Intimidation or undue influence (force or violence - there is violence when in order to wrest consent, serious or irresistible force is employed, intimidation - there is intimidation when one of the contracting parties is compelled by a reasonable and well-grounded fear of an imminent and grave evil upon his person or property, or upon the person or property of his spouse, descendants, or ascendants, to give his consent, undue influence - control over one's will). **e.** Physically incapable of consummating the marriage. **f.** Sexually transmitted disease (at the time of marriage, either party was afflicted with a sexually transmitted disease).

² Ibid., 41. **a.** Repeated physical violence or grossly abusive conduct directed against the petitioner, a common child, or a child of the petitioner. **b.** Physical violence or moral pressure to compel the petitioner to change religious or political affiliation. **c.** Attempt of respondent to corrupt or induce the petitioner, a common child, or a child of the petitioner, to engage in prostitution, or connivance in such corruption or inducement. **d.** Final judgment sentencing the respondent to imprisonment of more than six years, even if pardoned. **e.** Drug addiction or habitual alcoholism of the respondent. **f.** Lesbianism or homosexuality of the respondent. **g.** Contracting by the respondent of a subsequent bigamous marriage, whether in the Philippines or abroad. **h.** Sexual infidelity or perversion. **i.** Attempt by the

Code. According to the Family Code, after the finality of the legal separation, the innocent spouse may revoke any donations made by him or her in favor of the offending spouse; he or she may revoke the designation of the latter as a beneficiary in any insurance policy, even if the designation is irrevocable. The custody of the minor children will be awarded to the innocent spouse.

Legal separation is not commonly practiced in the Philippines; one underlying reason is its expense and the conditions of implementation, especially among low-earning couples. It is very evident among Filipino communities that there are quite a number of couples practicing illegal separation. "This is the kind of separation that is frowned upon by the law and morals because couples simply separate and take on another wife or husband [sic] without the benefit of marriage,"³ Some are living apart from their spouses without any legal process and without any intention of coming together again. This kind of separation is considered illegal because it was not ruled by the court, which grants the legal separation of the couples on valid grounds. Most of these couples, who are low-earning, opt not to bring their case to the court because of the cost of filing for legal separation or annulment. It is very expensive to file for marriage annulment (P 50,000 for filing fee, excluding lawyer's fee, compared to the normal Filipino monthly income which is only P 8,000 monthly).

I have obtained statistical data about the Filipino family in Davao City, Mindanao Island, the Philippines, where my ministry is based. The average marriage rate in 2007 in Davao City was 726 marriages per month. Marriage annulments were only 3 cases a month in 2007. In 2007, 36 cases were decided by the court in a whole year. And there is no case of registered legal separation.⁴ According to the Philippine Star, one of the newspapers in the Philippines, "marriage annulments increase yearly in the whole nation. It was 5,773 cases in 2005, 7,138 in 2006 and 7,753 in 2007."⁵ The figures are likely to increase since there was a great increase of cases from 2005 to 2007. There are no official figures for informal or illegal separation, but from personal observation it is a common problem.

respondent against the life of the petitioner. j. Abandonment of petitioner by respondent without justifiable cause for more than one year

³ Rene Ezpeleta Bartolo, "The Alternative Divorce," *The Mindanao Times* (August 23, 2010)

⁴ I visited the city civil registrar in February 2008 to ask them for the data. They gave me some data in an official letter.

⁵ *Philippine Star* (February 11, 2008), 1-2.

B. The purpose of the study

Family perpetuates society. And the health of society depends on the health of every family. But the condition of many families in the Philippines is getting weaker. The church should partake in the burden of alleviating this condition. The Catholic Church and the Evangelical churches should work hand in hand in promoting the welfare of every Filipino family. And one way of promoting its welfare is to protect Filipino marriages.

Primarily, the purpose of this study is to survey and identify causes of marital and family conflict and problems among the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s age groups in Christian families. The church needs to know what are the problems and conflicts that couples in the church have so that the church may help them deal with their problems effectively. Oftentimes, couples who are overwhelmed with their marital problems cast ripple effects not only on themselves, but on their children, relatives, church and eventually society. These couples need help and the church must be prepared to extend this help.

Secondly, this study will identify how the couples react whenever they have marital conflicts. Conflict is not harmful in itself but it is how the couples respond to each other whenever conflict arises that is important. After their responses will be identified, this study aims to find ways of how the couples could deal with their marital problems effectively.

Finally, this study will offer, based on the survey, some suggestions for local churches to help Christian couples and families how to deal their problems. Couples would know where to go to ask for help. Building strong, stable marriages and families is very important not only for the people involved but also for the growth and stability of the church.

C. Objectives of the study

This study has the following objectives:

1. To determine the factors that cause marital conflict among 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s and above.

This study will evaluate the common factors that cause the marital conflicts in different age groups.

2. To determine if the couples are considering separation whenever they have marital problems.
3. To determine if the couples are apt to resolve their conflict whenever it arises.
4. To determine if spiritual resources or other marriage enrichment seminars has an effect on their marriage.

This study will evaluate if the spiritual resources they used or marriage enrichment seminars they received affects the condition of their marriage.

5. To determine to whom usually the couple go to seek help.

Overwhelmed by problems, oftentimes married couples ask help from other people. This study will identify to whom these couples usually go and ask for help.

6. To determine whether there is a significant difference between the degrees of marital conflict of those couples who received counseling with those who did not receive counseling.

In the next chapter we shall review relevant literature in order to understand Filipino families in their historical, religious, social, political and economic context.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The family is given high importance by Filipinos. In the country, family is considered inviolable as required by the church and the state. It is the basic social unit in Philippine society. For Filipinos, family signifies security, support, love, and care. The influence of the family on its members is apparent in that it permeates all areas of a Filipino's life, i.e. social, spiritual, religious and economic. "The community life of a Filipino is organized around his family."⁶ Filipino family is indeed one source of one's identity.

This chapter will investigate more about what the family means for a Filipino. In this section Philippine history is used to show how the Filipino family structure has evolved over the course of time. The changes in the Philippine economic status have encouraged the Filipino diaspora in order to work outside the country, thus affecting the whole picture of the Filipino marriage and family. "According to the young adult children of working migrants interviewed by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas that parents leave the Philippines purely for economic reasons."⁷

THE STUDY OF THE FILIPINO FAMILY

The study of Philippine history will take us back to the past and view the events in history that influence the shape of the contemporary Filipino family.

A. Internal study of the Filipino family

1. Brief history of the Philippines

There is a theory which says that during the Ice Age the water around what is now the Philippines fell about 156 feet below its present level. Because of this, large areas of land came to the surface and became a sort of 'land bridge' to the mainland of Asia. It is said that it was during this period that the first settlers came to the Philippines. "In 1962, a

⁶ Belen T.G. Medina, *The Filipino Family* (The University of the Philippines Press, 2010), 12.

⁷ Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006), 56.

human skull was discovered in the Tabon caves in Palawan. From this skull it was learned that men have been in the Philippines at least 22,000 years ago. The settlers who first came to the Philippines arrived by means of land bridges.”⁸

Much later, another kind of pygmy settler came to the Philippines about 12,000 to 15,000 years ago. They were the ancestors of the present Aetas or Negritos. After their arrival the land bridges became submerged and Negritos lived permanently in the archipelago. “When the Philippines was separated from the mainland of Asia, another group of people came. They were the first wave of people called the Indonesians. Another race of people arrived on the shores about 800 to 500 BC. These were the Malays.”⁹ Then Malays settled the pre-colonial Philippines from the mainland to the islands of Southeast Asia. “The Filipino people today are not pure. They are a mixture of races, but they have many common traits such as hospitality, strong family ties and respect for the elders.”¹⁰ But they still differ in physical characteristics, customs and traditions.

Arab traders introduced the religion of Mohammed or Islam in old Malaysia. It is said that the Arab scholar Mukdum introduced and propagated Islam in the Malay Peninsula in the 14th century. “This religious activity was continued by Abu Bakr who exercised his powers as sultan in organizing a government that was similar to the sultanate of Arabia in Sulu. From there, Islam spread in the island of Sulu and throughout the Mindanao provinces.”¹¹

In the 15th century the Portuguese, the Spaniards and other peoples of Europe began to trade with Oriental countries. As a result, there developed rivalry among European countries especially between Spain and Portugal. This commercial rivalry led to the sending of European expeditions to the Orient and made way for the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan’s discovery of the Philippines on March 16, 1521. “He took possession of the islands of Samar, Leyte and Homonhon for Spain and called them the Archipelago of Saint Lazarus. On March 31, being Easter Sunday, the first mass in the Philippines was celebrated near the shore. Afterwards Magellan ordered that a large cross be planted on the top of the hill overlooking the sea.”¹² But a chieftain of Mactan did not want to recognize the sovereignty of the king of Spain. At a battle in Mactan Lapulapu killed Magellan. In 1565, Miguel

⁸ Theodoro A. Agoncillo, *Introduction to Filipino History* (Quezon City, Philippines: Garotech Publishing Inc., 2006), 7.

⁹ Crispin T. Garcia, *A United Filipino Nation* (Marikina, Metro Manila: ICS Publishing House, 1987), 100.

¹⁰ Theodoro A. Agoncillo, *Introduction to Filipino History*, op cit., 5-6.

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

¹² Crispin T. Garcia, *A United Filipino Nation*, op cit., 126.

Lopez de Legazpi was sent by the king of Spain to colonize the Philippines and he settled in Cebu. It was the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Philippines. "From Cebu, Legazpi moved in Panay, Manila and conquered it in 1569, and organized the country under a centralized government under Spanish rule."¹³

In the later part of Spanish colonization, the Filipinos realized that they had a right to govern themselves. "Andres Bonifacio founded the Katipunan¹⁴ in the Philippines and revolution broke out on August 26, 1896. On December 30, 1896 Dr. Jose Rizal, the Philippine national hero, was executed."¹⁵ While the revolution was raging, the Cubans were also fighting for their freedom against Spain. America's sympathy with the Cubans dragged her into war with Spain. "On May 1, 1898, the United States Navy Commodore George Dewey fought a battle in Manila Bay and that marked the end of Spanish rule in the Philippines."¹⁶

The Philippines collaborated with the Americans against the Spanish sovereignty in the country. "The defeat of the Spanish fleet discouraged the Spanish officials in the city. What demoralized them was the return of Aguinaldo."¹⁷ It meant that Filipinos renewed the struggle against them. On June 12, 1898 Aguinaldo issued the proclamation of Philippine Independence in Kawit, Cavite. When the "Battle of Manila began on August 18, 1898 between the Spanish and American troops, the Filipino forces rushed to help the Americans but when the Spanish surrendered Manila, the Americans prevented the Filipino forces from entering."¹⁸ The capture of Manila marked the end of Filipino-American collaboration.

"Spain and the United States sent delegates to Paris, to draw up the Peace Treaty, ending the Spanish-American war. The Peace delegates signed the treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, and the U.S. paid the amount of \$20 million to Spain for the improvements made in the Philippines."¹⁹ Filipinos believe that American had no right to impose her power over a people who from the beginning wanted to be free. At first the Filipinos fought against the Americans

¹³ Ibid., 129.

¹⁴ Katipunan was a revolutionary movement founded by Andres Bonifacio. It was a secret society whose aims were to overthrow the Spanish rule by means of revolution.

¹⁵ Crispin A. Garcia, *A United Filipino Nation*, op cit., 134-135.

¹⁶ Sonia M. Zaide, *The Philippines, A Unique Nation* (Quezon City, Philippines: All Nations Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 255.

¹⁷ Ibid., 258.

¹⁸ Ibid., 261.

¹⁹ Ibid., 262.

but they lost the war. Later they realized they had to cooperate with them. "The President of the United States guaranteed life, property and achievement of happiness for all the people."²⁰

On March 24, 1934, President Roosevelt signed the Tydings McDuffie Act²¹ that would grant independence to the Philippines. Then war with the Japanese Government broke out in the Pacific in 1941.

On October 20, 1944, the American Forces under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur bombarded the Japanese forces in Leyte and the battle for liberation of the Philippines began. Gen. MacArthur established The Commonwealth and Manuel Roxas were elected as the President. On July 04, 1946 the Filipinos celebrated their independence. Then Elpidio Quirino served as President until 1953, followed by Pres. Ramón Magsaysay (1953-1957), Pres. Carlos P. Garcia (March 1957- December 1961) and Pres. Diosdado Macapagal (1961-1965).²⁰

In the presidential election on November 09, 1965, Pres. Ferdinand Marcos became the President, and for the first time since regaining freedom in 1946, the Filipinos experienced the impact of Martial Law (1972-1981). "Pres. Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in order to prolong his stay in power and Philippines suffered the worst political, economic and moral decline in its post war history."²² The opposition leader Benigno Nonoy Aquino was assassinated at Manila airport, leading to a powerful wave of anti-Marcos dissent. "The 'People Power Revolution' in 1986, ousted Pres. Marcos from the administration and Corazon Aquino became the First Lady President of the Philippines."²³

During her Presidency, there was an agreement between the Philippines and the Americans to withdraw American forces from the Philippine bases.

"In 1992, the Philippines held its general elections under the 1986 Constitution and Fidel V. Ramos was elected President. He signed the 'Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995' which gave better protection for the Filipinos working overseas."²⁴

Joseph E. Estrada was inaugurated as thirteenth president of the Republic of the Philippines on June 30, 1998. He was buffeted by charges that he had accepted millions of dollars in payoffs from illegal gambling operations.

Although his support among the majority of poor people remained strong, many political, business, and church

²⁰ Crispin T. Garcia, *A United Filipino Nation*, op cit., 140.

²¹ Tydings McDuffie Act is known as the Philippine Independence Act.

²² Sonia M. Zaide, *The Philippines, A Unique Nation*, op cit., 371.

²³ Ibid., 397-400.

²⁴ Ibid., 408-410.

leaders called for him to resign. The House of Representatives impeached Estrada on charges of graft and corruption. As demonstrations against Pres. Estrada mounted and members of his cabinet resigned, the Supreme Court stripped him off the presidency and Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was sworn in as Estrada's successor.²⁵ Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (the daughter of the late President Diosdado Macapagal) was sworn in as Estrada's successor on the day of his departure in January 2001.

Arroyo's initial term in office was marked by fractious coalition politics as well as a military mutiny in Manila in July 2003 that led her to declare a month-long nationwide state of rebellion. Although she had declared in December 2002 that she would not contest the May 2004 presidential election, citing a need to heal divisiveness, she reversed her decision in October 2003 and decided to run. She was re-elected and sworn in for her own six-year term as president on June 30, 2004.

The Philippines' history greatly affects the development of Filipino marriages today. The history presented above shows the origin of the Filipinos before the colonizers set their feet on the Philippine islands and how these Filipinos adapted to the cultures and customs of these colonizers: the Spaniards, the Japanese and even the Americans. Some of the cultures adapted by the Filipinos are very evident. Spanish colonizers had influenced the Filipinos in spiritual aspects in life, fiestas and even parochial education. "And these had affected the contemporary Filipino attitudes of anti-divorce, anti-birth control, anti-abortion, tolerance for gambling and love for pomp, power and festivities."²⁶ Some of these indirectly affect the Filipino marriages. The Spanish colonization of the Philippines was deep-rooted in its desire to exploit the natural resources of the country. From the exploitation of the Spaniards down to the hands of the corrupt government leaders of recent times, the Philippines, which was once rich in natural resources, now experiences serious economic problems which thrust many Filipinos to work abroad to look for greener pasture, thus affecting the family structure. In this set-up, one parent has to go abroad to earn a living, leaving their family behind. "This long time separation from their family causes many broken marriages."²⁷ "The coming of the colonizers to the Philippines resulted in the defunctionalisation of the family. Education, medication, recreation, business,

²⁵ Philippine History, <http://pinas.dlsu.edu.ph/history/history.html> (September 5, 2010)

²⁶ Rosqueta-Rosales, Lily. *Counseling in Perspective* (Quezon City, Philippines: The University of the Philippines Printery), 4.

²⁷ Maria Fe Nicodemus, *Separated by Opportunity: The Impact of Overseas Migration on the Filipino Family* <http://www.philsol.nl/of/99/OFFamily.nov97.htm> (November 23, 2010)

establishments, churches and the government itself were functions taken away from the family.”²⁸ Therefore modern Filipino marriage can be best understood by learning and understanding its history.

2. The function of marriage in the Philippines

Marriage has a two-fold function in the Philippines. It is to establish companionship and to maintain a family. The primary function of marriage is to constitute a conjugal society. “Conjugal society as defined by Paul Glenn is the stable union entered by a man and a woman for the procreation and education of children and mutual support and helpfulness.”²⁹ The secondary function of matrimony is mutual support and companionship. “Marriage is a state where spouses complement each other. Love and concern for each other is the foundation of a happy marriage in the family. Without such love and appreciation for each other no man and woman can be together permanently.”³⁰ Being sanctified by the “sacrament of matrimony”, the Filipino couple becomes a part of society, being recognized as husband and wife. They take their part in establishing their responsibility and role in the family and in society. The couple will support and provide for the needs of the family. The father is the principal breadwinner and nominal head of the family. As such, he has the obligation to support his family financially. He is expected to make contacts to help his grown children find satisfactory jobs. “Thus, his activities are more concentrated on factors outside the home. Aside from being the principal support of the family, the husband is the recognized head of the family both at home and in the community.”³¹ On the other hand Filipino wives have not deviated much from their traditional roles of homemaking, rearing children and managing the household. They are held responsible for teaching their children right character and good conduct in order to be responsible citizens in the community.

The family plays a very important role in the Philippines. It is the basic and most fundamental unit in society. “It is an agency playing a vital role in the development of one’s personality and in the process of values formation and development. It is an influential factor in the determination of social organization of the entire society.”³² It is

²⁸ Tomas D. Andre, *Understanding Filipino Values on Sex, Love and Marriage* (Our Lady of Manaoag Publishers, 1987), 33.

²⁹ Ibid., 176.

³⁰ Ibid., 176.

³¹ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues* (Manila, Philippines: Katha Publishing Co., Inc., 1999), 57.

³² Dr. Eпитacio S. Palispis, *Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology* (Manila, Philippines: Rex Bookstore, Inc., 1996), 219.

regulated by customs and laws and gives continuity to society, as it does its reproductive function. It is the group that first socializes the individual and provides for his basic social needs.

3. Factors that affect the Filipino marriages

a. The economic situation

Filipinos are presently painfully aware of their economic situation. "Perhaps the deepest roots of Philippine economic problems are found in the colonial past of the Filipino people, whereby their economy was for a long time directed not by the Filipinos themselves but by colonial power."³³

Quite naturally, the colonial power directed the country's economy for the colonial power's own benefit. "The Philippine economy was in fact so directed that the Filipinos were encouraged to produce agricultural raw materials, which were exported to the mother country at relatively low prices and the Philippines was made a consumer market for the mother country's manufactured goods."³⁴ They were made to produce goods that would benefit the other country rather than their own, which greatly affects the economic status of the country itself. "Moreover, the colonizers likewise conditioned the tastes and oriented the minds of the Filipinos to prefer their industrial produce, rather than an industrial economy producing its own goods."³⁵

Thus, economically the Philippines has been tied to the apron strings of Mother America. Filipinos developed a taste for and even an addiction to the American manufactured goods. The development of the Philippine Natural Resources was geared to the needs of the mother country. The Filipino people never learned to industrialize and manufacture the goods that the country needs. "In this position, the Filipino people would not really develop a vigorous economy even as they became more and more dependent on the United States. Given an emergency like the destruction brought about by the Japanese occupation; the Philippines was completely unable by itself to

³³ Jeremias U. Montemayor, *Philippine Socio-Economic Problems* (Manila, Philippines: Katha Publishing, Co., Inc., 1992), 311.

³⁴ Ibid., 311.

³⁵ Ramon A. Tangle Jr., *Toward a Responsible Parenthood and Family Life* (Manila, Philippines: Popular Bookstore, 1991), 213.

rehabilitate its own economy.”³⁶ The colonization and foreign domination is generally the basic cause of the Philippine economic situation and this in turn affects the Filipino family.

There are many other factors that cause the economic problems in the Philippines, one of which is overpopulation. The growth rate of the Philippine population is one of the fastest in the world. “Rapid growth in the Philippines exerts a tremendous pressure on its effort to improve the quality of life of every citizen.”³⁷ The Philippines is economically underdeveloped. It can hardly feed its present population of some 90 million. Every year, some 1.5 million human beings are added to its population. “At the present rate of growth of the population, estimated at 2.3 percent, there will be some 120 million Filipinos by the year 2028.”³⁸

Population by itself is not a problem, but population which exceeds a country’s available resources, natural and man-made, is a serious problem, because it will cause unemployment of so many people, especially those who have families to feed. “It will also result in hunger, malnutrition, diseases and certain death.”³⁹ In this matter, if the population continues to grow rapidly, it will eventually result in increased waste production and scarce resources. There will be rampant unemployment and underemployment, which will greatly affect marriage and the family. Since there is not enough income to sustain the family, the last resort is to go abroad and work as an Overseas Contract Workers (OCW). This will result in long distance relationships and, if the foundation is not well built, will lead to separation, which is likely to happen in the Philippines.

“Moreover, overseas employment means separation of family members and in most cases either father or mother or both are absent at the critical stage when children are growing and in need of love, care and guidance from their parents.”⁴⁰ Long separation may lead to the breakup of families and delinquency of children, affecting the marital life of every Filipino. “The overseas workers sacrifice themselves to harsh conditions in the foreign countries and the loneliness and emotional effects of being away from the families and relatives only to come home as strangers to

³⁶ Jeremias U. Montemayor, *Philippine Socio-Economic Problems*, op cit., 312.

³⁷ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues*, op cit., 131.

³⁸ Ramon A. Tangle Jr., *Toward a Responsible Parenthood and Family Life*, op cit., 216.

³⁹ Ibid., 216.

⁴⁰ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues*, op cit., 134.

their own mates and children.”⁴¹ It is not unusual to find that the wife or husband left behind has in the meantime become unfaithful and has neglected the children due to loneliness and unsatisfied emotional needs.

If the family is not stable because the father and the mother can separate at any time to work outside the country to support the needs of the family, or because the parents have no longer authority over their children, the chances are that homes will be broken, children will be affected and the relationship will start to disintegrate, resulting in marital conflict and breakdown.

Rapid growth of the Philippine population directly affects the country’s economic status, which also affects the Filipino marital life. Therefore, the Filipinos have no choice but to gamble the welfare of the family by breaking the Philippine family code, which states “The husband and wife are obliged to live together, observe mutual love, respect, fidelity, mutual help and support”,⁴² by seeking their fortune outside the country to provide for the family’s needs.

b. Overseas migration

According to the fundamental law of the land, the ordinary Filipino has the right to a living wage; but in reality wages are very low. “In the private sector he receives a monthly remuneration of less than what his family needs. In an even worse situation, the government worker generally gets a lower wage than his counterparts in other sectors.”⁴³ Most Filipino workers are therefore underpaid, dependent not only on their employers for their living needs but also on loan agents. With rising prices of basic goods and services and the dwindling of the peso’s purchasing power, a Filipino family cannot survive. Unemployment rates further compound the situation. Many Filipino families therefore, feel a sense of hopelessness in their own land and are venturing to other lands to provide for the needs of the family.

Even policy makers feel the sense of urgency over the unemployment and economic situation of the country. “In 1972, President Marcos formally launched the overseas employment program and Filipinos took the opportunity to

⁴¹ Ibid., 71.

⁴² Renato R. Pasimio, *Family Code of the Philippines* (Metro Manila: National Book Store, 2004 Edition), 49.

⁴³ Marie E. Aganon, *The Filipino Family: A Spectrum of Views and Issues* (Quezon City, Philippines: The University of the Philippines Press, 1995), 81.

journey to foreign lands in search of a better future.”⁴⁴ “The high cost of living in the country, the lack of employment opportunities and the need to have their children educated”⁴⁵ are some factors identified by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) that trigger the international movement of Filipino labor.

There are no official figures on how many broken marriages ensue from husband and wife separation due to overseas work. Infidelity usually happens when the couple has been away from each other for a long time. Either the overseas worker or the spouse who is left behind is exposed to many temptations. “Wives became subject to sweet talk of suitors who later turn out to be vultures after their money. Sometimes, break-ups are temporary but oftentimes husband and wife end up with other families.”⁴⁶

Loneliness is one of the problems spouses of the emigrant workers have to cope with in the long absence of their beloved. Changes in lifestyles as a result of increased earning bring a host of other troubles, which many find themselves unable to handle. “Surveys of families whose breadwinners are abroad show that many of the children become vulnerable to drugs and peer groups pressures; wives end up overspending or gambling. Many of them left alone by their husbands for the first time since marriage find solace in other men’s arms.”⁴⁷

Yet in the face of the problems caused by migration, Filipinos continue to go overseas in droves for family financial reasons and for improvement of their lives. This is a truly admirable motive but the separation of the family, especially when prolonged and reunification is uncertain, has become one of the reasons for breakdown of marital relations and disintegration of the family.

As migrant labor continues to go abroad, seeking its niche in an alien world and helping diminish the inadequacies of a developing country, it is at the same time creating a host of problems at home. Although its effects are slowly being unearthed, many of them have not been openly exposed. Laws may regulate marriage and family life; however the realities of the situation have been such that the intention of the law and the traditions of society have not been seriously regarded. Society has not left much choice for Filipino labor, and the effect is taking its toll on the families.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁷ Libni A. Cerdenio, “How to Survive a Temporary Separation” *Health and Home*: July, 1984. Vol. 25, No.7, 9.

Although there are not enough statistics and no longitudinal studies to prove that children are most affected by the phenomenon of migrant labor, there are indications of this strong possibility. "We can deduce this from studies of the impacts of broken marriages, of absentee parenthood and of continuous exposure to bad elements."⁴⁸ The overseas Filipino workers know their responsibilities especially to their children. They go abroad because they feel it is the chief means to fulfill these responsibilities.

c. Prohibition of contraception as birth control

By right of conquest, Spain ruled the Philippines for three centuries (1565-1898). During this long period, Spain imposed her religion, language, customs, arts and sciences on the Filipinos. There was hardly any area of Filipino life which did not feel the impact of Spanish influence.

The greatest legacy of Spain to the Filipino people is Christianity, specifically Roman Catholic religion. Strangely, this religion was Asian in origin, being founded by Jesus Christ in Palestine; but it spread to Western Europe after Christ's crucifixion and resurrection and much later, in the 16th and 17th centuries, Spain propagated it across the Atlantic to the New World and across the Pacific to the Philippines, making her then the greatest power.⁴⁹

Spain brought to the Filipinos the Christian religion and the western social organization which influenced the Filipino culture and values. It became the basis of their beliefs and tradition. "It gave the Filipinos the Spanish law, the Spanish language and its national character."⁵⁰

The Christianization of the Filipinos was really the most outstanding achievement of the Spanish missionaries. These missionaries came with the Spanish conquistadores. As the latter subjugated the people to become vassals of Spain, they converted them to Christianity. "As a result of their apostolic labor, the Filipino people become uniquely the only Christian nation in the entire Asian world."⁵¹ If there's one thing that never separates the Filipinos from Spanish ideals, it is Roman Catholicism; along with its teaching which is strictly followed by the majority of

⁴⁸ Marie E. Aganon, *The Filipino Family: A Spectrum of Views and Issues*, op cit., 85.

⁴⁹ Sonia M. Zaide, *The Philippines, A Unique Nation*, op cit., 123.

⁵⁰ Tomas D. Andres, *Understanding the Filipino* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1987), 13.

⁵¹ Sonia M. Zaide, *The Philippines, A Unique Nation*, op cit., 123.

Filipino people, because the Philippine Government itself has a law prohibiting divorce. "Polygamy, divorce, infanticide, and family planning were strictly prohibited by the Roman Catholic Church."⁵²

Forbidding family planning and prohibition of divorce respectively are two of the roots of marital problems in the Filipino family.

The Roman Catholic Church is not against family planning per se but categorically and clearly condemns the use of artificial methods because they are objectively against natural law. Moral objections are directed against certain means employed to control conception. "On the other hand, abortion or killing live human fetus is considered by many as immoral and equivalent to murder. But the greatest moral controversy revolves around the means employed for preventing conception with sexual intercourse."⁵³ According to the Pope,

It is sometimes licit to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid greater evil or to promote a greater good, it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that good may follow there from; that is to make into the object of positive act of the will something which is intrinsically disorder and hence, unworthy of the human person, even when the intention is to safeguard or promote individual, family or social wellbeing.⁵⁴

But the majority group in society feels that there is really a need for family planning and that the Roman Catholic Church should support the government family planning program. Government support for family planning is reflected in Article XV, sec. 10 of the Constitution of State "to achieve and maintain population level most conducive to national welfare."⁵⁵ When there is a big family size, the marital life of every Filipino is likely to be affected. "There will be corresponding decrease in the availability of food and education, and increased medical expenditures per family; and as the family increases, the bigger is the disparity between the family income and family expenditures—expenditures being higher than the income."⁵⁶

⁵² Crispin A. Garcia, *A United Filipino Nation*, op cit., 135.

⁵³ Jeremias U. Montemayor, *Philippine Socio-Economic Problems*, op cit., 301.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 301-302.

⁵⁵ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues*, op cit., 77.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 78.

The health of the father as well as the mother and child suffer because of the enormous pressure on large families. Self-improvement and social development are seriously limited, so that it becomes intolerable. Prohibition of family planning means a bigger population.

There is a need of family planning in the Philippines to avoid unsustainable increase of population. It is simply the desire to control family size in order to improve the lot of family members and to insure quality of life for children. It is based on the principle that every person is entitled to health, liberty and pursuit of happiness. "Implied in the family planning is the idea of responsible parenthood that parents with the help of their conscience are involved with the responsibility to determine the number of children they can adequately rear, take care of, love and educate so they will grow into upright, mature members of society."⁵⁷

The high population growth rate is really a major Philippine problem, since it will render the achievement of the development of the Filipinos ineffective, affecting the family and marital life specifically.

d. Prohibition of divorce

As the Roman Catholic Church opposes family planning so also it opposes divorce, and this is supported by the government. The Catholic Church views marriage as a union sealed by the sacrament of matrimony, and nothing can separate the two person united by God but death.

"The Civil Code of the Philippines has provision only for legal separation and none for divorce. Legal separation is a type of divorce where neither of the parties has the right to marry again."⁵⁸ It does not dissolve the marriage, but merely entitles the spouse to live separately. Consequently, most couples no longer file for legal separation but simply live apart for the rest of their lives. "Absolute divorce is a type of divorce that returns to the partners their single status and therefore they can remarry any time they want."⁵⁹ "Most of the arguments for divorce lie on the need to be free from one's spouse because of irreconcilable problems such as infidelity, violence and

⁵⁷ Isabel S. Panopio, *General Sociology: Focus on the Philippines* (Sta. Cruz Manila, Philippines: Popular Bookstore, 1978), 168.

⁵⁸ Marie E. Aganon, *The Filipino Family: A Spectrum of Views and Issues*, op cit., 40.

⁵⁹ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues*, op cit., 67.

irresponsibility.”⁶⁰ That is why women, who are in general the initiators of marital separations, want divorce to be legalized, believing that spouses who can no longer live together peaceably must be allowed to separate to live their own lives and to marry again. Since the Roman Catholic Church views marriage as a permanent contract, an inviolable institution, this makes divorce not legally available in the Philippines. In spite of the existence of legal separation in Philippine Law, “because of the legal competition involved in a formal court separation and the stigma which can be brought upon the families and the children in proving adultery or concubinage on the part of a parent, legal separation is not too common.”⁶¹ Without the dissolution of the previous marriage, the separated couples who are living together cannot be recognized as husband and wife. “In this case, the government or the Catholic Church cannot stop the couple living with someone without the need of marrying each other; hence this exemplifies immorality in the society.”⁶²

The norms and values of the society of the Philippines have become such a part of the lives of every Filipino that they could not think of breaking the rules of the Church about marriage by legalizing divorce. In this connection as a Christian country, the Filipinos value the sacrament of matrimony, though it will mean for many being bound in a marriage that no longer exists as a family.

e. Values and customs

Most of the values Filipinos hold are integrated into the character of the people. And these values affect their marital life.

The choice of mate in the contemporary Filipino society is one of the customs that affect marital life of the Filipinos.

“Selecting a life partner is still however a complex process, one in which cultural norms, race, nationality, ethno-linguistic factors and socio-economic considerations, play important roles.”⁶³ Kinship remains strong and any great event in a family member’s life is a group concern. The mores associated with marriage are such that no matter what the young people may say about independently choosing a mate, their parents’ opinions and evaluations usually still

⁶⁰ Marie E. Aganon, *The Filipino Family: A Spectrum of Views and Issues*, op cit., 55.

⁶¹ Ibid., 45.

⁶² Ibid., 47-48.

⁶³ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues*, op cit., 54.

influence their choice. Parents influence mate selection by criticizing what they find undesirable in a suitor or praising desirable traits. "One effective parental strategy for influencing the choice of a mate is to ensure that their sons and daughters live in an environment where they will meet members of the opposite sex able to gain parental approval."⁶⁴ If that person is unacceptable to the parents, then they are not allowed to start a relationship with each other. Because it is a family alliance, the parents' opinions are 'like the word of God.' Religion is employed to reinforce the will of the parents. A couple disobeying their parents and eloping would not enjoy the 'graces of God.'

"Barrenness is often explained as a parental curse."⁶⁵ Because of this belief, a daughter or a son is forced to marry his parents' choice, even if he does not love this person. A man cannot afford to suffer for the rest of his life bearing the curse of his parents by not following their decisions. It is their belief that the curse involves poverty, marital conflict, barrenness, and eventually family disintegration. "In rural communities and in families with little exposure to urban ideas, the feeling exists that to disobey parental wishes would bring tragedy and disaster."⁶⁶

But being married to the person you do not love will result in an unhealthy relationship. Marital conflict will start to arise, because of differences, incompatibility and lack of mutual feeling for each other.

Emotional closeness and security of the family is another value of the Filipinos that prevents them from accepting a more lucrative position and job if it will separate them from their families. This value is more often practiced in the rural areas. It doesn't matter if they suffer financially: as long as they are together; they believe things will just turn out right.

The closeness of the family ties has resulted in undermining the individual's loyalty to the government. "The family is real while the government is something impersonal – an attitude that has its origins during the Spanish regime."⁶⁷

There was a time when government positions were for sale and, naturally, the office became a source of graft and corruption in order to compensate for the money paid for the position. "The Filipino regarded the government as the means to oppress and abuse him, to harass him, to suppress his freedom, and to impose a lot of burden on him."⁶⁸ It was an institution to be avoided for its interests were contradictory to his welfare. This view of the government has

⁶⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁵ Tomas D. Andres, *Understanding the Filipino*, op cit., 89.

⁶⁶ Lucila L. Salcedo, *Social Issues*, op cit., 42.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 43.

persisted and even today some indications of this idea still exist. Government is universalistic while family is personalistic. Thus the family has become the rallying point.

When there is an overlap of the family and the office, irregularities like nepotism occur. Preferential treatment is extended to relatives especially in the grant of licenses, government contracts, franchises, purchase of supplies, different permits and others. A job applicant, no matter how highly qualified he is, will not be able to land a job if he has no influential friend or crony of the appointing power to get the job.⁶⁹

Even if you were less qualified, it doesn't matter so long as you know someone from the company. Because of this practice, many Filipino applicants become frustrated and are discouraged by this unfair and unjust kind of employment. Many lose their job, and the family is most likely to be affected, because they can no longer provide for the needs of their family. When a Filipino is no longer stable financially, this will create conflict in marital life and eventually it will result in wanting to work abroad to earn a fair wage to provide for the needs of the family.

Some other characteristics of Filipinos that may cause them to suffer financially and may cause many marital conflicts are:

'*Ningas Cogon*', a term of Spanish origin, means great enthusiasm at the start of a project, organization or any work.

"The Filipino shows a lot of interest at first but as the days pass, eventually interest dies down and the work is neglected."⁷⁰ This kind of characteristic cause Filipinos to suffer financially; they will never earn money because they will only work well at first, they do not continue to work to finish their job or assigned task. That's why many Filipinos do not succeed in their business or work and this leads them to bankruptcy and their family will be most affected.

"'*Mañana habit*', a term of Spanish origin, means procrastination, to put off till tomorrow what ought to be done today. It has an element of fatalism and is linked with the '*Bahala na*' attitude"⁷¹ – letting things go on in the way they are going and just enjoying everything. This makes the Filipino a happy-go-lucky person. They do not prepare for their future. That's why many Filipino families suffer because they marry, and then if they are not financially

⁶⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 48-49.

⁷¹ Ibid., 49.

stable, they are not able to give their children good education, decent house to live and proper food to eat. The presence of these problems in the Filipino character is causing conflict in the family.

The Filipino sexual values such as Machismo or Manliness of a male also affect the marital life of every Filipino. The tendency of the Filipino to equate masculinity or virility with the ability to procreate is also the root of some Filipino males' irresponsibility and infidelity that occurs after marriage. "Since a man is more of a man if he is able to have a woman and to beget children, his 'extra-curricular activities' are regarded as part of his '*Pagkalalake*' (being a man, in Tagalog) - machismo, possibly meaning 'manhood' but more accurately indicating the man's cultural manifestation of his virility."⁷²

Through sexual relations he can prove his capability, while otherwise he has few possibilities of exercising his prowess. The Filipino father exercises this type of authority in his family, resulting in a state of submission by the woman and her daughters, while fostering in the male descendants a feeling of superiority. When a man has many daughters and no sons or fewer sons, it is regarded as a Filipino male's punishment for his sexual irresponsibility before or during his marriage; it is his turn to protect his daughters from the sexual irresponsibility of other men.

A Filipino woman, on the other hand, is expected to keep herself a virgin for the man she will later marry; she is expected to remain loyal to the same man no matter what happens. "Even if her husband proves to be unfaithful, she is expected to bear this as part of his male weakness. The Filipino culture considers as the ideal image of a woman one who is shy, demure, modest, self-effacing and loyal to the end."⁷³

Traditionally, Filipinos on all levels have accepted the existence of a double standard of sexual morality in the country. "Society may frown on women being involved in extramarital sex, but tolerates it when it is the male who is the guilty party. Though, premarital affairs are understandable, extramarital infidelity on the part of the woman is not."⁷⁴ This custom greatly affects the marital life of the Filipinos. This is one of the main reasons why there are broken marriages. The values and customs in the Philippines are shared conceptions of convictions or beliefs which are considered contributory to the welfare of the group. They give meaning and significance to the totality of society and culture and influence the behavior of group members.

⁷² Tomas D. Andres, *Understanding the Filipino*, op cit., 83.

⁷³ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 84-85.

However a comprehensive process of modernization and change is occurring in Philippine society. Among the many results of this modernization are: rapid technological development and industrialization, brisk growth of mass media, communication and transportation, urban migration; and increased participation of women in the labour force, both locally and abroad. These changes that have affected the larger society have not spared the family. Just as Philippine society is in a period of transition from what is traditional to what is modern, so the family is experiencing pressure from both the forces of tradition and modernity. As a result, strict conformity to the traditional norm has become difficult because they are now considered to be increasingly inadequate or to be in conflict with modern modes of conduct. This lack of integration between values, norms, and behaviors give rise to many issues.

4. Contemporary Filipino family

The Filipino family which is known for having strong family values and family ties is now in a debilitated state. This condition resulted from changes in the economic and social spheres. Many debates have evolved on how the Filipino family has declined remarkably. Some factors that momentarily influence this regression are poverty, low compensation and joblessness, moral degradation and overseas migration. These factors directly and indirectly affect the structure of the family system.

Over the years, there have been a notable number of Filipino families suffering from poverty. Poverty at home brings economic and emotional stress to every member of the family. This could even bring depression to the parents and cause marital conflicts. Poverty has been linked with other social problems among adults and the younger generation. Many Filipinos have embraced immoral activities just to escape the effects of poverty. Prostitution, juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, robbery and early marriage are some of the unpleasant effects of poverty.

Low compensation and joblessness are just two of the underlying causes for the Filipinos to migrate and work abroad. This overseas migration has been a good help economically for the family and for the country with their remittances. But alongside the economic relief this migration brings to the family is its adverse social impact for the members left behind. "Children from migrant parents became alienated and husband-wife relationship deteriorates.

Extra-marital relationship is common among these families.”⁷⁵ Marital conflicts and breakdown and disintegration of families resulted from these family set-ups. “Incidents of separation and abandonment are increasing. Intense loneliness, anxiety and pressure of child-rearing and domestic chores are factors which contribute to emotional stress that affects the entire family.” ⁷⁶

Moral degradation has a strong manifestation in the society. Moral as defined in Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary is expressing or teaching the concept of right behavior. One active example of this is prostitution. In a certain place in the city, I learned from a volunteer worker in a child center that the mother of a boy (a beneficiary of a Christian organization) is engaged in prostitution in order to support her children. Every night she is out in the street to bargain herself for a small amount of money to help her raise her children. She is separated from her husband; therefore, she is left alone to support the family. Even though the church, in partnership with the organization that supports her child, offers her a livelihood project, still she opted to stay in prostitution. For her, it is the easiest way to earn money since she is illiterate. This has devastating effects on her children. The children might develop a marred perception of what family is. They don’t have a father that will provide their basic needs but a mother who tries herself to provide in an indecent way. This indecent way of providing their basic needs is considered immoral in relation with the social norms of the society but might be acceptable in her children’s eyes as justified by poverty and illiteracy of their mother who has the least chance of landing a decent job. There are some Filipinas in the country with the same situation and this is just one example of the moral degradation that is evident in the society.

There are myriad factors that affect the picture of the traditional Filipino family. “The increase in petitions for annulment and single-parent families, the alternative marital arrangements and lifestyles portrayed in media, and the topics of marriage covered in literature such as marriage dissolution, marital crisis, marital violence and conjugal power, all seems to point to a movement away from the traditional Filipino Christian orientation on marriage.”⁷⁷

These things should not be left unaddressed. There is a need to recapture the Filipino values that undergirds Filipino families in the Philippine setting.

⁷⁵ Anny Misa Hefti, “Globalization and Migration”, *European Solidarity Conference on the Philippines*, www.Philson.nl/solcon/Anny-Misa-97.htm (Date assessed: November 23, 2010)

⁷⁶ Maria Fe Nicodemus, *Separated by Opportunity: The Impact of Overseas Migration on Filipino Family*, <http://www.philsol.nl/of/99/OFFamily.nov97.htm> (November 23, 2010)

⁷⁷ Roldan, Aurora T. “*Marriage Across the Family Life Cycle in Selected Urban and Rural Communities of Bulacan From The Perspective of Wives.*” Diss. University of the Philippines (October 2002), 1.

B. Blessedness of marriage

In the Philippine context, quite a number of Filipino Christian marriages are on a rocky road. Elson T. Lao quoted a court clerk in 2003 in Quezon City Regional Trial Court to the effect that for the past five years most of their cases were annulment.⁷⁸ And “these were not only among non-believers but even among evangelical Christians.”⁷⁹ This is an ugly truth. Could this be because Christians had lost their view of the blessedness of marriage?

Marriage is a union, designed by God, of one man and one woman (Gen. 1:24). It is a commitment with God as a witness. It was ordained by God for mutual companionship (Gen. 2:18). It is a union instituted to be for a lifetime (Matt. 19:4-6). The love that holds the couple together should be like the love of God possessing us and this will permeate to the children born to them. Marriage perpetuates the human race as children are born to the married couple (Gen. 1:28) and are cared for by them. It is a union intended to give the most intimate relationship between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:22-25).⁸⁰

Consequently, humans as made in the image of God are relational beings. Created for this reason, we are to relate to one another in love. We need to be related to God and to others and in marriage we can find an intimate form of human relationship. This relationship is exemplified by Jesus’ relationship with the church. Ephesians 5:22-33 outlines how husband and wife should relate to each other as Christ relates to the church. “As Christ is the head of the church, so the husband is the head of the unity which he forms with his wife. As the church submits to Christ, so the wife submits in love to the authority of the husband.”⁸¹ Drawing also from the passage in Ephesians wherein marriage symbolizes the relationship of Jesus to the church (believers), marriage is considered holy in God’s eyes since the relationship of Jesus and believers is holy. “Marriage is also instituted by God before the fall of man, in the state of innocence of Adam and Eve, before sin corrupted the whole nature of human being,”⁸² therefore, marriage is holy in God’s eyes.

⁷⁸ Lao, Elson T. “*The Effect of A Skill-based Marriage Enrichment Program on Marital Adjustment and Satisfaction Among Couples from Filipino-Chinese Churches.*” Diss. Asia Graduate School of Theology (February 2007), 4.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁰ This paragraph is based on a statement of the principles of marriage produced by a local church, Victory Christian Fellowship, a fairly typical medium sized Evangelical congregation in Davao City.

⁸¹ *Christian Marriage* (Philippine Christian Education Publications, 1987), 4.

⁸² Ibid., 4.

Marriage is a gift from God. It is not only given to man to meet his profound needs that can only be met in marriage but it is a created means of fulfilling God's purpose. In marriage the two will not only be committed to each other but to God as well. From the start, it was never intended that the couple should be alone but that they should be in relationship with God who directs how the marriage should develop. The condition of one's marriage greatly depends on how the couple relates to God in their relationship.

In the Philippines, even although legal separation is one of the provisions of the Law for adultery, it is not the first resort of most Filipino Christian couples. During the years I have spent in the Philippines, I have learned that Filipinos place much importance on the family bond. In an interview with a Christian woman who has been married for more than 30 years, she told me that in her married life there was a time that she was separated for a year from her philandering husband. But her husband pursued her and they got reconciled after she forgave him. She said that after making God the center of their marriage they are having a stronger marriage than before. And in one informal conversation with a married woman, she said that if her husband had an illicit affair with another woman she would not easily leave her husband for the sake of her children. According to her, you cannot resort to separation just because of your own emotional hurts, but you have to consider many things, one of which would be the welfare of the children. Taking what these women have said, it shows that annulment or legal separation would not be an easy solution for adultery even if the Philippine Law had provisions for this. Filipinos will opt to do everything possible just to keep the family together and this makes them uniquely Filipino. But in some cases, no matter how much they try to keep their marriage working, some situations seem to be irreparable and may result in separation and in the worst cases annulment.

The following chapter will discuss and show how pastoral counseling, one of the pastoral activities that might be helpful for the couples in conflict, is associated with Practical and Pastoral Theology. I will also study the situation of counseling in the Philippine context.

CHAPTER THREE

PRACTICAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY

This chapter will discuss Practical and Pastoral Theology, and their significance in dealing with marital problems.

Psychology will be discussed as to what extent it will be helpful to theology in helping the people in need. Pastoral care and pastoral counseling will be explained as part of the pastoral ministry which is also borne out from practical/pastoral theology.

Pastoral counseling will be cautiously assessed as a way to assist people who ask for help and need spiritual guidance. In the context of the Philippines, pastoral counseling will be carefully studied and its appropriation in regards with Filipino culture and customs.

A. Practical and pastoral theology

“Practical theology is the study of theology that is intended to be applicable to everyday concerns. It aims to translate theological insights in such a way that will be helpful in ministering to people. It is not simply to contemplate nor comprehend theological doctrines but it moves toward applying these doctrines in everyday Christian life.”⁸³ The practical theologian’s purpose is to communicate the theological doctrines that are true and associated with the people’s (ecclesial and secular) experiences and contribute to becoming what God intends these people to be. The benefits of practical theology are not only limited to the people within the church but are also for the people outside the church since God’s heart for life transformation is for all. Practical theology should be undergirded with Biblical principles yet unsystematic in a sense that it should be flexible as it engages in the realities, changes and the issues that the contemporary world presents. “Practical theology uses other methods and

⁸³ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 6-7.

insight from other academic disciplines as part of its method.”⁸⁴ Practical theology comprises of sub-disciplines like pastoral theology, Christian education and Christian ethics. As practical theology is inclined to integrate, communicate and apply Biblical doctrines to human experiences of the people that would bring transformation, pastoral theology is a more focused integral part of practical theology that fosters the well-being of God’s people.

Pastoral theology is a special form of practical theology that deals with the functions of a pastor. Pattison and Woodward state that “pastoral theology might be seen in broad terms as the theological reflection and underpinning that guided pastoral care directed towards ensuring the individual and corporate wellbeing and flourishing of the Christian “flock”.”⁸⁵ Pastoral theology is a branch of theological knowledge that brings shepherding perspective in practice. Pastoral Theology according to Seward Hiltner is not just another discipline in theology but rather an operation or experienced-focused theological discipline that contributes directly to the understanding of revelation and theology from the shepherding perspective.⁸⁶ “The shepherding perspective basically means regarding experience and theology from the vantage point of the practice of pastoral care.”⁸⁷

Many theologians have different perspectives on the definition as well as the differences and similarities between pastoral and practical theology. Indeed, it is possible to differentiate the two, however, there is no universally accepted definition of either term since at some point they are closely related. “Pastoral and practical theology is a diffuse and changing field that involves many diverse participants, methods, and concerns.”⁸⁸ Pastoral and Practical Theology are disciplines of theology that draw their foundations from Biblical grounds. They are not just a set of principles, guidelines or procedures for the ministers or theories but they need to be applied or practiced in order for the two to have their fullness in meaning and existence.

“The aims of practical and pastoral theology not only concern how they will be applied in practice but how are they going to relate the contemporary experiences of the people in the light of theology.”⁸⁹ There is no experience of human beings that is divorced from their relationship with God. According to James Woodward and Stephen

⁸⁴ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 8-9.

Pattison, “if Practical Theology fails to take into account the realities of the contemporary human condition, or if it produces high-flown theory that cannot be understood or applied in practice, then it forsakes an important part of its identity and value”⁹⁰.

B. Pastoral care and pastoral counseling

To understand God and explore the realm of spirituality is the intention of theology. This study is significant to humans as their identity is dependent upon their Creator. Theology will show that every aspect of human beings is interrelated with their relationship with God. As pastoral theology deals with the work of a pastor in fulfilling his given task over the sheep (God’s people), the following portions will discuss further pastoral care and pastoral counseling as part of a pastor’s ministerial work.

1. Pastoral care

Pastoral care, also referred to as “care for souls”, is the sum of all church ministries given to the congregation. It includes the ministry of healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of one person to God and to others”⁹¹. The ministry of preaching, teaching, correcting, nurturing and training people (2 Timothy 3:16) is not divorced from pastoral care since it should be based on the Bible.

“Care for Souls” had its origin in the Latin words *cura animarum*. The word *cura* can be translated as care which contains the idea of both care and cure, while *animarum* is still the subject of a long debate for its exact interpretation/translation. Since it is difficult to give a concrete definition of *animarum*, we will lay down the definition of the Biblical word “soul” which translates the Hebrew word *nepeš* and the Greek word *psyche*. Many biblical scholars suggest that the best single word that could describe *nepeš* and *psychē* is person or self since the Hebrew word *nepeš* refers “to a wide range of the inner person (i.e. thoughts, feelings, passions), to the whole

⁹⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁹¹ Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (W Publishing Group, 1988), 16.

person including the body. Similarly, in the New Testament, *psyche* carries such meaning as the totality of the person.”⁹²

It is suited to describe the soul since it is the center of human life, it is where our thoughts, desire, emotions, consciousness, and our will reside. Care and cure are intertwined with care for souls or pastoral care because it is tendered to people to support the well-being of someone and also to restore what was lost, especially that brought about by sins. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is not silent about soul care. For instance in the Old Testament, Ezekiel 34, paralleled in the introductory verses of Jeremiah 23, the sheep (God’s people) were scattered and no one cared for them. These flocks had become food for wild animals. Some of these flocks were lost and no one searched for them. God himself searched out and brought these flocks together. He had a deep compassion and care for these helpless sheep. God will raise up human shepherds over the flock. The shepherds will take care and protect these sheep from dangers. In verse 23 and 24 of Ezekiel chapter 34, God promised to raise up a shepherd, his servant David. But of course David by this time was 400 years dead. The verse refers to the descendant of David. This promised was fulfilled in the New Testament where Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd who gave his life for his sheep. Jesus perfectly demonstrated God’s heart in shepherding. Jesus exemplifies the best soul care. Jesus Christ shows compassion over the sheep as demonstrated in some passages below:

Mark 6:34 When Jesus went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Matt. 9:36 Seeing the people, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

Before the Fall, man stands apart from other creatures because of his relationship with God. When God created man in his likeness, he was created as a social, emotional, psychological and spiritual being. He is the crown of all creation because he was created to have dominion over the other creatures (Genesis 1:28).

Man was created by God to fulfill God’s purpose. He was created perfect; but this does not make him impeccable. His perfection came along with his dependence on God and on His Word. He had a wonderful relationship with the

⁹² Allen C. Myers ed., *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 964-965.

Lord. Everything was in order; but this orderliness was destroyed when Satan slyly twisted the Word of God and tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Through disobeying God's command they fell from their state of innocence into a state of sin and rebellion against God. Now humankind had to grapple with the impact of sin. Sin affected all aspects of human life. Sin perverted our ways of thinking, behavior and living. "The fall brought four-fold separations: separation between man and God, separation between man and his co-human beings, separation of man and himself and separation between man and nature."⁹³ There was a great need: "Man needed God's Word. His revelatory Word was necessary to understand God, creation, himself, his proper relationships to others, his place and functions in creation and his limitations."⁹⁴

After the fall of man, the whole world was affected. The world, which used to be perfect, is now marred by the devastating effects of sin. It has brought misery to human beings – hurts, disappointments, frustrations, retaliation, depressions and the like. The aim of pastoral care is to foster the whole being of the person, depraved by sin, and to restore his broken relationship with God and with other people.

2. Pastoral counseling

This ministry is part of pastoral care. It is a unique form of counseling which uses spiritual resources and psychological understanding for healing and growth. It integrates theology and behavioral sciences to address the issues of the counselee. Psychological and spiritual aspects are vital for the counselors to consider since they constitute the inner life of a person. Integration of behavioral sciences in pastoral counseling receives great opposition from many theologians asserting the sufficiency of the Scriptures as the solution to human problems. Jay E. Adams asserts that "to conceive the work of Freud and his followers is improper and their work is in competition with God's truth."⁹⁵ But the integration of social and behavioral sciences with theology does not invalidate the supremacy of the Scriptures over the human activities or experiences. Rather these sciences will explain the dynamics that a person goes through and will communicate the biblical truths in his experience or his situation. Although theologians were right when they criticized the principles behind the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud,

⁹³ Gary Collins, *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers* (Colorado Springs Navpress, 2001), 106-110.

⁹⁴ Jay E. Adams, *A Theology Of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption* (U.S.A: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1979), 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

mos: (if not all) practicing counselors like Gordon Lynch applied what Freud called “talking cure”.⁹⁶ This talking cure was applied by counselors in their counseling for in this kind of conversation the counselee can “honestly talk and open-up his/her situation.”⁹⁷ Aside from Lynch, one of those people who carefully integrate his theological knowledge in his counseling practice is Gary Collins. He mentions in his book *Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers* that he has always believed that “theology is alive and relevant to Christian living and problem solving.”⁹⁸ As Collins said, his theological perspectives are reflected in the content of his books.⁹⁹

Gary Collins uses his knowledge of psychology in his counseling encounters. “Psychology uses many methods in collecting data such as surveys, experiments and even animal studies to uncover behavioral principles.”¹⁰⁰ As part of the counseling process, the counselor observes his counselee as to how the latter interacts with other people and the counselor. These scientific observations of his counselee are then combined with the counselor’s training, past experiences, and his knowledge and understanding of God’s creation in formulating his conclusions. He uses his knowledge of general and special revelation, added to the contribution of psychology, in his counseling to help his counselee. General revelation helps us understand God’s creation through what we see in our surroundings and special revelation is what God wants to communicate with us through his written Word and even in his dealings with the people recorded in the Bible. He honors the directions that the Bible gives to a counselor: “The Bible is regarded as an authority when it speaks about the issues of life, including those issues that people bring in counseling.”¹⁰¹ In my opinion he tries to be very careful to integrate his knowledge of psychology with theology to prevent any bias. He tries to be as objective as possible.

Pastoral counseling is a specialized form of pastoral care. It goes beyond the normal counseling of simply giving advice to the parishioner and is rather giving advice with the goal of the spiritual guidance of a spiritually mature counselor to a parishioner asking for spiritual help. Therefore, the well-being of the counselor is very important in

⁹⁶ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 223.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 223.

⁹⁸ Gary Collins, *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers: Relating The Basic Teachings of Scripture To People’s Problems* (Colorado Springs Navpress, 2001), 8.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 225.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 31.

the counseling process. "It is hard to lead others to places where one has never been."¹⁰² Pastoral counseling involves being with the counselee. Being in the situation or suffering and sharing it with them just like what Jesus did in his counseling encounters in the Bible (raising dead Lazarus back to life, Jesus felt what Martha and Mary felt at that time when they lost their brother). Jesus empathized with the people whom he counseled. He understood the situation of the Samaritan woman involved in adultery (John 4:4-42). Jesus did not simply lay down Biblical precepts or tell them right away what to do but he sympathized with them. He walked alongside them in their sufferings. Pastoral counseling should be the embodiment of Jesus in how he demonstrated compassion and offered care to those who needed them. As pastoral counseling is a specialized form of pastoral care, it should be separated from other church contacts or church meetings. And, since counseling should foster the spiritual wholeness of the parishioner, the counseling process is not only contained within the counseling room but it goes beyond what professional counselors do. As part of pastoral care, "the counselor may serve the people they cater for in counseling through a variety of ways, e.g. visiting them when they are sick, when they marry or during fellowships or service."¹⁰³ In this way the counselor-counselee relationship will be built up more, as it is a very important element in the counseling process. It is very important that the counselor can build an environment where trust, acceptance, compassion and the like are present.

C. Theology and psychology

Psychology, defined as the scientific study of the behavior and cognitive process of human beings, has an undeniable impact on the pastoral arts. But this should not mean that secular psychology overwhelms theological doctrines in its practice of pastoral activities. Rather it would mean taking some fruitful insights from secular psychology and translating these insights in the light of theological perspectives undergirded biblically.

Many ministers have neglected the theological perspective while practicing pastoral care. They have taken on so much from psychology that they forgot the theological doctrines. Other ministers are not in opposition to basic methods of psychology but some of the presuppositional foundations of the psychological models advocated by

¹⁰² David G. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling* (USA: Baker Book House, 2000), 20.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 17.

some psychologists which were used by churches. Jay E. Adams strongly disagrees with the use of psychology in churches. According to him “advocating, allowing and practicing psychiatric and psychoanalytical dogmas within the church is every bit as pagan and heretical as propagating the teachings of some bizarre cults.”¹⁰⁴ Adams’ argument is based on criticism of the foundation of psychoanalysis pioneered by Sigmund Freud, who became very influential in psychology and psychiatry. Freud’s psychoanalysis believed that “human perceptions are distorted by attachment to illusions. Illusions about ourselves and the world allow us to make sense of what might otherwise be overwhelming especially during infancy and childhood, when the illusions are first constructed. The goal of maturity and psychoanalysis is to strip away and to see both the inner and the outer world clearly.”¹⁰⁵ Mangis in McMinn and Phillips stated that “therapy is a process of assisting people in their search for meaningful attachments”¹⁰⁶ and this can also be developed from the client-therapist relationship. This is drawn out from human’s longing for satisfaction in relationship. In the therapeutic method of psychoanalysis, the character of the therapist is very significant. The character of the therapist defines the outcome of the therapy; the client is driven away or drawn to Christlikeness. And since the psychoanalysis denies the supremacy of religious truth, then the method of therapy is objectionable to Christians who believe in the supremacy and the direction of God.

Psychoanalysis provides very insightful literature for the study of human behavior; we cannot deny the contributions it can provide to theology in its understanding more deeply in areas where theology is limited. “Theology uses other disciplines as part of its theological method and in order for it to adequately respond to contemporary situations and issues.”¹⁰⁷ The use of psychological methods in theology does not manifest insufficiency of the Scriptures to address every human problem. “Theology alone cannot reveal all that one needs to know adequately to respond to contemporary situations and issues.”¹⁰⁸ Psychology and other disciplines (e.g. economics, sociology) do not compete with or replace the Scriptures as to what they can do in a person’s life; but rather, psychology as a science attempts to explain the dynamics of human behavior.

¹⁰⁴ Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (N.J., Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1979), xi.

¹⁰⁵ Mark R. McMinn and Timothy R. Phillips, ed. *Care For The Soul* (U.S.A: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 188.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

¹⁰⁷ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 15.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

In spite of the fact that “Freud’s psychoanalysis seeks to eliminate religion’s assertion that there is a supernatural source of authoritative truth”¹⁰⁹, divine providences are not hidden from all creation. God’s sustaining care for his creation is evident. In John 1:3 states that “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made,” God upholds the world through his Son. Jesus in Matthew 5:45 shows that God’s sustaining grace chooses no distinctive recipient by saying “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous.” God’s common grace is evident and common to all that we can say that someone is out there who has the authority above all. Now, many psychologists acknowledge the supremacy of our Creator according to what McMinn said in *Care for the Soul* that psychologists treat the soul by easing the suffering and helping people to see themselves, others and the world accurately. He said that psychologists care for the soul but to cure the soul is beyond the mainstream of psychological intervention. The cure for the soul, as most Christian psychologist would assert, is God’s work.

The real challenge for practitioners is how to integrate psychological methods with theological perspectives. Psychology is helpful in theology in the same way that theology is helpful to psychology. Careful and practical integration of psychology and theology may prove appropriate and helpful for those interested in caring for souls. Both psychology and theology are looking after the soul and its welfare. Although each discipline has its distinctives, they have commonalities.

The church aims to be therapeutic in people’s lives by offering pastoral care, such as counseling. Much of these therapeutic methods had been learned from secular psychology. “Secular psychology has been helpful in revealing the complexity of the self and its functioning. Genetic factors, family dynamic circumstances, educational background and even chance weave intricate patterns that form each individual personality.”¹¹⁰ Many ministers have been tempted to apply solely the secular psychology while failing to apply the theological doctrines in their pastoral activities. A more integrated way of caring for souls is needed. “A reconstructed theological psychology and pastoral practices should be grounded in the biblical and theological heritage.”¹¹¹ As the church wants to offer therapy for people, this therapy should bring the clients to God as only he can give the meaning of his existence and all areas of their life are affected by their relationship to God.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 189.

¹¹⁰ Mark McMinn and Timothy Phillips, ed., *Care for the Soul* (USA: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 133.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 133.

D. Counseling in the Philippines

Counseling in the Philippines has been in existence for some decades. "It was introduced in 1920's but it was only in 1950's that a more formal guidance program and counseling services were established."¹¹² Since then many approaches and theories have been introduced in the country but counseling was widely noted only when more "culturally relevant" theories and approaches have been explicitly presented. In 1950's, the Directive Approach was brought into the country, followed by the Nondirective Approach in the 1960s. For a country which has considerably different cultures from the country where these counseling approaches originated, Filipino advocates cannot simply apply the theories and approaches as they are. They must always be integrated with other approaches so as to fit the culture of the Filipinos.

Formal counseling is not so popular in the country since it is thought that seeing a counselor would mean that something is not normal or the person seeking help is not normal. There are some Filipino values that hinder them from seeing a counselor, such as shame or reluctance to disclose any private, personal information. There are some issues within a relationship, especially in marriage, that they consider a taboo even if the health of their marital relationship is at stake. The couple still opts not to bring out the issue to seek help.

Filipino cultural orientation is a mixture of the influence of various cultures from several races which were dominant in the country at various times. Some influences have become part of the Filipinos' values system and this makes them uniquely Filipino. And this value system has influenced the Filipinos' behavior. Working with a Filipino in a counseling set up, it is important to consider the elements that underlie the Filipino value orientation. According to Tomas Andres there are three main imperatives taken as a whole which will make up the whole normative environment for a Filipino. These imperatives are:

Relational imperatives – This refers to the emphasis given to person-to-person encounter of a Filipino. "One's experience of self is totally linked with his relationship with people who are important to him."¹¹³ His choices are

¹¹² Villar, Imelda Virginia G., *Western Approaches to Counseling in the Philippines* (Philippines: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 1997), 1.

¹¹³ Andres, Tomas and Ilada-Andres, Pilar B., *Understanding The Filipino* (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1987), 55.

influenced by these relationships. For example, in choosing a lifetime partner, the opinion of the family is very important.

Emotional Imperatives – “This is in support of relational imperatives. The Filipino’s reaction over something reflects his personal relations, how he looks at himself relative to another individual.”¹¹⁴ Filipinos desire harmony. But this does not mean that there is no conflict. When he needs to convey his feelings, a Filipino would try to communicate it in an indirect way. In the event of problems, confrontation is not the first recourse. Instead he will try first the diplomatic way, the friendly way and even use an indirect way so as not to offend others. This values is rooted that Filipinos desires for harmony and he will try all possible ways to maintain it.

Moral Imperatives – Filipino behavior is also influenced by moral values that they hold dearly. One example of the moral imperative is the debt of gratitude (*utang na loob* in Tagalog). The person who has a debt of gratitude to others is expected to return the favor no matter what it costs. For example, during an election, the candidate who receives help from other people in his candidacy is expected to return the favor through a position in government or by providing what the other person may ask as a favor.

It is important for a counselor to know what influences the behavior of many Filipinos so that the counselor may have some idea what to do during the counseling sessions. Most of the counseling sessions done in most churches (if not all) are of an informal type. According to some of the counselors I have talked with, some counseling is done in hallways of the church, in the parks, office, schools. In short, the counseling type that is prevalent in churches, big or small, is informal and most counselees approach the people in church aside from their pastor and the people who are close to them.

E. Pastoral counseling in Philippine marriages

Marriage in a Christian (largely Roman Catholic) country like the Philippines is a sacred institution. It is protected and supported by the Philippine government as promulgated in its Family Code. But because of a changing Filipino value system, the image of marriages in the Philippines has changed remarkably. According in GMA News, “In

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 57.

2007, there were 7,753 cases of annulment and legal separation filed at the Office of the Solicitor General. It is 71.5 percent raised from 4,520 cases filed in 2001. The OSG (Office of the Solicitor General) received 43,617 cases of annulment and separation from 2001 to 2007.”¹¹⁵ The number could have been higher if more married people had the means to afford the procedures. The figures speak for the conditions of the marriages in the country.

Despite the number of Filipino couples who desire to dissolve their marriage, many couples are still hesitant to ask for “outside help” in order to salvage their marriage. One of the reasons may be the pride of either one or both partners. In the country’s culture, to go for marriage counseling would mean admitting that the marriage has a problem or that they committed a wrong which is why the marriage is not working. Because of society’s stigma, the couple tries to maintain the appearance of being physically married, but are actually psychologically and emotionally divorced. Because these couples are reluctant to undergo marriage counseling, their marital problems are left unresolved, resulting in an even worse condition of their marriage. And when their marriage becomes unbearable, these couples may opt to dissolve their marriage or to live apart without legal separation.

The present condition of Filipino marriages calls the attention of the churches to do its part educating couples in the sanctity of marriage. The pastoral counseling should provide an environment wherein they are not judged, which is the opposite of what they will feel from the society. The counseling that the churches will offer should instill the Biblical perspective on their marital status. It should even correct the erroneous thinking of the couples, if they have it, and replace with it Biblical truths.

As the preceding chapters studied the Filipino family dynamics and related the place of Practical Theology in a person’s life, the succeeding chapter will discuss the method by which the survey was carried out to examine the marital life of the couples and how they deal with their marital conflicts.

¹¹⁵ AR Sabangan, “Number of Filipinos Filing For Annulment –Legal Separation Cases Up” <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/87220/number-of-filipinos-filing-for-annulment-legal-separation-cases-up> (Date accessed: November 18, 2010)

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher uses the survey method to investigate Christian marriages in the Philippines. Survey method was used since there is some information that is not directly observable for a Christian marriage (e.g. attitude of the couples towards their marital conflict). Survey method is easier to be administered to small or large scale sample. Survey questionnaire was used since it was easier for the researcher to gather the data than to have face-to-face interviews with the couples given that the researcher is doing missionary works while conducting the study. With the survey questionnaire, the respondents can provide the answers to each question without being pressured because the identity is kept anonymous. The survey questionnaire comprises of closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were used since Filipinos are not too responsive to surveys with open-ended questions. As I observed and even from the interviews with some Filipinos, they prefer that answers are being supplied for them. They do not want to have to think more about the answers for the open-ended questions and for them they take up more time than the closed-ended type.

In this section, the researcher will explain the type of sociological research method being used, the selection of the respondents of the study, the instrument used and the method to determine the size of the sample population. Furthermore, the distribution and collection of the questionnaire, the limitations of the methods in collecting the data and the methodology in the analysis of the results will also be described.

1. Object of the study

The researcher surveyed 28 local churches located in Davao City, situated in Mindanao Island. The average size of the congregation is 108 members. The objects of this study are couples, both of whom fall under the same age category (20s, 30s, 40s and 50s). Respondents are active members of the local churches, aged between 20-59 years old. In the Philippines, those more than 60 years old are considered senior citizens in the society and in churches.

This group was excluded from the study because there are only a few people in this age group that are active in churches, and data gathering from these people proved difficult for the researcher since only a few from this group had answered and returned the survey questionnaire.

2. Sampling extraction

From the approximately 1,200 local churches in Davao City, 52 churches were chosen randomly by the researcher as the subject for the study. From 52 local churches only 28 churches underwent the study based on the host pastor's permission. The researcher chose the respondents randomly at Sunday worship service, at Bible Study groups and by appointment with some couples. The researcher purposely divided the couples into 4 age groups, 20 – 29s, 30 – 39s, 40 – 49s and 50 – 59s. If one of the party's age was less than 20 or was more than 59 years old among the couples from the sample extracted, the couples were eliminated. Or in the event that the other party or spouse belongs to the other age category, the couples are also eliminated. The respondents being considered not only fall between 20-59 years old but both spouses must be in same age category. In this manner, the researcher will have the idea on how each respondent in each group perceived their marriage and conflict regardless with the perception of their marital partner.

In the course of the study, the researcher found it difficult to obtain the exact number of Christians in the city since some organizations and government agency (NSO, National Statistics Office) could not give him the exact numbers. The Philippine Challenge in Davao City gave some figures, but by provinces, so that the researcher could not extract the figures for the Davao City alone. The NSO in their surveys considered *Christians* those people who are not Roman Catholic or Muslims, so the researcher cannot extract again the population of evangelicals. The last resort of the researcher was the Davao City Chaplain Office, which has the list and contact with the Evangelical churches in the city. As inquired by the researcher in 2007, it was said that there was an estimated Christian population in Davao City of 94,000, of which 40% are married.

From the data gathered, the researcher took the sampling extraction under a statistician's supervision. The statistician suggested using Slovin's formula [$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne \text{ (square)}}$] for the sampling extraction with 93% degree of precision. From the formula, n is the required sample size to be observed as the representation of N ; N is the actual population to be observed; e is the margin of error. Using Slovin with a 7% margin of error, the number of samples determined by the formula was 204 couples. Increasing the sample to 214 indicates slightly more reliable results.

3. Survey Questionnaire

For the study, a specified and detailed questionnaire (see Appendix I) containing forty questions was used as an instrument for data gathering to identify the problems among the Christian families and how they deal with them. The researcher preferred this research method based on the Filipino culture of "*Hiya*" (shame) which means that they will not easily open up verbally to others any personal information about themselves. Through this instrument, it will be easier for them to supply the information I need, given the assurance that their identity will be withheld. With this type of instrument, the respondents can give honest answer to the questions that they cannot answer if done in personal interview. Furthermore, through the questionnaire more respondents can be covered compared with personal interview which can cost a lot of time just for one respondent.

TABLE 1: Study Questionnaires

Content	Question No.
Personal Data	1-9
Degree of marital conflict	10-13
Causes of marital conflict	14-26
Ways the couples react with marital conflict	27, 29, 30
Ways the couples solve their marital conflict	28
Support from church for marital conflict	31-34
Going abroad for money and influence of Catholic teaching	35-38
Received counseling (formal or informal)	39-40

The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions which were divided into 8 parts. Questions 1 – 9 are all personal data about the respondents, questions 10-13 determine the degree of marital conflicts between the couple, questions 14 – 26 are the possible factors that cause the marital conflicts, questions 27,29,30 are about the ways the couples react whenever they have marital conflicts, question 28 determines how the couples solve their marital conflict, questions 31-34 determine if the couples receive support from the church, questions 35-38 determine their perspective of

going abroad for money and the influence of the Roman Catholic teaching and lastly questions 39-40 determine if the couples received counseling (formal or informal).

The questions aim to draw out the perspective of husband/wife about their conflict within marriage irrespective from the perspective of his/her marital partner.

4. Distribution and collection of survey Questionnaires

The most important material for this thesis is the questionnaire. So the researcher visited local churches and asked help from the host pastor of each local church to schedule a meeting with the church members to conduct the survey for this study. The subjects participated willingly when confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed.

The researcher distributed and collected questionnaires from September 09, 2007 to March 30, 2008 for this study. It took 29 weeks to distribute and collect the forms because of the delay in response from many of the subjects. During the survey the researcher met more than 550 couples. The couples were asked to fill in the questionnaires. A few were less educated, but they were able to participate in this survey with the help of the researcher, their church mates and neighbors.

The researcher went round 52 local churches to distribute forms and conducted a survey of the host pastors to ask for their agreement to the researcher conducting this survey in their churches. There were 28 local Protestant churches who agreed to participate: 8 big¹¹⁶, 15 medium and 5 small churches. These included 5 Presbyterian, 7 Baptist, 6 Assembly of God, 3 Pentecostal and 7 Alliance local churches. The biggest congregation the researcher surveyed has 1,200 members and the smallest has 20 members. The researcher distributed 850 sets of questionnaires, collected 300 and chose 214 as the sample to be studied as explained above. At the same time, in order to keep balance among age groups, the researcher purposely chose at least 52 samples in 20's age group to at most 55 samples in 40's age group.

The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the survey to the couples in three languages: English, Tagalog and Cebuano, which are the spoken languages and dialects in Davao City. The researcher explained how to fill in the forms they received. Eleven churches allowed the researcher to distribute forms after the Sunday Worship service.

¹¹⁶ It is not easy to identify local churches as big, medium or small. I follow the local ministers' informal concept about church size. Therefore, I classify local churches according to the size of the congregation: more than 200 members as big churches, 50-199 members as medium and less than 50 members as small churches.

The number of questionnaires the researcher gave out in these churches were 520 forms. Only 42 forms were returned out of 520. The rest of them were not returned. Eight churches guided me to their small Bible Study groups during weekdays. The researcher distributed 270 sets of forms. They brought back 223 sets of questionnaires. At the same time, some host pastors introduced the researcher to their individual church members. The researcher gave them 60 sets of forms. 35 forms were returned. 300 forms in all were collected, 214 questionnaires were selected and used for this study. From a total of 300 questionnaires the researcher eliminated 86 questionnaires in which many questions were left unanswered. Of 214 questionnaires coming from Christian couples, 105 questionnaires were filled up by male and 109 questionnaires by female. There was an unequal number of questionnaires filled up by male respondents with the number of questionnaires filled up by the female respondents because four more of the male respondents returned incomplete questionnaires. But this unequal number does not affect the intention of this study to examine how each couple perceived their marriage and how each of them responds to marital conflict regardless of what was his/her partner's perception on marriage and reaction in their conflict. The survey questionnaire was not designed to be answered exclusively by both couples. It can be answered by both or just one of the couples about their perspective on what is being asked in the survey. It was stated above that the unequal number of male and female resulted after I eliminated 86 questionnaires. The almost equal number of respondents of each age group was not intentional; it just resulted after the elimination of some questionnaires.

5. Limitations on collecting the materials for the study

The first limitation of this study is the resources available. The researcher visited 52 local churches in Davao City, but because of the non-availability of host pastors and sometimes because of their unwillingness, the researcher was not able to visit them all to conduct the survey. It means that the material the researcher has collected is inadequate to give a comprehensive picture of marital problems of many Christian couples. After the forms were distributed, the researcher phoned the host pastor who helped the researcher to conduct the survey, and they reported the reasons why the numbers of the returned forms are less than expected. Some reasons for non-returned forms are: some Christians who received the forms had no interest in his survey; some of them were too busy to fill up the forms they received; some forgot to bring the forms back; some were not willing to share the information. These are the reasons why from the 850 forms distributed by the researcher, only 300 forms were returned. Based on the researcher's observation, from the 300 married Christians who returned the forms, most of them are well-educated. 258 out of

300 questionnaires were collected in Bible Study Groups by myself and I noticed that some of them got help from other members while filling up the forms.

From the 300 questionnaires collected, 86 questionnaires were not included for the analysis since these questionnaires have some unanswered questions, because of which the researcher had decided to eliminate them. Therefore, 214 questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed.

The second limitation was the time available. As a missionary doing two tasks at a time, it was not easy for the researcher to find enough time. I have to listen to my sending body which consists of local sponsoring churches in Korea and at the same time, the researcher has to consider the demands of ministries that he is responsible for in Mindanao Island. In other words, there was not enough time for the researcher to visit all the local churches in Davao City, to meet local churches and their church members.

The third limitation is the questionnaire itself, because the researcher did not particularly cater for the other factors that might be a source of reasons for marital conflicts. Among these factors are personal spiritual growth or maturity in faith or differences in educational/academic background. These factors might not have maximum influence but may be presumed to have at least some influence on marital conflicts of the couples.

The researcher has included questions 1-9 for the personal data of the respondents to see if some of the factors being asked in these questions have effects on how the couples handle their marital conflict. Questions 10-13 aim to check the degree of the marital conflict of the couple. Questions 14-26 aim to enumerate the causes of marital conflicts in order of importance. The causes enumerated in the items were based on my initial observations. Question 28 aims to know how the couples solve their marital conflict. Questions 27, 29 and 30 aim to examine how couples react whenever marital conflict arises. Questions 31-34 will give the researcher information about to what extent the churches are apt to help these couples. Questions 35-38 aim to check the influence of the catholic teaching on the marriage of the couples and their perspective of going abroad for economic reasons. And lastly, questions 39 and 40 will examine if the couples received counseling and from whom they received the counseling.

The questionnaire does not make use of open-ended questions since this type of question will not interest most Filipinos. They prefer close-ended questions wherein answers to each questions are being supplied. For them, open-ended questions would take up too much of their time. And for some Filipinos, especially for those who are illiterate or less educated, they find it difficult to articulate their answers in writing.

6. Statistical treatment

The problem being studied cannot be well-interpreted and analyzed without using statistical treatment. The researcher will identify what statistical treatment was used for every category of the questions.

Table 2. Study Instrument

Content	Question No.	Statistical Treatment
Personal Data	1-9	Frequency count, percentage
Degree of marital conflict	10-13	Frequency count, percentage
Causes of marital conflict	14	Frequency count, percentage, ranking
Causes of marital conflict	15-26	Frequency count, percentage
Ways the couples react with marital conflict	27, 29, 30	Frequency count, percentage
Ways the couples solve their marital conflict	28	Frequency count, percentage
Support from church for marital conflict	31-34	Frequency count, percentage
Going abroad for money and influence of Catholic teaching	35-38	Frequency count, percentage
Received counseling (informal)	39-40	Frequency count, percentage

In order to generate the general summary of the items and the responses of the respondents, the most common statistical tool used was frequency tabulation. Frequency counts and their corresponding relative frequencies (percentage) were computed and tabulated to facilitate summary.

The statistical tool to determine the degree of marital conflict being experienced by those who receive and those who did not receive counseling is T-test. T-test is primarily concerned with determining significant difference on the basis of a scoring mechanism between two groups.

The next chapter will relate and analyze the results of the survey.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of the survey and analyses the data. The presentation is organized into several parts, namely: the general information of the subjects, the information about the registration of marriage of the subjects, the degree of marital conflicts, the main causes of marital conflicts, analysis of the ways the couples respond to marital conflicts, analysis of the ways the couples resolve their marital conflicts, analysis of the church's support given to couples in resolving marital conflicts, analysis of how the Catholic teaching affects the marriage and the job-related questions about marriage. The results also will determine if the different age groups received counseling and if the counseling they received has an effect on the resolution of the marital conflict between the couples.

1. Analyzing general information

Table 3: General Information of the subject of the study, Question nos. 1-7

DIVISION		Frequency	%
SEX	MALE	105	49.1
	FEMALE	109	50.9
AGE	20-29	52	24.3
	30-39	54	25.2
	40-49	55	25.7
	50-59	53	24.8
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND	ELEMENTARY	9	4.2
	HIGH SCHOOL	40	18.7
	COLLEGE AND ABOVE	165	77.1

VOCATION	EMPLOYEE	94	43.9
	PROFESSIONAL	41	19.2
	SELF-EMPLOYED	48	22.4
	OTHERS	31	14.5
POSITION IN CHURCH	LAYPERSON	117	54.7
	DEACON OR DEACONESS	28	13.1
	ELDER	14	6.5
	LEADER (WORKER)	55	25.7
NO. OF CHILDREN	1	49	22.9
	2	72	33.6
	3	50	23.4
	4	16	7.5
	MORE THAN 4	13	6.1
	NONE	14	6.5
MARRIAGE PERIOD	1-2 YEARS	23	10.7
	3-5 YEARS	30	14
	6-10 YEARS	38	17.8
	ABOVE 10 YEARS	123	57.5

Table 3 shows the demographic profile of the respondents.

Sex. It is shown in table 1 that 105 or 49.1% of the respondents were males and 109 or 50.9% were females. The distribution of the number of respondents according to their sexes, are almost equal.

Age. Of the 214 total respondents, 52 or 24.3% were 20-29 years old; 54 or 25.2% were 30-39 years old; 55 or 25.7% were 40-49 years old and 53 or 24.8% were 50-59 years old. From the results, each age bracket or division has almost equal number of respondents. The almost equal distribution of respondents was just by accident after the

researcher had eliminated the 86 questionnaires. If these 86 questionnaires were complete, with no unanswered item, this would yield a slightly different number of respondents of each age group.

Academic Background. Of 214 respondents, 9 or 4.2% were elementary level; 40 or 18.7% were high school level and 165 or 77.1% were college level. In my observation, this is the usual spread of academic background in congregations. More educated people responded in this survey since they are the majority in the congregations.

Vocation. The table shows that of 214 respondents, 94 or 43.9% were employees; 41 or 19.2% were professionals; 48 or 22.4% were self-employed and 31 or 14.5% belonged to other categories. The researcher categorized employees as people hired by company or institution while professionals are categorized as people who are not hired but they are working with their own shops or business. Self-employed are those people who do not fall under the first two categories. They are not hired by a company or government but they do not have also their own store or shop or business. The “other categories” include all those people who do not belong to the other three categories.

Position in church. The table shows that of 214 respondents; 117 or 54.7% were laypersons; 28 or 13.1% were deacons or deaconesses; 14 or 6.5% were elders and 55 or 25.7% were leaders (workers). Laypersons were thus the largest group represented. This could have been even more in proportion to the other categories but when the survey was conducted people from this group were less responsive. Some of them are shy despite the persuasion of the researcher. Some of them did not return the questionnaires. The leaders being referred to by the researcher in this item refer to those people who are holding a certain position in the church like board members, while workers refer to those people working in church but do not hold any position in the church.

Number of children. The tables shows that of 214 respondents; 49 or 22.9% had only one child; 72 or 33.6% had 2 children; 50 or 23.4% had 3 children; 16 or 7.5% had 4 children and 13 or 6.1% had more than 4 children and 14 or 6.5% had no children. The researcher believed that the number of children the couples have, may have some effect on the marriage as may other factors such as age, length of marriage and occupation. The children may or may not bring pressure on the marriage. The researcher did not consider the correlation between the number of children and the length of the marriage.

Length of Marriage. Of the 214 respondents, 23 or 10.7% were married for 1-2 years; 30 or 14% were married for 3-5 years; 38 or 17.8% were married for 6-10 years and 123 or 57.5% were married for more than 10 years. The result shows that more than half of the total respondents were married for more than a decade. In this country, it might be expected that the group who has been married for more than a decade should have been well-adjusted in their

marital life and with their marital partner and have less conflicts than those couples who have been married for less than a decade. But as it has been said, conflicts are inevitable regardless of how long a couple have been married.

Table 3-1: General information on legal registration of marriage of the respondents, Questions nos. 8, 9

Items	Yes/No	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Marriage Legally Registered	Yes	43	54	53	52	202
	No	9	0	2	1	12
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Living Together before Marriage	Yes	21	15	6	10	52
	No	31	39	49	43	162
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Marriage Legally Registered. From the total number of respondents, 202 or 94.4% answered that their marriage was legally registered while 12 or 5.6% answered that their marriage was not legally registered. For those marriages that are not legally registered, this is so called “live-in” in the Philippines. From the 52 respondents that belong to 20-29 years old, 43 or 82.7% said that their marriages were legally registered while 9 or 17.3% answered that their marriages were not registered. All respondents from 30-39 years old answered that their marriages were legally registered. From 55 respondents that belong to the 40-49 years old, 53 or 94.4% answered that their marriages were legally registered while 2 or 5.6% answered that their marriages were not legally registered. From the 53 respondents that belong to 50-59 years old, 52 or 98.1% answered that their marriages were legally registered while 1 or 1.9% said that his/her marriage was not legally registered. Among the age groups, 20-29 years old have the highest percentage of respondents who said that their marriage were not legally registered, financial instability could be one reason why they could not hold their wedding and register their marriage. As observed also, it is prevalent in the country that some couples engage first in “live-in” and later have their marriage registered when they have enough money.

Living Together before Marriage. This question asks if the couples were living together before they married each other. From the total number of respondents, 52 (24.3%) answered that they cohabited with their spouses before

marriage, while 162 (75.7%) answered that they did not cohabit. From 52 respondents that belong to 20-29 years old, 21 (40.4%) answered that they cohabited with their spouses before marriage, while 31 (59.6%) answered that they did not cohabit. From 54 respondents from 30-39 years old, 15 (27.8%) answered that they cohabited with their spouses before marriage, while 39 (72.2%) answered that they did not cohabit. From the 55 respondents that belong to 40-49 years old, 6 (10.9%) answered that they cohabited with their spouses before marriage, while 49 (89.1%) answered that they did not cohabit. From the 53 respondents that belong to the 50-59 years old, 10 (18.9%) answered that they cohabited with their spouses before marriage, while 43 (81.1%) answered that they did not cohabit.

From the results, the 20-29 years old group has the highest frequency of cohabitation before marriage. Although the Philippines is a conservative country, I would deduce from this that the influence of the media and the sexual freedom or permissiveness in the society is affecting the views of the younger generation about sex and marriage.

2. Analysis of the degree of marital conflicts

Table 4: The comparison of the degrees of marital conflicts in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s age groups,

Question nos. 10,11,12,13

Items	Frequency	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Frequency of marital problems	Very often	1	3	3	1	8
	Often	8	4	3	9	24
	Sometimes	32	31	33	36	132
	Rarely	8	12	15	7	42
	Never	3	4	1	0	8
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Suffering from marital problem at the present	Yes	6	5	15	9	35
	No	46	49	40	44	179
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Thoughts of Separation	Very often	0	0	0	0	0

	Often	2	2	2	0	6
	Sometimes	19	7	9	16	51
	Rarely	8	5	6	7	26
	Never	23	40	38	30	135
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Effort to overcome problems	Very often	20	26	23	18	87
	Often	18	9	17	22	66
	Sometimes	8	13	12	7	40
	Rarely	3	0	3	1	7
	Never	3	6	0	5	14
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Frequency of marital problems. In question 10, which determines the frequency of marital problems between couples, from the 214 respondents, 8 or 3.7 % answered 'very often'; 24 or 11.2% answered 'often'; 132 or 61.7% answered 'sometimes'; 42 or 19.6% answered 'rarely' and 8 or 3.7% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents that belong to the 20-29 years old; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often'; 8 or 15.4% answered 'often'; 32 or 61.5% answered 'sometimes'; 8 or 15.4% answered 'rarely' and 3 or 5.8% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents that belong to 30-39 years old; 3 or 5.6% answered 'very often'; 4 or 7.4% answered 'often'; 31 or 57.4% answered 'sometimes'; 12 or 22.2% answered 'rarely'; 4 or 7.4% answered 'never'. For the 40-49 years old; 3 or 5.5% answered 'very often'; another 3 or 5.5% answered 'often'; 33 or 60% answered 'sometimes'; 15 or 27.3% answered 'rarely' and only 1 or 1.8% answered 'never'. From the 50-59 years old; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often'; 9 or 17% answered 'often'; 36 or 67.9% answered 'sometimes'; 7 or 13.2% answered 'rarely' and no one answered 'never'.

The results show that from all the different age groups, the most respondents answered 'sometimes'. From the result, it is from the 20-29 years old age group where 17.3% in total who answered 'very often' and 'often'. This may be because the couples from this group are in the adjustment stage in their marital life or they are in the early stage of

marriage. The 13 % of the respondents of 30-39 and 11% of 40-49 who answered 'very often' and 'often' are also a substantial number. This could suggest that the adjustment stage is not only for those people who are in their earlier stage in marriage but marital adjustment transcends age limits. My personal observation was confirmed by the survey that the 50-59 years old group age experiences frequent marital conflict which sums up to 18.9% from the respondents who answered 'very often' and 'often'. This is perhaps because some respondents from this group are unyielding and the other partner is tolerant and they continue to live together. Outwardly they do not have conflict but have inner conflict with their spouses.

Suffering from marital problem at present (when the survey was conducted). For question 11, 35 or 16.4% from 214 respondents answered 'yes' while 179 or 83.6% answered 'no'. Out of 52 respondents from 20-29 years old; 6 or 11.5% answered 'yes' while 46 or 88.5% answered 'no'. From the 30-39 years old respondents; 5 or 9.3% respondents answered 'yes' while 49 or 90.7% answered 'no'. From the 55 respondents from 40-49 years old; 15 or 27.3% answered 'yes' while 40 or 72.7% answered 'no'. Out from the 53 respondents that belong to the 50-59 years old; 9 or 17% answered 'yes' while 44 or 83% answered 'no'. The results show that during the survey most of the respondents were not in conflict with their spouses. It can be noted that from 40-49 years old age group, 27.3% say that they are suffering from marital conflict when they participated in the survey, followed by the 50-59 years old age group with 17%. The researcher could not state the possible reasons for the marital conflict among these age group since in the survey questionnaire there was no follow-up questions for this item.

Thoughts of Separation. For question 12 that asks if the couples consider separating from his/her spouse whenever they are in conflict, from the 214 respondents; no one answered 'very often'; 6 or 2.8% answered 'often'; 51 or 23.8% answered 'sometimes'; 26 or 12.1% answered 'rarely' and 135 or 63.1% answered 'never'. From the 20-29 years old respondents no one answered 'very often'; 2 or 3.8% answered 'often'; 19 or 36.5% answered 'sometimes'; 8 or 15.4% answered 'rarely' and 23 or 44.2% answered 'never'. From the respondents that belongs to the 30-39 years old 2 or 3.8% answered 'often'; 7 or 13% answered 'sometimes'; 5 or 9.3% answered 'rarely' and 40 or 74.1% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents that belong to 40-49 years old 2 or 3.6% answered 'often'; 9 or 16.4% answered 'sometimes'; 6 or 10.9% answered 'rarely' and 38 or 89.1% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents coming from 50-59 years old; only 16 or 30.2% answered 'sometimes'; 7 or 13.2% answered 'rarely' and 30 or 56.6% answered 'never'.

The results show that more than half of the total number of respondents with 63.1% did not consider separating from their spouse whenever they have conflicts. From the different age groups, we can observe that we have almost the same low percentage of those who answered “very often” and “often”. But among the 20-29, 36.5% of the respondents answered “sometimes”. This could be because some young couples are very keen to see the results of their marital adjustments right away and whenever they are in conflict they want to see the results. And maybe during a heated conflict between the couple, as part of the “spur of the moment” reaction, they think of separating from their marital partner without further contemplation of the consequences. Among the 30s and 40s, we have less percentage of the respondents who thinks of separating from their marital spouse with 13% and 16.4%, respectively. As part of my observation, this is because their children are very young and they are the ones who will greatly be affected by the situation. It is noticeable that from 50-59 years old 30.2% answered “sometimes”, twice the percentage for 30s and 40s age groups. Still many from this age group are thinking of separation from their marital partner. This could be because they are too old to make another adjustment with their partner and maybe also because most of this group have less or no children to care for because they are all grown up and have their own family.

Efforts to Overcome Problems. Question 13 asks about the extent to which the respondents try to overcome marital conflict. From the 214 respondents, 87 or 40.7% answered ‘very often’; 66 or 30.8% answered ‘often’; 40 or 18.7% answered ‘sometimes’; 7 or 3.3% answered ‘rarely’; 14 or 6.5% answered ‘never’. From the 52 respondents from 20-29 years old; 20 or 38.5% answered ‘very often’; 18 or 34.6% answered ‘often’; 8 or 15.4% answered ‘sometimes’; 3 or 5.8% answered ‘rarely’ and another 3 or 5.8% answered ‘never’. From the 54 respondents from 30-39 years old; 26 or 48.1% answered ‘very often’, 9 or 16.7% answered ‘often’, 13 or 24.1% answered ‘sometimes’, no one answered ‘rarely’ and the remaining 6 or 11.1% answered ‘never’. From the 55 respondents from 40-49 years old; 23 or 41.8% answered ‘very often’, 17 or 30.9% answered ‘often’, 12 or 21.8% answered ‘sometimes’, 3 or 5.5% answered ‘rarely’ and no one answered ‘never’. From the 53 respondents coming from 50-59 years old; 18 or 34% answered ‘very often’, 22 or 41.5% answered ‘often’, 7 or 13.2% answered ‘sometimes’, 1 or 1.9% answered ‘rarely’ and 5 or 9.4% answered ‘never’.

The results show that the majority of couples in each age group make an effort to resolve their marital conflicts. It is noticeable that 50-59 years old had the highest percentage of making efforts to resolve their marital conflict with

75.5%, followed by the 40-49 years old with 72.7%. The 50-59 years old group had the higher percentage in trying to resolve their marital since this is also the group which has high percentage of the frequency of marital conflict. It is noticeable that the next group, the 40s, is of considerable percentage, since this is the group with much less marital conflict. This would suggest that this group is very committed to work on their marital relationship.

3. Analysis of the main causes of marital conflicts

TABLE 5: Analyzing the ranking of causes of marital conflicts in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s, Question no. 14

Ranking	20s age group			30s age group			40s age group			50s age group		
	ITEMS	F	%	ITEMS	F	%	ITEMS	F	%	ITEMS	F	%
1	Financial	46	88.5	Financial	48	88.9	Financial	45	81.8	Financial	46	86.8
2	Personality	36	69.2	Personality	46	85.2	Personality	45	81.8	Personality	43	81.1
3	Habits	35	67.3	Habits	43	79.6	Role Diff.	36	65.5	Habits	40	75.5
4	Role Diff.	33	63.5	Children	40	74.1	Leadership	35	63.6	Role Diff.	38	71.7
5	Communi.	20	38.5	Role Diff.	38	70.4	Communi.	34	61.8	Fam. Rela	28	52.8
6	Leadership	20	38.5	Communi.	38	70.4	Children	33	60	Communi.	28	52.8
7	Fam. Rel.	17	32.7	Leadership	37	68.5	Habits	33	60	Leadership	27	50.9
8	Sex Life	16	30.8	Sex Life	35	64.8	Fam. Rela	32	58.2	Children	27	50.9
9	Leisure	14	26.9	Leisure	31	57.4	Fam.Back.	29	52.7	Fam.Back.	23	43.4
10	Fam. back.	12	23.1	Fam. Rela	30	55.6	Leisure	28	50.9	Leisure	23	43.4
11	Religion	9	17.3	Fam.Back.	30	55.6	Sex Life	25	45.5	Intimacy	23	43.4
12	Intimacy	8	15.4	Intimacy	28	51.9	Intimacy	24	43.6	Sex Life	18	34
13	Children	7	13.5	Religion	24	44.4	Religion	19	34.5	Religion	16	30.2
14	Others	3	5.8	Others	6	11.1	Others	7	12.7	Others	5	9.4

Table 5 shows vertically the ranking of 14 causes of marital conflicts as perceived by the four age groups. The frequency (F) of items and percentage of the total number of causes of conflicts are shown horizontally. The ranking scheme is from 1 to 14 with 1 as the top ranking. Of the 52 correspondents from the 20s, 46 or 88.5% ranked 'financial' as the number one source of their marital conflicts, 36 or 69.2% for 'personality' and ranked 2; 35 or 67.3% made 'habits' as ranked 3; 33 or 63.5% for 'role difficulty' and ranked 4; 20 or 38.5% for 'communication' and 'leadership' and ranked 5 and 6 respectively; 17 or 32.7% answered for 'family relationship' and ranked 7; 'sex life' in rank 8 with 16 or 30.8% ; 14 or 26.9% answered 'leisure' and ranked 9; 12 or 23.1% answered 'family background' and ranked 10; 9 or 17.3% answered 'religion' and ranked 11; 8 or 15.4% answered 'intimacy' and ranked 12; 7 or 13.5% answered 'children' and ranked 13; and lastly 3 or 5.8% answered 'others'.

For the 54 respondents from 30s; 48 or 88.9% answered 'financial' as the topmost source of marital conflict; 46 or 85.2% answered 'personality' and made it in rank 2; 43 or 79.6% for 'habits' and ranked 3; 40 or 74.1% answered 'children' which is in rank 4; 38 or 70.4% answered 'role difficulty' and 'communication' and ranked 5 and 6 respectively; 37 or 68.5% answered 'leadership' and ranked 7; 35 or 64.8% answered 'sex life' and ranked 8; 31 or 57.4% answered 'leisure' and ranked 9; 30 or 55.6% for 'family relation' and 'family background' and ranked 10 and 11, respectively; 28 or 51.9% answered 'intimacy' and ranked 12; 24 or 44.4% answered 'religion' and ranked 13 and lastly 6 or 11.1% answered 'others' and ranked 14.

For the 55 respondents from 40s; 45 or 81.8% answered 'financial' and ranked 1 as the topmost source of marital conflict; 45 or 81.8% answered 'personality' and ranked 2; 36 or 65.5% answered 'role difficulty' and ranked 3; 35 or 63.6% answered 'leadership' and ranked 4; 34 or 61.8% answered 'communication' and ranked 5; 33 or 60% answered 'children' and 'habits' and ranked 6 and 7, respectively; 32 or 58.2% answered 'family relationship' and ranked 8; 29 or 52.7% answered 'family background' and ranked 9; 28 or 50.9% answered 'leisure' and ranked 10; 25 or 45.5% answered 'sex life' and ranked 11; 24 or 43.6% answered 'intimacy' and ranked 12; 19 or 34.5% answered 'religion' and ranked 13 and lastly 7 or 12.7% answered 'others' and ranked 14.

For the total 53 respondents from 50s; 46 or 86.8% answered 'financial' as topmost reason for marital conflict; 43 or 81.1% answered 'personality' and ranked 2; 40 or 75.5% answered 'habits' and ranked 3; 38 or 71.7% answered 'role difficulty' and ranked 4; 28 or 52.8% answered 'family relationship' and 'communication' and in rank 5 and 6, respectively; 27 or 50.9% answered 'leadership' and 'children' and in rank 7 and 8, respectively; 23 or 43.4% answered 'family background' 'leisure' and 'intimacy' and in rank 9, 10 and 11, respectively; 18 or 34% answered

‘sex life’ and ranked 12; 16 or 30.2% answered ‘religion’ and ranked 13 and lastly 5 or 9.4% answered ‘others’ and ranked 14.

The results in table 5 show that the 4 age groups are quite similar in their perceptions that finances, personality and habits are topmost reasons of marital conflicts. But in item 13, there is a noticeable difference between the 20s and other three groups. The 20s answered “children” while the other groups answered “religion”, this maybe because in the 20s the pressure of the presence of their children is less compared to the other group since their children are young compared with others who are more grown up and have greater needs and demands.

TABLE 6: Comparison of frequency of marital conflict factors in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s,
Question nos. 15-26

Items	Frequency	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Financial Problems	Very often	9	3	6	4	22
	Often	11	10	6	13	40
	Sometimes	21	30	25	27	103
	Rarely	6	5	13	3	27
	Never	5	6	5	6	22
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Temperament or Personality	Very often	3	2	3	2	10
	Often	14	7	10	15	46
	Sometimes	25	37	33	24	119
	Rarely	8	4	6	9	27
	Never	2	4	3	3	12
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Habits	Very often	0	0	1	2	3
	Often	9	6	5	12	32
	Sometimes	27	31	26	27	111
	Rarely	11	11	11	8	41

	Never	5	6	12	4	27
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Role difficulty	Very often	2	2	1	1	6
	Often	11	4	5	7	27
	Sometimes	19	29	23	26	97
	Rarely	7	10	14	15	46
	Never	13	9	12	4	38
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Leadership	Very often	1	0	2	3	6
	Often	3	5	5	2	15
	Sometimes	18	31	20	19	88
	Rarely	11	8	15	15	49
	Never	19	10	13	14	56
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Children	Very often	0	3	2	1	6
	Often	0	3	4	5	12
	Sometimes	9	24	23	21	77
	Rarely	1	11	11	12	35
	Never	42	13	15	14	84
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Sexual Conflict	Very often	1	0	0	0	1
	Often	0	0	0	2	2
	Sometimes	11	26	15	10	62
	Rarely	9	11	14	13	47

	Never	31	17	26	28	102
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Intimacy	Very often	0	0	0	2	2
	Often	3	2	1	0	6
	Sometimes	10	26	20	19	75
	Rarely	15	13	15	12	55
	Never	24	13	19	20	76
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Extended Family Relationship	Very often	0	1	2	0	3
	Often	2	2	3	6	13
	Sometimes	11	20	23	14	68
	Rarely	8	11	11	11	41
	Never	31	20	16	22	89
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Family Background	Very often	0	0	3	0	3
	Often	4	6	4	6	20
	Sometimes	9	19	21	16	65
	Rarely	12	14	9	10	45
	Never	27	15	18	21	81
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Leisure	Very often	0	0	1	0	1
	Often	1	0	1	4	6
	Sometimes	21	22	21	20	84
	Rarely	14	13	14	11	52
	Never	16	19	18	18	71
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Religion	Very often	0	0	0	3	3
	Often	5	1	0	2	8
	Sometimes	5	14	5	4	28
	Rarely	4	4	4	7	19
	Never	38	35	46	37	156
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Table 6 shows vertically the reasons that cause marital conflicts among the four age groups. The frequency and the number of each item are shown horizontally. This is based on question number 15-26 in the survey questionnaire.

Financial Problems. Question 19 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the result shows that from the total 214 respondents; 22 or 10.3% answered 'very often', 40 or 18.7% answered 'often', 103 or 48.1% answered 'sometimes', 27 or 12.6% answered 'rarely' and 22 or 10.3% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 9 or 17.3% answered 'very often', 11 or 21.2% answered 'often', 21 or 40.4% answered 'sometimes', 6 or 11.5% answered 'rarely' and 5 or 9.6% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 3 or 5.6% answered 'very often', 10 or 18.5% answered 'often', 30 or 55.6% answered 'sometimes', 5 or 9.3% answered 'rarely' and 6 or 11.1% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 6 or 10.9% answered 'very often', another 6 or 10.9% answered 'often', 25 or 45.5% answered 'sometimes', 13 or 23.6% answered 'rarely' and 5 or 9.1% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 4 or 7.5% answered 'very often', 13 or 24.5% answered 'often', 27 or 50.9% answered 'sometimes', 3 or 5.7% answered 'rarely' and 6 or 11.3% answered 'never'. Even though 'financial' ranked 1 as the topmost source of marital conflicts, table 6 shows that almost half of the total respondents answered 'sometimes' in question 19.

From the results, the majority of respondents answered that 'financial' is their topmost source of their conflict. This could have been brought about by the fact that in the country, most Filipino families are living on a low income. According to the 2009 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES), on the average, Filipino family earns 206 thousand pesos yearly. The Filipino family that belongs in the bottom 30 percent income group earns just 62 thousand pesos yearly. This means that they only have almost 5,200 pesos to spend in a month which is not enough for a family especially those who have more children.

Personality. Question no. 17 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results shows that from the 214 total respondents, 10 or 4.7% answered 'very often', 46 or 21.5% answered 'often', 119 or 55.6% answered 'sometimes', 27 or 12.6% answered 'rarely' and 12 or 5.6% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 3 or 5.8% answered 'very often', 14 or 26.9% answered 'often', 25 or 48.1% answered 'sometimes', 8 or 1.9% answered 'rarely' and 2 or 3.8% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 2 or 3.7% answered 'very often', 7 or 13% answered 'often', 37 or 68.5% answered 'sometimes', 4 or 7.4% answered 'rarely' and another 4 or 7.4% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 3 or 5.5% answered 'very often', 10 or 18.2% answered 'often', 33 or 60% answered 'sometimes', 6 or 10.9% answered 'rarely' and 3 or 5.5% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 2 or 3.8% answered 'very often', 15 or 28.3% answered 'often', 24 or 45.3% answered 'sometimes', 9 or 17% answered 'rarely' and 3 or 5.8% answered 'never'. From the results, there is a quite bigger percentage of respondents who had marital conflicts regarding with personality differences among 20s and 50s. The 20s and 50s have 32.7% and 32.1%, respectively, who answered 'very often' and 'often'. According to my observation and from information from my Filipino friends, the 20s are still in adjustment with their marital partner, so conflict in this area is not uncommon while among the 50s being unyielding and being tolerant are some of the issues entailed in this area. There are some 50s who are not willing anymore to adjust with their partner since they are old already while the other partner is being tolerant or they do not have any other option but to bear with their partner's personality.

Habits. Question 26 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results show that from 214 respondents, 3 or 1.4% answered 'very often', 32 or 15% answered 'often', 111 or 51.9% answered 'sometimes', 41 or 19.2% answered 'rarely' and 27 or 12.6% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; none answered 'very often', 9 or 17.3% answered 'often', 27 or 51.9% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 21.2% answered 'rarely' and 5 or 9.6% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; none answered 'very often', 6 or 11.1% answered 'often', 31 or 57.4% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20.3% answered 'rarely' and 6 or 11.1% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 1 or 1.8% answered 'very often', 5 or 9.1% answered 'often', 26 or 47.3% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20% answered 'rarely' and 12 or 21.8% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 2 or 3.8% answered 'very often', 12 or 22.6% answered 'often', 27 or 50.9% answered 'sometimes', 8 or 15.1% answered 'rarely' and 4 or 7.5% answered 'never'.

From the results more than half of the respondents answered 'sometimes'. 50s age group has the highest percentage of respondents who answered 'often' with 22.6% and 20s age group follows with 17.3%. The 50s age group may be not that willing to change their habits, unlike with respondents in their earlier stage of marriage. 20s have higher percentage and this may have resulted from their still being in the adjustment stage in marriage. But in the case of the 50s, just like the case I have encountered in one local church, one spouse is unyielding while the other is tolerant. It seems that outward they are not in conflict but the conflict is there (inwardly). So as to avoid making the matter worse, the other partner opted to tolerate the other. There might be the possibility that when they answered the survey, they answered that they rarely have problems in this area because technically they do not have.

Role Difficulty. Question 16 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results shows that from 214 respondents; 6 or 2.8% answered 'very often', 27 or 12.6% answered 'often', 97 or 45.3% answered 'sometimes', 46 or 21.5% answered 'rarely' and 38 or 17.8% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 2 or 3.8% answered 'very often', 11 or 21.2% answered 'often', 19 or 36.5% answered 'sometimes', 7 or 13.5% answered 'rarely' and 13 or 25% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 2 or 3.7% answered 'very often', 4 or 7.4% answered 'often', 29 or 53.7% answered 'sometimes', 10 or 18.5% answered 'rarely' and 9 or 16.7% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 1 or 1.8% answered 'very often', 5 or 9.1% answered 'often', 23 or 41.8% answered 'sometimes', 14 or 24.5% answered 'rarely' and 12 or 21.8% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often', 7 or 13.2% answered 'often', 26 or 49.1% answered 'sometimes', 15 or 28.3% answered 'rarely' and 4 or 7.5% answered 'never'.

Having marital conflict regarding role is not unusual in every marriage but in this item, the 20s has higher percentage of respondents who answered that they 'often' had marital conflict in this area compared with the other age groups. 20-29 years old age group, in their earlier stage in marriage compared with other age groups, are still adjusting to each other in their new roles and responsibilities in their married life. In other age groups there is a lesser percentage of respondents who answered 'very often' and 'often'. This is to be expected because maybe they have adjusted already in their role in the family and in their married life.

Leadership. Question 15 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results shows that from 214 respondents; 6 or 2.8% answered 'very often', 15 or 7% answered 'often', 88 or 41.1% answered 'sometimes', 49 or 22.9% answered 'rarely' and 56 or 26.2% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often', 3 or 5.8% answered 'often', 18 or 34.6% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 21.2%

answered 'rarely' and 19 or 36.5% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; no one answered 'very often', 5 or 9.3% answered 'often', 31 or 57.4% answered 'sometimes', 8 or 14.8% answered 'rarely' and 10 or 18.5% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 2 or 3.6% answered 'very often', 5 or 9.1% answered 'often', 20 or 36.4% answered 'sometimes', 15 or 27.3% answered 'rarely' and 13 or 23.6% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 3 or 5.7% answered 'very often', 2 or 3.8% answered 'often', 19 or 35.8% answered 'sometimes', 15 or 28.3% answered 'rarely' and 14 or 26.4% answered 'never'.

The result shows that leadership is one of the reasons of marital conflict but only 21 or 9.8% out from 214 respondents answered that oftentimes this is the reason for their conflict. Even though from different age group we have minimal percentage of respondents who answered 'very often' and 'often', still the 40s and 50s have higher percentage among the four age groups with percentage of 12.7% and 9.4%, respectively. It is observed that the elders and leaders of the church are coming from these age groups because it is in this group that people are more active in church work. The other two groups are not that active in church leadership since they are very engaged in their work outside the church in order to provide for their family.

Children. Question 21 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the result shows that from 214 respondents, 6 or 2.8% answered 'very often', 12 or 5.6% answered 'often', 77 or 36% answered 'sometimes', 35 or 16.4% answered 'rarely' and 84 or 39.3% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; no one answered 'very often' and 'often', 9 or 17.3% answered 'sometimes', 1 or 1.9% answered 'rarely' and 42 or 80.8% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 3 or 5.6% answered 'very often', another 3 or 5.6% answered 'often', 24 or 44.4% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20.4% answered 'rarely' and 13 or 24.1% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 2 or 3.6% answered 'very often', 4 or 7.3% answered 'often', 23 or 41.8% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20% answered 'rarely' and 15 or 27.3% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often', 5 or 9.4% answered 'often', 21 or 39.6% answered 'sometimes', 12 or 22.6% answered 'rarely' and 14 or 26.4% answered 'never'.

Although children are noted as one source of marital conflict, the results show that only 89 or 41.6% from the 214 respondents answered 'sometimes' and 'often' for the question. This suggests that the marital conflicts of some respondents are children-related. But it also shows that more than half of respondents had managed the pressure that the children may bring on their marital relationship.

Sexual Conflict. Question 18 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results show that from 214 respondents; 1 or 0.5% answered 'very often', 2 or 1% answered 'often', 62 or 29% answered 'sometimes', 47 or 22% answered 'rarely' and 102 or 47.7% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often', no one answered 'often', 11 or 21.2% answered 'sometimes', 9 or 17.3% answered 'rarely' and 31 or 14.5% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; no one answered 'very often' and 'often', 26 or 48.1% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20.4% answered 'rarely' and 17 or 31.5% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; no one answered 'very often' and 'often', 15 or 27.3% answered 'sometimes', 14 or 25.5% answered 'rarely' and 26 or 17.3% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; no one answered 'very often', 2 or 3.8% answered 'often', 10 or 18.9% answered 'sometimes', 13 or 24.5% answered 'rarely' and 28 or 52.8% answered 'never'.

The result shows that only 3 or 1.5% from 214 respondents answered that oftentimes they have conflicts in this area. In this item, we had very minimal percentage of respondents who answered 'very often' and 'often'. These results are encouraging, but the researcher suspects that this may be an underestimate due to the Filipino reticence about talking about or admitting to sexual problems.

Intimacy. Question 25 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results shows that from 214 respondents; 2 or 1% answered 'very often', 6 or 2.8% answered 'often', 75 or 35% answered 'sometimes', 55 or 25.7% answered 'rarely' and 76 or 35.5% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; no one answered 'very often', 3 or 5.8% answered 'often', 10 or 19.2% answered 'sometimes', 15 or 28.8% answered 'rarely' and 24 or 46.2% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; no one answered 'very often', 2 or 3.7% answered 'often', 26 or 48.1% answered 'sometimes', 13 or 24.1% answered 'rarely' and another 13 or 24.1% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; no one answered 'very often', 1 or 1.8% answered 'often', 20 or 36.4% answered 'sometimes', 15 or 27.3% answered 'rarely' and 19 or 34.5% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 2 or 3.8% answered 'very often', no one answered 'often', 19 or 35.8% answered 'sometimes', 12 or 22.6% answered 'rarely' and 20 or 37.7% answered 'never'.

The result shows that only 8 or 3.8% answered 'very often' and 'often' in this question. We have minimal percentage of respondents who answered 'very often' and 'often'. But from 50s, there were 3.8% of the respondents who answered 'very often'. From the 20s, no one answered 'very often' and 5.8% who said 'often'. It is encouraging to see that problems with emotional intimacy have a low incidence across the age groups. However there was a

significant incidence of problems 'sometimes' and even two of those in their 50s admitted to problems in this area.

This shows that it is an area that couples need to pay attention to throughout marriage.

Extended Family Relationship. Question 20 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results show that from 214 respondents; 3 or 1.4% answered 'very often', 13 or 6.1% answered 'often', 68 or 31.8% answered 'sometimes', 41 or 19.2% answered 'rarely' and 89 or 41.6% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; no one answered 'very often', 2 or 3.8% answered 'often', 11 or 21.2% answered 'sometimes', 8 or 15.4% answered 'rarely' and 31 or 59.6% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 1 or 1.8% answered 'very often', 2 or 3.7% answered 'often', 20 or 37% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20.4% answered 'rarely' and 20 or 37% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 2 or 3.6% answered 'very often', 3 or 5.5% answered 'often', 23 or 41.8% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20% answered 'rarely' and 16 or 29.1% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; no one answered 'very often', 6 or 11.3% answered 'often', 14 or 26.4% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20.8% answered 'rarely' and 22 or 41.5% answered 'never'. The results show that 16 or 7.5% of the respondents have marital conflicts due to extended family. In totality, we have lower percentage in this item who answered 'very often' and 'often'. This may be due to the fact that most Filipino families are accustomed to living with and relating to extended families and to some married couples are living along with them.

Family Background. Question 23 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the result shows that from 214 respondents; 3 or 1.4% answered 'very often', 20 or 9.3% answered 'often', 65 or 30.4% answered 'sometimes', 45 or 21% answered 'rarely' and 81 or 37.9% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; no one answered 'very often', 4 or 7.7% answered 'often', 9 or 17.3% answered 'sometimes', 12 or 23.1% answered 'rarely' and 27 or 51.9% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; no one answered 'very often', 6 or 11.1% answered 'often', 19 or 35.2% answered 'sometimes', 14 or 25.9% answered 'rarely' and 15 or 27.8% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 3 or 5.5% answered 'very often', 4 or 7.3% answered 'often', 21 or 38.2% answered 'sometimes', 9 or 16.4% answered 'rarely' and 18 or 32.7% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; no one answered 'very often', 6 or 11.3% answered 'often', 16 or 30.2% answered 'sometimes', 10 or 18.9% answered 'rarely' and 21 or 39.6% answered 'never'.

Ten of the respondents from 40s and 50s age group answered 'often'. It seems that they still have marital conflict in this area after so many years of being together, despite having already made some adjustments. It would be good to resolve these tensions early in marriage.

Leisure. Question 24 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results show that from 214 respondents; 1 or 0.5% answered 'very often', 6 or 11.3% answered 'often', 84 or 24.3% answered 'sometimes', 52 or 24.3% answered 'rarely' and 71 or 33.2% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; no one answered 'very often', 1 or 1.9% answered 'often', 21 or 40.4% answered 'sometimes', 14 or 26.9% answered 'rarely' and 16 or 30.8% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; no one answered 'very often' and 'often', 22 or 40.7% answered 'sometimes', 13 or 24.1% answered 'rarely' and 19 or 35.2% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 1 or 1.8% answered 'very often', another 1 or 1.8% answered 'often', 21 or 38.2% answered 'sometimes', 14 or 25.5% answered 'rarely' and 18 or 32.7% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; no one answered 'very often', 4 or 7.5% answered 'often', 20 or 37.7% answered 'sometimes', 11 or 20.8% answered 'rarely' and 18 or 33.9% answered 'never'.

This item has lower percentage among the 20s, 30s and 40s who answered 'very often' and 'often' but there was 7.5% from the 50s who answered 'often'. For the first 3 group, it might that be they had discussed and agreed already how they will spend their leisure time individually and as a family.

Religion. Question 22 aims to identify how frequently couples have conflict in this area and the results show that from 214 respondents; 3 or 1.4% answered 'very often', 8 or 15.1% answered 'often', 28 or 52.8% answered 'sometimes', 19 or 35.8% answered 'rarely' and 156 or 72.9% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; no one answered 'very often', 5 or 9.6% answered 'often', another 5 or 9.6% answered 'sometimes', 4 or 7.7% answered 'rarely' and 38 or 73.1% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; no one answered 'very often', 1 or 1.9% answered 'often', 14 or 25.9% answered 'sometimes', 4 or 7.4% answered 'rarely' and 35 or 64.8% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; no one answered 'very often' and 'often', 5 or 9.1% answered 'sometimes', 4 or 7.3% answered 'rarely' and 46 or 83.6% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from the 50s; 3 or 5.7% answered 'very often', 2 or 3.8% answered 'often', 4 or 7.5% answered 'sometimes', 7 or 13.2% answered 'rarely' and 37 or 69.8% answered 'never'.

More than 80% of the respondents have answered 'rarely' and 'never'. There were a small percentage of those respondents who answered 'very often' and 'often'. Maybe this is because the respondents are Christians belonging

to the same church and share common ideas regarding the matter and if ever they have occasional conflicts on this area, these might be on trivial topics only.

The classification used here, ‘very often’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’, ‘rarely’ and ‘never’, was left to the perception of each respondent. In my experience Filipinos are not comfortable providing a specific number based on a numerical scale or a numerical frequency to describe the conflicts they experience in their marriages. So the researcher opted to use this type of classification, believing that it gave a fairly accurate picture of the frequency of conflict from the point of view of the respondent’s experience.

4. Analyzing the ways couples deal with marital conflicts

TABLE 7: Comparison of the ways the couples deal with marital conflicts in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s

Question nos. 27, 29, 30

Items	Frequency	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Efforts to solve marital problems	very often	23	24	23	14	84
	Often	17	18	18	22	75
	Sometimes	9	8	11	12	40
	Rarely	1	1	2	4	8
	Never	2	3	1	1	7
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Attempt to resolve conflict with sincere talk	very often	15	18	17	12	62
	Often	20	19	27	22	88
	Sometimes	16	13	10	14	53
	Rarely	1	3	1	3	8
	Never	0	1	0	2	3
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Using spiritual resources to resolve conflict	very often	13	27	27	19	86
	Often	20	9	15	14	58

	Sometimes	14	10	7	15	46
	Rarely	3	4	3	5	15
	Never	2	4	3	0	9
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Table 7 shows vertically the items of the ways couples deal with marital conflict among the four age groups. The frequency and the distribution of the respondents of each group in their corresponding answers are shown horizontally. The researcher considered two ways (sincere talk and using spiritual resources) as a first step in resolving their marital conflict before seeking outside help.

Efforts to solve marital problems. This item aims to identify how often, if ever, the couple exert effort to solve their marital conflict whenever it arises. The results show that from the 214 respondents; 84 or 39.3% answered 'very often', 75 or 35% answered 'often', 40 or 18.7% answered 'sometimes', 8 or 3.7% answered 'rarely' and 7 or 3.3% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents coming from 20s; 23 or 44.2% answered 'very often', 17 or 32.7% answered 'often', 9 or 17.3% answered 'sometimes', 1 or 1.9% answered 'rarely' and 2 or 3.8% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 24 or 44.4% answered 'very often', 18 or 33.3% answered 'often', 8 or 14.8% answered 'sometimes', 1 or 1.8% answered 'rarely' and 3 or 5.6% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 23 or 41.8% answered 'very often', 18 or 32.7% answered 'often', 11 or 20% answered 'sometimes', 2 or 3.6% answered 'rarely' and 1 or 1.8% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from the 50s; 14 or 26.4% answered 'very often', 22 or 41.5% answered 'often', 12 or 22.6% answered 'sometimes', 4 or 7.5% answered 'rarely' and 1 or 1.9% answered 'never'.

The results show that the majority of couples do try their best to solve their marital conflict. From 20s, 30s and 40s there is no significant difference of the percentages of respondents of each group who answered 'very often'. Between 41-45% from the respondents of these groups answered 'very often' and from 32-34% answered 'often' which means that these groups are very reactive in their conflict resolution, while from 50s only 26.4% (who answered 'very often' are very reactive in their conflict resolution. There are also some respondents who made less effort to solve their conflict but this number is minimal. However, there are 15 respondents who rarely or never

make an effort in resolving their marital conflict. In some cases, this is just like the case of a couple I know: they have a happy marriage but sometimes when they have occasional marital conflict, the one is unyielding and the other is tolerant. The other partner opted to be tolerant to avoid making the matter worse. But still they have a happy marriage. As I observed, they have disagreement on one or two areas like their leisure. In the case wherein both couples have disagreement in many areas, I think this would a greater danger to their marital relationship.

Attempt to resolve conflict with sincere talk – This item aims to identify if couple resolves their conflict through sincerely talking together about their problems. The results show that from the 214 respondents, 62 or 29% answered ‘very often’, 88 or 41.1% answered ‘often’, 53 or 24.8% answered ‘sometimes’, 8 or 3.7 answered ‘rarely’ and 3 or 1.4% answered ‘never’. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 15 or 28.8% answered ‘very often’, 20 or 38.5% answered ‘often’, 16 or 30.8% answered ‘sometimes’, 1 or 1.9% answered ‘rarely’ and no one answered ‘never’. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 18 or 33.3% answered ‘very often’, 19 or 35.2% answered ‘often’, 13 or 24.1% answered ‘sometimes’, 3 or 5.6% answered ‘rarely’ and 1 or 1.9% answered ‘never’. From the 55 respondents from the 40s; 17 or 30.9% answered ‘very often’, 27 or 49.1% answered ‘often’, 10 or 18.2% answered ‘sometimes’, 1 or 1.8% answered ‘rarely’ and no one answered ‘never’. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 12 or 22.6% answered ‘very often’, 22 or 41.5% answered ‘often’, 14 or 26.4% answered ‘sometimes’, 3 or 5.7% answered ‘rarely’ and 2 or 3.8% answered ‘never’.

The result shows that 70% of the respondents tried to resolve their conflict through sincere talk. It is also noted that there is a significant number of respondents of each group who desire to resolve their conflict through sincere talk. In 20s there was 28.8%, in 30s 33.3%, in 40s 30.9% and in 50s 22.6% who answered ‘very often’ which means that they still find talking about the conflict with their partner will help them solve conflict. And for those who answered ‘often’ there was 38.5% in 20s, 35.2% in 30s, 49.1% in 40s and 41.5% in 50s who also consider talking about their conflict with their partner is also helpful in the conflict resolution. There were also a few respondents who are less reactive in this area. From the figures, I believe that counseling (talking with trusted person) will be a help in resolving marital conflict. And I think the other respondents might see also the benefits of having this kind of help since a large number of them believe that talking about the marital conflict with their partner will contribute to the resolution. As part of the Filipino culture about giving value to a trusted friend, whenever a person has a problem it is natural for him/her to share it with a trusted friend not only to have someone who will listen but also to ask for

advice. This kind of relationship can be observed in and outside the church. It is in this type of set-up that counseling in the Philippines goes on. It is an informal one as if you are just talking to a mere friend. The other option would be to encourage the couple to learn better communication.

Using Spiritual resources to resolve conflict – This item aims to identify if couples try to resolve their marital conflict through using spiritual resources and the results shows that from 214 respondents; 86 or 40.2% answered ‘very often’, 58 or 27.1% answered ‘often’, 46 or 21.5% answered ‘sometimes’, 15 or 7% answered ‘rarely’ and 9 or 4.2% answered ‘never’. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 13 or 25% answered ‘very often’, 20 or 38.5% answered ‘often’, 14 or 26.9% answered ‘sometimes’, 3 or 5.8% answered ‘rarely’ and 2 or 3.8% answered ‘never’. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 27 or 50% answered ‘very often’, 9 or 16.7% answered ‘often’, 10 or 18.5% answered ‘sometimes’, 4 or 7.4% answered ‘rarely’ and another 4 or 7.4% answered ‘never’. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 27 or 49.1% answered ‘very often’, 15 or 27.3% answered ‘often’, 7 or 12.7% answered ‘sometimes’, 3 or 5.5% answered ‘rarely’ and another 3 or 5.5% answered ‘never’. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 19 or 35.8% answered ‘very often’, 14 or 26.4% answered ‘often’, 15 or 28.3% answered ‘sometimes’, 5 or 9.4% answered ‘rarely’ and no one answered ‘never’.

The results show that many couples consulted or used spiritual materials as one source of help they needed to resolve their marital conflict. Couples in 40s appeared to be more active in using spiritual material in resolving their marital conflict. Couples in their 50s are less likely to ignore spiritual resources. These materials are in written form (for example books, magazines, newsletters) and in radio and television programs designed to address marital problems common among Filipino marriages. Since the results show that many consider consulting spiritual materials, it would be helpful for them if more materials with a more specifically Christian approach would be made available for them.

5. Analyzing the ways of resolving marital conflicts

TABLE 8: Comparison of the ways in resolving marital conflicts in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s, Questions no. 28

Item	Ways to resolve	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Response during conflict	Quarrel	5	5	2	8	20
	Have talk	43	41	44	38	166
	Ignore problem	3	2	1	4	10
	ask for others' help	1	2	3	0	6
	Other	0	4	5	3	12
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Table 8 shows the comparison of the ways of resolving marital conflict in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s age group. From the 214 respondents; 20 or 9.3% answered 'quarrel', 166 or 77.6% answered 'have talk', 10 or 4.7% answered 'ignore problem', 6 or 2.8% answered 'ask for others' help', and 12 or 5.6% answered 'other' - they had other ways of resolving their conflict other than those presented. From the 53 respondents from 20s; 5 or 9.6% answered 'quarrel', 43 or 82.7% answered 'have talk', 3 or 5.8% answered 'ignore problem', 1 or 1.9% answered 'ask for others help'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 5 or 9.3% answered 'quarrel', 41 or 75.9% answered 'have talk', 2 or 3.7% answered 'ignore problem', another 2 or 3.7% answered 'ask for others' help' and 4 or 7.4% answered 'other'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 2 or 3.6% answered 'quarrel', 44 or 80% answered 'have talk', 1 or 1.8% answered 'ignore the problem', 3 or 5.5% answered 'ask for others help', 5 or 9.1% answered 'other'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 8 or 15.1% answered 'quarrel', 38 or 71.7% answered 'have talk', 4 or 7.5% answered 'ignore problem' and 3 or 5.7% answered 'other'.

The results show that the majority of the couples opted to talk to resolve their conflict. Even though only few ask for others' help, I believe that counseling may be helpful for these couples. Majority of the couples opted to talk to each other to resolve their problem but this did not guarantee success in the process. But since there is willingness to talk it over with their marital partner for resolution, I suppose that they will be open to others' help if they can't resolve it by themselves, especially if they know that there is confidential expert Christian counseling available.

In the Philippines, according to one Filipina I interviewed, couples among 50s are expected to have minimal marital conflicts because they are advanced in age and should know already how to cope with their problems. This expectation from society puts pressure on them to just keep their conflicts to themselves and not consider asking for help. Possible reason for this is pride. And according to her that most Filipinos tend to hold this mindset: '*mas matanda kami kaya huwag nyo kaming pangunahan, papunta pa lang kayo pauwi na kami*'. This phrase is in Tagalog and translates as 'refrain from bothering to solve our problems as if you know better, we are older and more experienced than you are'. This kind of mindset does not encourage them to seek the help or advice that could come from their friends or family who might be younger than them. They believe that they know more because they are older and that they can handle their problems by themselves even if the situations needs outside help.

6. Analyzing the church's support in resolving marital conflicts

TABLE 9: Comparison of church's support in marital conflicts in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s,
Questions nos. 31, 32, 33, 34

Items	Frequency	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Received help from church members	very often	2	4	8	2	16
	Often	6	14	9	10	39
	Sometimes	22	16	20	22	80
	Rarely	16	9	8	10	43
	Never	6	11	10	9	36
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Pastor's preaching is helpful	very often	13	27	23	15	78
	Often	19	16	13	20	68
	Sometimes	17	9	17	15	58
	Rarely	2	0	2	3	7
	Never	1	2	0	0	3
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Church minister's help	very often	7	18	18	11	54
	Often	14	15	10	12	51
	Sometimes	16	17	21	15	69
	Rarely	12	2	5	9	28
	Never	3	2	1	6	12
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Attending lectures	very often	1	2	7	1	11
	Often	3	9	11	11	34
	Sometimes	24	29	31	21	105
	Rarely	15	6	5	13	39
	Never	9	8	1	7	25
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Table 9 shows vertically the ways of receiving help from the church in resolving marital conflict among the four age groups. It shows horizontally the frequency and the number of each frequency item. The results are as follows.

Received help from church members. This item aims to identify how frequently couples receive help from church members when they have marital conflict. The results show that from 214 respondents; 16 or 7.5% answered 'very often', 39 or 18.2% answered 'often', 80 or 37.4% answered 'sometimes', 43 or 20.1% answered 'rarely' and 36 or 16.8% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 2 or 3.8% answered 'very often', 6 or 11.5% answered 'often', 22 or 42.3% answered 'sometimes', 16 or 30.8% answered 'rarely' and 6 or 11.5% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 4 or 7.4% answered 'very often', 14 or 25.9% answered 'often', 16 or 29.6% answered 'sometimes', 9 or 16.7% answered 'rarely' and 11 or 20.4% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 8 or 14.5% answered 'very often', 9 or 16.4% answered 'often', 20 or 36.4% answered 'sometimes', 8 or 14.5% answered 'rarely' and 10 or 18.2% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 2 or 3.8% answered 'very often', 10 or 18.9% answered 'often', 22 or 41.5% answered 'sometimes', 10 or 18.9% answered 'rarely' and 9 or 17% answered 'never'.

The results show that 25.7% of the respondents received help from the church 'often' or 'very often'. 57.5% said the 'sometimes' and 'rarely' they received help from the church while 16.8% said they did not received any help at all. The 20s received least help from among the age groups. As the church desires to be a help in the community, the church may try to have simple research why there is quite high number of people among the congregation who said that they received less help from the church and work in this area to be a least be able to extend help whenever the situation requires it. I have observed in the country that most churches do not have counseling programs and the help available at present is not highly trained, so it may be helpful for the church to add counseling programs and have training for the leaders and laypersons. But it does not mean that these trained leaders and laypersons will be expert in the field but at least they will be equipped with the basic and important principles in counseling.

Pastor's preaching is helpful – This item aims to identify if the sermons of the pastors in local churches are helpful for the couples in resolving marital conflict. The results yield that from 214 respondents, 78 or 36.4% answered 'very often', 68 or 31.8% answered 'often', 58 or 27.1% answered 'sometimes', 7 or 3.3% answered 'rarely' and 3 or 1.4% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 13 or 25% answered 'very often', 19 or 36.5% answered 'often', 17 or 32.7% answered 'sometimes', 2 or 3.8% answered 'rarely' and 1 or 1.9% answered 'never'. From 54 respondents from 30s; 27 or 44.4% answered 'very often', 16 or 29.6% answered 'often', 9 or 16.7% answered 'sometimes', and 2 or 3.7% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 23 or 41.8% answered 'very often', 13 or 23.6% answered 'often', 17 or 30.9% answered 'sometimes', 2 or 3.6% answered 'rarely'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 15 or 28.3% answered 'very often', 20 or 37.7% answered 'often', 15 or 28.3% answered 'sometimes', 3 or 5.7% answered 'rarely'.

The results show that 68% of the respondents find the sermons of the pastor helpful oftentimes. Because of this encouraging result, the preachers may be encouraged to develop their skills in preaching on this subject and incorporate some message that may help the couples. There may not be many occasions or opportunities for the preacher to integrate issues regarding marriage, so the church could provide special occasions, such as family days, so that he can extend help not only for those in need at that time but also minister to other couples in the congregation. For busy pastors who might not be able to spend long in counseling this might be a good option. But of course I am not limiting the pastors to strictly follow what is stated above, they can think of ways of how can incorporate their message that would be appropriate and workable in their situation.

Church minister's help – This item aims to identify how frequently couples receive help from church ministers. The results show that from 214 respondents; 54 or 25.2% answered 'very often', 51 or 23.8% answered 'often', 69 or 32.2% answered 'sometimes', 28 or 13.1% answered 'rarely' and 12 or 5.6% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 7 or 13.5% answered 'very often', 14 or 26.9% answered 'often', 16 or 30.8% answered 'sometimes', 12 or 23.1% answered 'rarely', and 3 or 5.8% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 18 or 33.3% answered 'very often', 15 or 27.8% answered 'often', 17 or 31.5% answered 'sometimes', 2 or 3.7% answered 'rarely' and another 2 or 3.7% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 18 or 32.7% answered 'very often', 10 or 18.2% answered 'often', 21 or 38.2% answered 'sometimes', 5 or 9.1% answered 'rarely' and 1 or 1.8% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 11 or 20.8% answered 'very often', 12 or 22.6% answered 'often', 15 or 28.3% answered 'sometimes', 9 or 17% answered 'rarely' and 6 or 11.3% answered 'never'. The results show that 49% of the respondents oftentimes received help from the church ministers.

Because many respondents oftentimes received help from church ministers, this would suggest that the churches could develop the skills of their ministers in extending help in these groups of people in more formal ways. But because ministers have limited time, it would be helpful to training other mature Christians to be recognized as those to whom people can go for help with marriage problems.

Attending Lectures – This item aims to identify how frequently couples attend lectures or seminars about marriage. The results show that from 214 respondents, 11 or 5.14% answered 'very often', 34 or 15.9% answered 'often', 105 or 49.1% answered 'sometimes', 39 or 18.2% answered 'rarely' and 25 or 11.7% answered 'never'. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often', 3 or 5.8% answered 'often', 24 or 46.2% answered 'sometimes', 15 or 28.8% answered 'rarely' and 9 or 17.3% answered 'never'. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 2 or 3.7% answered 'very often', 9 or 16.7% answered 'often', 29 or 53.7% answered 'sometimes', 6 or 11.1% answered 'rarely' and 8 or 14.8% answered 'never'. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 7 or 12.7% answered 'very often', 11 or 20% answered 'often', 31 or 56.4% answered 'sometimes', 5 or 9.1% answered 'rarely' and 1 or 1.8% answered 'never'. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 1 or 1.9% answered 'very often', 11 or 20.8% answered 'often', 21 or 39.6% answered 'sometimes', 13 or 24.5% answered 'rarely' and 7 or 13.2% answered 'never'.

The results show that almost 80% of the respondents are not eager to attend lectures or seminars that could enrich their marriage. The 20s has the least number of respondents who attend lectures and seminars. The 40s is found to be most interested in lectures and seminars compared to the other age groups. As there were a considerable number of respondents who do not attend lectures and seminars, it would be helpful for the church to conduct simple research (like simply asking them during a simple conversation) to find out the possible reason since the researcher has not catered for the question of examining the possible reasons. And as part of my observation of the Filipino attitude as I host seminars and lectures for Filipino church ministers, I found that Filipinos are not that receptive to lectures and seminars that are not participative. If the church will host lectures or seminars for the ministers or for the congregations (married couples included), it would be best that they be participative.

7. Analyzing how Catholic teaching affects marriage and job-related questions

TABLE 10: Comparison of Catholic teaching affecting marriage and job-related questions among 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s

Questions nos. 35, 36, 37, 38

Items	Frequency	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Does the teaching of the Roman Catholic church affect your marriage?	Very often	0	3	2	0	5
	Often	3	4	0	3	10
	Sometimes	14	12	14	5	45
	Rarely	4	11	7	5	27
	Never	31	24	32	40	127
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Do you want to go abroad to earn money for the family?	Yes	33	31	21	11	96
	No	19	23	34	42	118
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
Can you maintain good family relationship even when outside of the country?	Yes	21	27	27	15	90
	No	31	27	28	38	124
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Can job opportunities for women cause problems?	Yes	32	16	17	25	90
	No	20	38	38	28	124
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

Table 10 shows vertically the items relating to the effects of Roman Catholic teaching on marriage and some job-related questions on four different age groups. The results are as follows.

The effect of Roman Catholic teaching on marriage – This item aims to identify if the Roman Catholic teaching has effect on Filipino marriages and the result show that from 214 respondents: 5 or 2.3% answered ‘very often’, 10 or 4.7% answered ‘often’, 45 or 21% answered ‘sometimes’, 27 or 12.6% answered ‘rarely’ and 127 or 59.3% answered ‘never’. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 3 or 5.8% answered ‘often’, 14 or 26.9% answered ‘sometimes’, 4 or 7.7% answered ‘rarely’, and 31 or 59.6% answered ‘never’. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 3 or 5.6% answered ‘very often’, 4 or 7.4% answered ‘often’, 12 or 22.2% answered ‘sometimes’, 11 or 20.4% answered ‘rarely’ and 24 or 44.4% answered ‘never’. From the 55 respondents from the 40s; 2 or 3.6% answered ‘very often’, 14 or 25.5% answered ‘sometimes’, 7 or 12.7% answered ‘rarely’ and 32 or 58.2% answered ‘never’. And from the 53 respondents from 50s; 3 or 5.7% answered ‘often’, 5 or 9.4% answered ‘sometimes’, 5 or 9.4% answered ‘rarely’ and 40 or 75.4% answered ‘never’.

The results show that 72% say that the Roman Catholic teaching rarely if ever affects the state of their marriages. The Roman Catholic teaching is elaborated as the belief in the sanctity of marriage, indissolubility of marriage and the forbidding of artificial methods of family planning. As perceived by the respondents the main emphasis of this item is on the family planning. The Filipinos believe in the sanctity of marriage and this is stressed not only by the Catholic Church but also by the government and the Protestant churches. The state and the church are trying their best to protect the sanctity of marriage but still the decisions of the couples still have the greatest affect on their marital relationship.

Desire to go abroad to earn for the family – This item aims to identify if the respondents have the desire to go abroad to earn for their family. The results show that from 214 respondents; 96 or 44.9% answered ‘yes’ that they have the desire to work abroad for their family while 118 or 55.1% answered that they do not want to go abroad to

work. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 33 or 63.5% desires to go abroad to work while 19 or 36.5% does not have the desire to work abroad. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 31 or 57.4% desires to work abroad while 23 or 42.6% does not have the desire to work abroad. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 21 or 38.2% desires to work abroad while 34 or 61.8% does not have the desire to work abroad. From the 53 respondents from 50s; only 11 or 20.8% desires to work abroad while 42 or 79.2% does not have the desire to work abroad.

The results show that nearly two thirds of the 20s age groups wish to go abroad to earn money for their family and this proportion falls with age, so that only a fifth of the 50s age group consider doing so. Hearing from the sentiments of people from different age group, 20s and 30s are very open for opportunity of working abroad because they are still young and of sufficient strength. Most of them are driven by the desire to give material things to their family. While the 50s are not that willing to go abroad because they are advanced in age and according to them they cannot oftentimes fight the emotional pressure of missing their family in the Philippines.

Possibility of well-maintained family relationship even if one is outside the country – This item aims to identify if the couple can maintain the family relationship well when one of them is outside the country. The results show that from 214 respondents, 90 or 42.1% answered ‘yes’ that they can maintain the relationship while 124 or 57.9% answered ‘no’ that they cannot maintain the family relationship well. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 21 or 40.4% answered ‘yes’ while 31 or 59.6% answered ‘no’. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 27 or 50% answered “yes” and another 27 or 50% said “no”. From the 55 respondents from the 40s; 27 or 49.1% said ‘yes’ while 28 or 50.9% said ‘no’. From the 53 respondents from the 50s; 15 or 28.3% answered ‘yes’ while 38 or 71.7% answered ‘no’.

The result shows that more than half of the respondents acknowledge that it is hard to maintain good family relationship with someone who is outside the country. 40-51% of the respondents from 20s, 30s, and 40s age group believe that they can still maintain a good quality relationship and coming from 20s and 30s also are very open for the opportunity to work abroad. This may be rooted in their desire that they need to maintain their good relationship even they are away in order for them to give future to their family. The 50s has lower percentage of good relationship and this may also the reason that this group has the least desire of working abroad.

Job opportunities for women as cause of problems – This item will identify if the job opportunities for women can cause problems to the couples. The results show that from 214 respondents; 90 or 42.1% answered ‘yes’ can cause problems while 124 or 57.9% answered ‘no’ that it cannot bring problems. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 32 or 61.5% says ‘yes’ while 20 or 38.5% says ‘no’. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 16 or 29.6% says ‘yes’ while 38 or 70.4% says ‘no’. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 17 or 30.9% says ‘yes’ while 38 or 69.1% says ‘no’. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 25 or 47.2% says ‘yes’ while 28 or 52.8% says ‘no’.

The result show that more than half, or 57.9%, of the respondents believe that opportunities given to women cannot cause problems in their marriage. 35.5% coming from 30s and 40s believed that job opportunities for women will not give problems in their marriage. A total of 26.6% from 20s and 50s believed that job opportunities can cause marital problems. My view of the results is that for 20s, they consider that it can cause problems because in this early stage of marriage, most couples, especially the husbands, hold the picture of ideal Filipino family where the wife stays at home and is concern with the household. While for the 50s, most husbands in 50s among Filipinos are emotional and they want their wives to be with them. So if their wife has a job opportunity they cannot easily enjoy time with their wife.

8. Analyzing the groups who received counseling

TABLE 11: Comparison of the couples who receive counseling and by whom counseled in 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s

Question nos. 39, 40

Items	Frequency	20s	30s	40s	50s	Total
Counseled by someone	Yes	48	41	30	38	157
	No	4	13	25	15	57
	Total	52	54	55	53	214
By whom Counseled	Pastor	16	17	14	18	65
	Church members	5	7	3	9	24
	Friend	7	10	8	7	32
	Parents	14	6	3	2	25

	Others	6	1	2	2	11
	No counselor	4	13	25	15	57
	Total	52	54	55	53	214

The kind of counseling the respondents received was informal counseling wherein the respondents visit their ministers without any appointment and ask them for ideas and advice for their married lives and problems.

Normally, this counseling is on just one occasion. There are four barriers to formal counseling in the Philippines.

First of all, Filipinos tend to think that such counseling is only for people who have very serious problems.

Secondly, even though they have a chance to receive formal counseling, they cannot do it because it is too expensive. Thirdly, it is not easy to find counselors who practice normal counseling session by session. Lastly, many local ministers are not formally trained as counselors. Therefore, counseling mentioned below means informal counseling.

Table 11 shows if the respondents ever received counseling and from whom they received it. The results are as follows.

Received counseling – Out from 214 respondents; 157 or 73.4% answered ‘yes’ they received counseling while 57 or 26.6% answered ‘no’ they did not received counseling. From the 52 respondents from 20s; 48 or 92.3% answered ‘yes’ while 4 or 7.7% answered ‘no’. From the 54 respondents from 30s; 41 or 75.9% answered ‘yes’ while 13 or 24.1% answered ‘no’. From the 55 respondents from 40s; 30 or 54.5% answered ‘yes’ while 25 or 45.5% answered ‘no’. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 38 or 71.7% answered ‘yes’ while 15 or 28.3% answered ‘no’. The results show that more than 70% of the respondents received informal counseling. The 20s age group has the highest percentage of respondents who received counseling followed by 30s, 50s and then the 40’s. The 20s has the highest maybe because they are in adjustment stage and they need the counsel of others to help them.

From whom they received counseling – This item aims to identify to whom the respondents usually go to ask for help. The results show that from 214 respondents; 65 or 30.4% ask help from their ‘pastor’, 24 or 11.2% ask help from other ‘church member’, 32 or 15% ask help from their ‘friends’, 25 or 11.7% ask help from their ‘parents’, 11 or 5.1% ask help from ‘others’ while 57 or 26.6% opted not to ask for help or did not received counseling. From the

52 respondents from 20s; 16 or 30.8% received counseling from their 'pastor', 5 or 9.6% received counseling from their other church member, 7 or 13.5% received counseling from their friends, 14 or 26.9% received counseling from their parents, 6 or 11.5% received counseling from 'others' and 4 or 7.7% did not received counseling. From 54 respondents from 30s; 17 or 31.5% received counseling from their pastors, 7 or 13% received counseling from their church mates, 10 or 18.5% received counseling from their friends, 6 or 11.1% received counseling from their parents, 1 or 1.9% received counseling from other while 13 or 24% did not received counseling. From 55 respondents from 40s; 14 or 25.5% received counseling from their pastor, 3 or 5.5% received counseling from their church mates, 8 or 14.5% received counseling from their friends, 3 or 5.5% received counseling from their parents, 2 or 3.6% received counseling form others while 25 or 45.5% did not received counseling. From the 53 respondents from 50s; 18 or 34% received counseling from their pastors, 9 or 17% received counseling form their church mates, 7 or 13.2% received counseling from their friends, 2 or 3.8% received counseling from their parents, 2 or 3.8% received counseling from others, 15 or 28.3% did not received counseling.

From the results 30% of the respondents turn to their pastors for help regardless of whether their pastors are trained in counseling or not. But 26.6% from respondents did not received counseling and 44% from these respondents from 40s. On the basis of these results, there is a need for the church to equip not only the pastors in marital counseling but also church members, because they are the groups which couples already turn to for help. In this manner, the church people will have some skills in extending this counseling help whenever it seems needed. Having the other church people being trained will not mean that they are to hold formal sessions but it will still depend on the counselee since Filipinos are not that used to 'formal counseling'. And most counseling encounters of Filipinos are based on the relationship that the counselee already has with the counselor.

TABLE 11-1: Comparison in the degree of marital conflicts between couples who receive counseling and couples who do not receive counseling

Questions nos. 10, 12, 13

ITEMS		Receiving Counseling	Not Receiving Counseling	T-Value	Sig.
Experiencing marital conflicts	Mean	3.07	3.12	-.438	.662
	Standard deviation	.77	.80		
Thoughts of Separation	Mean	4.30	4.37	-.479	.632
	Standard deviation	.93	.94		
Effort to overcome problems	Mean	4.01	3.82	1.024	.307
	Standard deviation	1.12	1.21		

T-value: is the single value describing the difference of those who received counseling from those who did not among the four age groups. This is actually a ratio of the variance or the spreading of the data between age groups and among the data itself.

P-value (Sig.) is the probability of the t- value or our null hypothesis which is there is no difference among the mean of the four age groups.

The table shows the factors of marital problem, the degree and the ways to which the four age groups resolve the problem and the frequency of those who received counseling and of those who did not receive it. From the data, mean is the single value representing average score of respondents while standard deviation is the average distance or difference among individual scores of respondents.

In the item *experiencing marital conflicts*, the mean scores of those who received counseling and those who did not receive it are 3.07 and 3.12, respectively. There is no significant difference between the two means and this suggests that respondents from both groups most likely answered the third choice which is 'sometimes'. The standard deviation of .77 and .80 means that it is the average distance that each respondents of each group has chosen their

answers in this item. The t-value -.438 has the probability of .662 of our claim that there is no significant difference between the degrees of marital conflicts of those who received counseling from those who did not receive it.

In the item *thoughts of separation*, the mean scores of those who received counseling and those who did not receive are 4.30 and 4.37, respectively. There is no significant difference between the two means which suggests that respondents from both groups most likely answered the fourth choice which is 'rarely'. The standard deviation of .93 and .94 means that it is the average distance that each respondents of each group has chosen their answers in this item. The t-value -.479 has the probability of .632 of our claim that there is no significant difference between the degrees of marital conflict of those who received counseling from those who did not receive it.

In the item *efforts to overcome problems*, the mean scores of those who received counseling and those who did not receive it are 4.01 and 3.82, respectively. There is a slight difference between the two means which suggests that the respondents have taken different ways to overcome their marital problems. The standard deviation of 1.12 and 1.21 means that is the average distance how each respondents of each group has chosen their answers in this item. The t-value of this item which is 1.024 has the probability of .307 of our claim that there is no significant difference between the degrees of marital conflict of those who received counseling from those who did not receive it.

Since the results show that there is no significant difference between those who received and those who did not receive counseling, it signifies that the counseling that was given to them did little to resolve the marital conflicts among the age groups. Taking into account that 157 out of 214 who sought counseling have chosen the pastors, church members, friends, parents to counsel them, this would mean that the counseling they received is less effective. This might have resulted from many factors, one is that most informal counseling encounters they have only happened once or twice and most do not have follow ups. And follow up in counseling is very important to assess the progress of the counseling. Given the fact that most pastors and church ministers are not that skilled in counseling, since most of them did not yet receive any training on how to do the counseling, this may contribute to the poor result of the counseling. Therefore, on the basis of this result, it would be worth examining whether giving the pastors and church ministers training to improve their skills in counseling would lead to their being more effective in giving help to married couples. Or another option would be for the church ministers to conduct a program designed to enrich marital life of their congregation just like the study conducted by Elson T. Lao

mentioned earlier. The marriage enrichment program of Mr. Lao proved to be effected among the married couples being studied in the research. The church may also try other ways of helping the married couples.

From the data that was gathered, we cannot determine that the severity of their marital conflicts has influenced their choice of counselor. But even if we can determine this, it will not affect the result that there is no significant difference between two groups: those who received counseling and those have not received it.

With the data the researcher has interpreted, the researcher will study the resolution of marital conflicts in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

SYNTHESIS: TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING AND RESOLUTION OF MARITAL CONFLICTS IN FILIPINO MARRIAGES

The study has surveyed and assessed the prevalence of some factors which have been held to be possible sources of marital conflicts among married couples. In the following section, the researcher will discuss further the factors that cause marital conflicts and offer possible resolutions for every factor to abate the marital discord among married couples.

1. Study finance management skills

The survey shows that the financial aspect has been held as the top source of discord between the married couples. This has been also affected by the financial crisis of the country. As the result, many are jobless and suffer from financial crisis. On the other hand, even those who have jobs and have enough income are still caught in a dilemma of financial shortage. This has resulted from lack of good finance management skills or the couples might have the wrong attitude to spending their resources, just like a couple I know. In an ideal Filipino family, the wife is responsible for the budgeting and marketing for the food, but what happened between this couple is that the husband is the one who keeps the budget. The husband decided to keep the budget because when his wife did the marketing and budgeting, they always ran out of budget because of the unplanned and impulsive buying of the wife. Some Filipinos have the tendency to spend money without proper planning on how the money should be allocated. In most marriages, one is the over-spender while the other is the saver. And in some cases, one spouse does not trust the other spouse when it comes to handling money. But whoever has the greater influence in the financial instability of the family, it is better for the couple to work together to resolve their financial problems. When financial resources are getting low it is easy for the couple to point the finger at or blame the other partner, but it should be avoided, as it will just aggravate the situation.

The following points are some steps that the couples might find of good help for their financial problems.

1. *Communicate about the problem.* The couple may talk and plan together on how to resolve the problem. “One cause of financial frustration is poor communication between the couple on financial matters.”¹¹⁷ They may plan together how to achieve financial goals.
2. *Set the family priorities together.* The couple should start prioritizing those factors that are most important. Start budgeting to maximize the family resources. Start to eliminate those expenditures that are not necessary and learn to live without having those things.
3. *Start saving.* The family should start saving some amount for the future in order to cope with unexpected expenses. In order to save, the couple would have to start cutting their expenditure strictly for their necessities, especially if the family has just enough income to survive with.
4. *Stay in Control.* Sometimes, the couples may be tempted to ignore their priorities. They should avoid being in debt beyond their means.

The couple should know and follow the basic principles of handling their money. Although these principles do not guarantee financial prosperity, this will keep conflict over money from occurring. As Christians, we should be committed as managers and stewards of our finances and not the owners. “The acknowledgement of God’s ownership is not easy for us, yet the Scripture is clear at this point: ‘For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine and all that is in it.’ (Psalm 50:10-12)”¹¹⁸

Having the knowledge that our possessions are not really ours but we are just stewards of them will change our attitude towards our possession.

¹¹⁷ Ray Linder, “Living within Your Means,” *Money and Marriage, Focus on the Family* (November 2000)

¹¹⁸ Dr. Bob Moorehead, *The Marriage Repair Kit* (USA, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1988), 74.

2. Understanding personality and temperament differences

According to the survey, ranked as second of the causes of marital conflicts is personality and temperament. This is very often among the 40s and 50s age groups. They have lived together as couples, known each other well and should have known how to adjust with one another, but still they are suffering from personality conflict.

Incompatibility is one of the causes of marital discord. Personality or temperament differences alone are not the problem but it is how the couples deal with their incompatibility. "Different personality sets are not enough to make a marriage unworkable. Different values are not enough to make a marriage untenable."¹¹⁹ Differences in personality are said to complement each other. The strength of one's personality should strengthen the other partner's personality. In marriage, we cannot always expect similarities from the couples in every way. Differences in personality are present in every marriage, along with differences in their views, perspective, values and the like. But this should not weaken a good marriage but rather build it up. Every marriage requires the flexibility of each partner. "The flexibility asked for in marriage, in the name of trust, is for a husband or wife to modify behavior or for one to accept the other's behavior, without disturbing the validity of each one's personhood."¹²⁰ It is important for the couple to recognize and accept their differences and to work in this area to strengthen their relationship. The purpose of marriage is not for the couple to think exactly alike but to work together in enriching and in strengthening their marital relationship.

The church may help these couples by providing some marriage enrichment programs for the couples. These seminars will help them to relate with their partners in spite of their differences and incompatibility in some areas. This will also help them to work together as a team and not as competing individuals. The research of Elson T. Lao in 2007 on the marital adjustments with Filipino-Chinese marriages¹²¹ proved to have benefited the respondents who participated in the experiment using the RE-BUILDER seminar, a marriage enrichment programs for the couples. Many had claimed that their marriage have improved after they undergo the workshop. The churches may find the enrichment program helpful in their congregation just taking into account the suggestions posted by the researcher in making the questionnaires as one tool for the program. Although the above-mentioned research was conducted on

¹¹⁹ Lourdes Lapuz, *Filipino Marriages in Crisis* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1977), 79.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 78.

¹²¹ Lao, Elson T. "The Effect of A Skill-based Marriage Enrichment Program on Marital Adjustment and Satisfaction Among Couples from Filipino-Chinese Churches." Diss. Asia Graduate School of Theology (February 2007), 96.

Filipino-Chinese marriages, I think that this program would also be appropriate in Filipino-Filipino marriages by taking the recommended revisions of the researcher. Even though it is a study of mixed marriages, most of these Chinese have lived in the Philippines for a longer period, some were even born in the country while some came from mixed marriages also, which would mean that they had adapted to some of the culture of the Filipinos. Applying the enrichment program that was given in these Filipino-Chinese marriages would be a good option provided that this program will be slightly modified, making it suitable for the pure Filipino marriages.

3. Controlling bad habits

Habits are one of the top ranked causes of marital conflicts among couples. These bad habits may range from the trivial, such as one partner leaving clothes on the floor or leaving the toothbrush on the sink to more serious ones like criticizing, nagging, blaming, complaining, threatening, being bossy. In some marriages, there are habits that may appear unnoticeable because they are just accepted as a form of habits. But still it will affect the marriage. Whatever the habits that upset the marriage, there are ways of solving the problem. Some habits may take longer than others to stop or to replace with good habits.

Below are some of the steps that couples can consider and may apply in their marriages.

1. Talk to the spouse about the habits that caused the conflict. Be careful to communicate the topic to avoid misunderstanding.
2. Lovingly encourage the partner to change the habit and talk about how both of you can help each other to stop the habit.
3. Do not focus only on the bad habits but make a room for appreciation for the other qualities of your partner. Do not allow that these habits and the frustrations it bring become the dominant focus of the relationship for it will give negative feelings for the other partner. The couple must encourage one another and must build each other up in marriage.

4. Roles and expectations

“In traditional Filipino marriages, the husband was regarded as superior status over the wife. He is explicitly the decision-maker. He is allowed more freedom in moving about and is less liable to censure or penalty if he violates

the rule of exclusivity and monogamy. The wife is expected to take care of him, the home, and the children, under any circumstance. Her only excuse from fulfilling this role would be that of her serious physical illness.”¹²² But as time passes, a lot of change has been brought to Filipino marriages, including migration, thus affecting the traditional family set-up. Because of the economic status of the country and where overseas opportunities have opened the way for some Filipinos to work abroad, many families were separated. This brought a lot of changes not only for the Filipino marriages but for the whole family as well. Couples were separated, affecting the functions of each of them in the family. Role reversal is not uncommon in some of these families where the wife has to work abroad for the family leaving the husband to take charge of the households and to care for their children and in some cases both spouses are working abroad leaving their children in their relatives’ care.

Aside from the cases above-mentioned, there are many couples who enter marriage with little or no preparation at all for their new responsibilities as husbands and wives, as fathers and mothers. Even though couples receive pre-marital seminars and counseling prior of their wedding, still it is not enough to prevent problems. Elson T. Lao encountered a couple married for eight months but were about to sign annulment papers¹²³. He was surprised to know that this couple went through 6 sessions of pre-marital counseling. Aside from the fact that pre-marital counseling is not enough, many of them do not have the opportunity to attend some seminars that could assist them on what to do after they get married or help them how to handle the problems that might arise in their marriages. This problem may also be due to the reason that many of these couples came from broken families themselves. Some are abandoned by either their mother or their father or both of their parents, so they grew up in an environment in which the picture of a family is shattered and they do not even know the real meaning of what family is because they themselves have not experienced it. So when they have a family of their own, they do not know how to be a mother or a father and they do not know how to be a good spouse to their partners because they do not have anybody to guide them or to look up to as an example.

Based on the results of this survey, the church can design a program that will give participative seminars or training to those church members who are getting married. This program will equip the future couples for their new

¹²² Lourdes Lapuz, *Filipino Marriages in Crisis* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1977), 88.

¹²³ Lao, Elson T. “*The Effect of a Skill-based Marriage Enrichment Program on Marital Adjustment and Satisfaction Among Couples from Filipino-Chinese Churches.*” Diss. Asia Graduate School of Theology (February 2007), 124.

responsibilities. The church can also create a committee that will design some programs regarding family life. And this committee should be given proper training that might be given by a marriage counselor or any experienced person on dealing with married couples. With this, the new couple will be assisted in their new life with the help of this committee. But this program should be available not only for the new couples but for all married couples. This committee would be designed to educate every couple in how to enrich their marital relationship, educate them on their respective roles in marriage, and how to foster a long-lasting and healthy marriage.

Among the population in our churches, there are some church members coming from broken families. I had encountered in one of the churches I visited, that a girl is longing for a family that will take care of her because she came from a family with separated parents. We cannot ignore that their experiences might have significance in the way they will deal their own family. The church can form a pastoral counseling team that will care for these people, assist them to deal with the emotions that they might hold against their own family and help them to manage the inner conflicts brought by the broken marriage of their parents. If these inner conflicts are not resolved, there is a great possibility that these can contribute to a marital problem in the future. The church can help to resolve these conflicts among the people as early as possible before it will come out within the marriage.

5. Effective communication skills

Communication is vital in any relationship and marriage is not an exception. Just like any other, the health of marital relationship is based with the condition of the communication between the couples. Miscommunication is inevitable. And we often do fail in this area. Hendricks says that “a fundamental error most of us make in relationships is to assume that others view life as we do. This error leads us to misperceptions, false judgments, break down in relationship.”¹²⁴ Men and women communicate in different ways; therefore it is not uncommon that communication tension between couples arises. Poor communication happens when one is not understood by the other. To have a meaningful effective communication is helpful and it only happens when both party understand each other. But effective communication is a skill. It is simplistic to say that we can have an effective communication with just one partner’s effort. There must be a joint effort of the couple to build a good communication. Good communication is

¹²⁴ Howard & Jeanne Hendricks, General Editors with La Vonne Neff, *Husbands and Wives*, op cit., 287.

built by everyday practice. Communication is not through mere words alone but it takes in many forms, for example, tone of voice, choice of words or body movements. It is very important in effective communication that the perception of the receiver corresponds to the meaning that was intended by the sender of the message.

Misunderstanding occurs when there is misperception in the communication of the couples. It is important for the couple to determine how each other can convey their message to their partner, especially because Filipinos have a unique way of expressing themselves compared with other people from different cultures. Filipinos are known for having high context culture in contrast with other people who are using low context culture. "A high context culture possesses mostly information and therefore communication which is internalized in the person or in the physical context. A low context culture, on the other hand is one in which the majority of the information is contained in the explicit code."¹²⁵ Oftentimes, if they cannot express their message in words they try to communicate it through body language. And they expect the other partner would be able to perceive the message being conveyed. True enough not only they relate to foreign people but even to their fellow Filipinos indirectly. "We are indirect because we want to keep our interpersonal encounters pleasant and friendly and we want our channels of communication open."¹²⁶

Most conflicts among the couples are aggravated by poor communication between them. But effective communication can be developed by having a systematic way of communication that would best suit for the couple.

In a marital relationship, there should be an environment of acceptance, an assurance that if one partner would want to communicate something that is important and crucial for the relationship he/she should sense that there is freedom to open it up with the other partner without the fear of retaliation. Miscommunication among couples is not uncommon but it is something that can be solved. The effectiveness of communication between the couple lies in their desire to work in this area.

6. God's design for family Leadership

The headship in the family is exemplified with the headship of Christ over the church. God determines who will bear the responsibility of leading the family. The husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church. The husband did not get the headship because of his strength, intelligence, or because he is more spiritual

¹²⁵ Tomas D. Andres, Pilar B. Ilada-Andres, *Understanding the Filipino* (New Day Publishers, 1987), 67.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 68.

than his wife but simply because it was God who had given him the authority to be the head of his wife. Ephesians 5:23-33 explicitly shows that Jesus is the head of the church by loving and by serving her. And this relationship is used as a pattern for husband and wife: the leadership of the husband should be demonstrated by loving and serving his wife. It is his responsibility to protect, to provide and to lead the family. The leadership in marriage is never equated in the Bible with power and strength but with service. Male headship in marriage is not that of a tyrant, but of a loving, faithful, self-giving husband after the pattern of Christ. As submission is expected from the church towards Christ, so submission is expected from wife towards her husband. Submission does not put the wife in a lower position than her husband but “it is a response to the husband’s leadership that empowers him to love and lead you as Christ does His Church”.¹²⁷ Submission of the wife means her respect and support for his husband as they fulfill their respective responsibilities given by God in marriage.

Today, the traditional husband and wife role is gradually changing as modernization is in progress. In Filipino families, while husbands are earning, many wives are challenged to have their own jobs. This is not only because of the financial situation in order to sustain the family but also for career and academic advancement for the wives. Sometimes the career and academic attainments of wives are higher than those of their husbands. As a result, incomes of some wives are higher than their husbands. This explains why in some Filipino families the wife has the leadership, because family headship or leadership in some families is measured through material provision and achievements.

The local church can distinguish the probable existence of these problems among the church members and can give the church members lectures and seminars about God’s design for the family. Husbands and father’s leadership and headship should be developed. They should know that one of their responsibilities is to be leader and head of their families according to the teaching of the Bible. The couples should be reminded that God has given the authority to the husband not to be the lord and master over his wife but to be leader for the welfare of the wife and family. Mutual submission should be developed as to what is expected from each spouse. Mutual submission means being

¹²⁷ Bob and Yvonne Turnbull, *Team Mates – Building Your Marriage To Complete, Not Compete* (USA, Beacon Hill Press, 1998), 101.

open to one another's point of view for consideration without denying one's own view. It also means willingness to work together for one another and to be devoted to meet each other's needs.

7. Raising Children

One of the biggest challenges for every couple is to maintain their marital relationship amid the pressure of having children. Sometimes raising children can be a source of marital discord on how to discipline the children and how to cope with the pressures in child care and pressures they can give on marital relationship.

Marital relationship. Children can either strengthen or weaken the marital relationship of the couple. "Babies don't have to be hazardous to a relationship's long-term health. Couples who stick together as partners through the process of becoming parents can keep their marriages loving and strong."¹²⁸ Dianne Hales quotes from Jay Belsky, Professor of human development at Pennsylvania State University, "that deterioration in good marriages actually seems to be adaptation".¹²⁹ If the marital relationship is good before a child comes, the relationship will be good afterwards. If the marital relationship is poor, the poorer it will get after the child comes. For a happy marriage, children enrich the marital relationship. Successful marriages with children do not deny the pressures that a child may bring between the couple, but they just know and understand the challenges of having children and they know how to manage these challenges.

Child Care. One of the conflicts couples have is in raising children. Some have different views from their spouses on dealing with their children's upbringing. Some of them do not have rules and regulations when they discipline their children at home. Many partners have different expectations from their children. Many of them leave the child care to their spouses and do not have any interest in it. Many husbands in the Philippines tend to think that rearing the children is the responsibility of their wives. In other cases, some have not been mothered or fathered properly, because they were from broken families. They do not know how to be a father or mother to their children. Some do not know the Bible's teaching on child care and child-rearing.

The first thing a church can do for this matter is to incorporate the Biblical principles in child care and discipline into church programs design to enrich the marital relationships of the couples. Secondly, the church may give

¹²⁸ Marian V. Liautaud, *Swatting the Mosquitos in Marriage* (Grand Rapid Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1994), 64.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

parenting seminars for the couples where the couples will be educated in their active role in rearing their children in line with the Biblical principles.

8. Enriching marital intimacy

Intimacy and sexual conflicts are not ranked very high among the couples as a cause of marital problems. But this is one of the sensitive areas for couples. Intimacy is one important element in marital relationship. It is state of being connected with one's spouse emotionally, physically, spiritually. Deepening marital intimacy should be one of the top priorities of the couples. Marital intimacy is more than a sexual relationship between the couple, rather it is more of quality connection between them emotionally, socially/mentally, spiritually and physically. Before the marriage, intimacy between the couple should be fostered well and this should continue within marriage. Marriage is a high maintenance relationship, it requires time, effort, resources and the like to be mutually shared between couples. It is manifested also in quality and quantity of time spent being together. Intimacy is distinguished by how the couple cares for each other and how committed they are in meeting each other's needs. Intimacy and sexual relationship of the couple are interlinked with each other. The quality of sexual life of the couples will reflect of how intimate the partners are. Once intimacy is developed and well-fostered, the couple will have a satisfying sexual relationship.

But in this country, disclosing information about the sexual life of the couples is a taboo for many Filipinos. According to Dr. Corazon Raymundo in UPI Asia.com, healthy adolescent sexuality is regarded as promiscuity. I suspect that this mentality had influenced some even in their married life and some is due to Filipino reticence of disclosing sexual problem within marriage. Even though a lot of couples are suffering some marital discord in this area, they opt not to tell it to others. This makes it difficult for the churches to identify this problem among the congregation. In regard to this study, I think it is highly likely that there are couples who have not honestly disclosed some information about their sexual relationship in spite of the assurance of confidentiality of their answers. The researcher respects this as part of Filipino culture.

What the church can do for this matter is to incorporate teachings and lectures on marital intimacy and sexual relationship on church programs for couples. This program would enrich the knowledge of the couples as they will be challenged to explore and develop their marital relationship.

Having presented the possible steps that a church may take in helping the married couples in their marital conflict, the following chapter will present the conclusion and recommendations of the researcher based on the findings from the survey questionnaires.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This thesis started with a concern for the Filipino Christian families and couples facing marital conflict and problems. There was also a concern to provide the local churches with ideas on pastoral counseling in order to help such couples. And furthermore the researcher would like to lay some Biblical foundations to encourage and motivate local ministers to take an interest in pastoral counseling or improve their pastoral counseling. The survey has shown the incidence and extent of marital conflict among various age groups, the ways in which they respond to conflict and the sources of help they seek. On the basis of the foregoing analysis of the results, I tentatively make the following suggestions.

For further research

1. The researcher will consider adding questions to the survey that will test the correlation of the spiritual condition of married couples, the effect of their parents' marriage and their experiences before they got married with how the couples handle their marital conflicts.
2. The researcher will consider taking both partners in a couple as respondents of the further study/research to evaluate and compare the perceptions of each partner in their marital condition and their view of marriage.
3. Evaluate closely the type of counseling (informal type) that exists in the churches, how it is done aside from the fact that most of these counseling encounters are done in church hallways, cafeteria, parks, etc. And the researcher may add some questions to the survey, evaluating if the respondents are satisfied with the counseling they received from the church ministers.
4. Because in the survey a quarter of the total number of respondents said that they received help in their marriages from the church, the researcher may evaluate the underlying reasons why most of the couples received less help from the church.

5. If some churches apply some of the suggestions in the thesis, the researcher may evaluate the effectiveness of those suggestions and may also ask the respondents how the local churches and the government can help them in promoting their marriages. In this way, we will not only be organizing program, lectures, seminars that we think can help them but we will be working on the basis of their feedback on how we can best help them in most of their situations.

For the local churches

1. Since 68.23% of the respondents find that their pastor's preaching is helpful for the couples in solving their marital problems, the church may incorporate, if possible, Biblical principles and practical solutions that would seem helpful in marital relationship in preaching or in activities whenever it seems appropriate to integrate.
2. The church members, especially the church workers and ministers, may be given equipping lecture or seminars on counseling. The church may design a program and integrate counseling techniques and principles. This is not to say that the church will produce Christian counselors by doing this but this is to educate the congregation in at least the basics of counseling so that they can help each other better informally. It is my observation that most church members especially the ministers are tempted to always talk and talk and give advice, rather than listen, to those people who come to them for help. At some points this style is not helpful for those people who need help.
3. Only 25.7% of the respondents say that they often or very often receive help from the church. The church may have its reason why only few receive help from them but regardless of this, the church has a duty to help these couples because this is one of the purposes of the church. As personally observed by the researcher, most churches in the city do not have a counseling program and most of the pastors and even the ministers are not well equipped in this area. Usually the counseling done in churches is informal. The church may be strengthened in this area and the pastor or other ministers can be trained in some theological seminary offering Biblical counseling courses. This should make a significant difference if there are improvements in the usual counseling encounters of the church ministers. The ministers will know how to follow through those people who seek help and foster their holistic growth. Being trained and equipped in this area will be helpful for the church as a whole. Healthy marriages in church will contribute a lot to the church growth and in its function.

4. Only 21% of the respondents say that they often attended lectures on marriage life, this shows that many couples in churches today have less interest in lectures or seminars. With the present set-up in most churches in the City, some churches in Davao City or some organizations from other parts of the country sometimes holds seminars, trainings or lectures which they made open for other churches, the church ministers may attend these trainings and lectures. The church itself may hold its own seminar or lectures. One way in which the church could educate the couples is through lectures and seminars. The church may conduct a study of to what extent lectures and seminar appeal to them. From the survey, the church may design programs strengthening the weaknesses that these couples see in a lecture or seminar. Based on my personal observation, the most lectures and seminars at present are less interactive. Therefore, the church may have marriage enrichment programs that will be interactive for the couples and then they will be encouraged to participate because they will not only learn how to develop their marital relationship but they will also have the enjoyment of participation.
5. The church may apply the Skill-Based Marriage Enrichment Program for the marital adjustments and satisfaction of the couples in many churches. A research study done by Elson T. Lao in 2007 entitled “The Effect of a Skill-based Marriage Enrichment Program on Marital Adjustment and Satisfaction among Couples from Filipino-Chinese Churches” proves that the program has a significant effect on the marital relationship of the couples. “The skill-based programs which have a psycho-educational aspect like lecture-based program but more focused and concerned on how to put the principles taught into practice. It is a program that seeks to develop interaction skills in marriage.”¹³⁰ As recommended by the researcher, in the programs more interactions should be included during the sessions. These programs should add more illustrations and testimonies of the couples, use of vernacular with the participant couples and the church may design a post-workshop as a follow-up of the skill-based program.

¹³⁰ Elson T. Lao, “*The Effect of A Skill-Based Marriage Enrichment Program on Marital Adjustment and Satisfaction Among Couples From Filipino-Chinese Churches*”, Diss., Asia Graduate School of Theology (February 2007), 56.

For husbands and wives

In this day when marriage breakdown is a common phenomenon among Christians and non-Christians, the husband and wife should not lay the future of their relationship entirely in the hands of church ministers or other people. The couples should work toward the betterment of their relationship. The couples can participate in the activities that the government or local churches offer to foster and to strengthen the marriages. They can engage themselves and assist in activities given by their local churches design to build up marriages, by doing so they will find that their marriages will be strengthened also. According to Mr. Elson Lao "... the couples who volunteer to assist him with the workshop in helping other couples, testify that their marriages becomes stronger and strengthened. Even the marriage of Mr. Elson T. Lao is being strengthened as he works with other couples in developing their marital relationship."¹³¹ In the process of helping other couples, the couples may learn and may discover something that will be of help in their own marriage.

Furthermore, the couples could not only engage themselves in helping other couples but they may help the church in educating the teens and other young people who are considering getting married. They may share their own testimonies to these people as something that can be drawn on for lessons about marriage.

For the Government

The instability of many marriages in the country is undeniable. Since family is considered as the basic unit of the society, if family fails then it follows that society will fail also. The government is in a position to take an active role in preserving and in strengthening Filipino marriages, which in turn will strengthen the nation as a whole.

The following are some suggestions that the government can take as a start to rebuild marriages.

1. The government should be encouraged to reevaluate the pre-marital counseling given to the couples who are marrying. Pre-marital counseling should focus on how to educate and prepare the couples about married life not just giving the counseling for the purpose of birth/population control. This should be given by people who

¹³¹ Ibid., 141.

are experienced and knowledgeable in pre-marital/marital counseling. The government may cooperate with non-governmental organizations who are dedicated to nurturing stable marriages and helping couples in marital problems. The government may link this program in the locality and may work with the *barangays* (the smallest administrative division in Philippines society) and in *puroks* (divisions within a *barangay*).

2. The local government may create a city ordinance that would protect the marriage of those couples contemplating on filing for separation or annulment. This ordinance may request the couples to undergo a program (like reconciliation or marriage enrichment program) before they can file for separation or annulment. The program would be given by the group organized by the government to work with couples in nurturing their marriages. And this group would evaluate the marital status of the couple after they undergo marital enrichment program (to discover if the marriage can be salvaged or the marriage is hopeless, a candidate for separation or annulment). The couple may be allowed to file for separation or annulment upon the recommendation or referral of this organized group that the couple is qualified to do so.
3. The local government may associate with and support the local churches or community-based Christian organizations in their programs fostering stronger marriages.
4. As the media is a strong and effective tool in communication, the government may strengthen its campaign in promoting healthy marriages through media such as radio, television and the press. The government may support those existing programs that promote healthy marriages. Where there is no program in operation for promoting healthy marriages and family, the government may consider starting one.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that there is no significant difference in the degree of marital conflict between those who received counseling and those who did not receive it. From the researcher's observation, this may have resulted from the type of counseling they received. Most counseling that these couples received happened informally once or twice and did not have follow-up. Oftentimes, these counseling sessions also did not have any feedback from the counselee if there was any improvement or progress in their situation so that the counselor may know what other actions they will take further for the betterment of their marital problems. One factor also might be that the counselor is not knowledgeable enough to deal with the situation of the marital problems. Oftentimes, the counselor just deal with the surface problems but not with the root of the problems.

As the sanctity of marriage is protected by the law and even the local churches, the husbands and wives themselves may also show their willingness and interests in preserving their own marriages. They cannot solely put the future of their marital relationship in the hands of other people. As the family is considered in the country to be the basic unit in society, the condition of every Filipino family and marriage will directly affect society. I have observed also that Filipinos are somehow very active to seek changes in their country's political system, problems with poverty, unemployment and corruption. It would be good if they were also eager to see changes for the betterment in the country's family system. As we have learned in the previous chapters how the traditional Filipino culture has changed, efforts should be made in order to preserve the well-being of every family in the changing culture. The changes for the better the Filipinos want to see in their society would be impossible unless Filipino marriages are strengthened. Analysis of the results of this survey convinces me that implementing the above suggestions will contribute to strengthening marriage and the family, and thus the church and society.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

It will be highly appreciated if you give an honest answer to each question by putting the mark X on the space provided after the answer of your choice.

1. Sex : male ---- female ----

2. Age : ----

3. Educational Background

Yourself : a. elementary graduate --- b. high school graduate ---
 c. college graduate ---

Spouse : a. elementary graduate --- b. high school graduate ---
 c. college graduate ---

4. Vocation : a. employee --- b. professional ---
 c. self-employed --- d. others ---

5. Position in church :

Yourself : a. layperson --- b. deacon or deaconess ---
 c. elder --- d. leader(worker) ---

Spouse : a. layperson --- b. deacon or deaconess ---
 c. elder --- d. leader(worker) ---

6. Number of children : a. 1 --- b. 2 --- c. 3 --- d. 4 ---

 e. more --- f. none ---

7. The length of marriage : a. 1-2 years --- b. 3-5 years ---
 c. 6-10 years --- d. more than 10 years ---

8. Is your marriage legally registered?

 a. yes --- b. no. ---

9. Did you live together before you married?

- a. yes --- b. no. ---

10. How often do you experience marital problems?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---

11. Are you suffering from marital problems?

- a. yes --- b. no. ---

12. Do you ever think of divorcing/separating when you are in marital troubles?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---

13. Do you make an effort to overcome marital problems?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---

14. Please arrange the following causes of marital conflict in numerical order (1 being most frequent) according to their frequency in your marriage. Ignore those that do not apply to your marriage. -----

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| the leadership --- | role difficulty --- | personality --- |
| sex life --- | financial matter --- | family relationship --- |
| children --- | religious --- | family background --- |
| leisure --- | intimacy --- | communication --- |
| habits --- | others(specify) --- | |

15. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of leadership?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---

16. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of role difficulty?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---

17. Has your couple ever experienced any problems due to temper or personality?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
18. Has your couple ever experienced any problems due to sexual conflict?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
19. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of financial problems?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
20. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of extended family relationship?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
21. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of relationship with your children?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
22. Has your couple ever experienced any conflict because of religion?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
23. Does your couple think that a different family background is a cause of marital problems?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
24. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of leisure life?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---
25. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because lack of intimacy?
- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never ---

26. Has your couple ever experienced any problems because of habits?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never ---

27. Does your couple make any effort to solve your marital conflict immediately?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

28. How do you respond when you are in marital problems?

- a. quarrel --- b. have talk --- c. ignore the problems ---
- d. ask for other's help --- e. others(specify) ---

29. How often do you try to solve marital conflict with sincere talk?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

30. Have you ever used spiritual resources when you are in marital problems?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

31. Have you ever received the help of church members?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

32. Do you think that your pastor's preaching is helpful in solving the problems you experience as a couple?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

33. Do you think that your minister gave you help when you were in marital trouble?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

34. Have you ever attended any lectures or seminar on marriage life?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
- d. rarely --- e. never --

35. Does the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on marital life affect your marriage life?

- a. very often --- b. often --- c. sometimes ---
d. rarely --- e. never --

36. Do you want to go abroad to make money for your family?

- a. yes --- b. no ---

37. Do you think that you can still maintain good family relationship even you are abroad for making money?

- a. yes --- b. no ---

38. Do you think that more job opportunities for the women in our society can cause more marital problems?

- a. yes --- b. no. ---

39. Have you ever been counseled by someone?

- a. yes --- b. no. ---

40. If you gave 'yes' as an answer to question no. 39,

Who was it?

- a. pastor --- b. church member --- c. friend ---
d. parents --- e. other(specify) ---

Your personal data will be treated as anonymous and confidential.

This questionnaire is used to plan a better ministry to married couples.

Thank you very much for your honest answers in this Questionnaire.

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