

## **THE IMPACT OF PASTORAL CARE ON MARRIAGE AND COUNSELING IN UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN OGUGU AREA OF KOGI STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*This research work ‘‘The Impact of pastoral care on marriage and counseling in United Evangelical Church Unyi Ogugu Superintendency Ogugu Area Conference’’ is an attempt to re-awaken marriages, church and the society at large to different challenges facing them on daily basis and suggest the need for counseling as a means to tackle the problem at each level. The society needs moral rehabilitation, which the pastoral care and counseling is more than any other thing to succeed. The subject therefore, calls on the pastors, counselors and leaders to wake-up to their responsibilities in order to bring peace and harmony to the society through the means of counseling. This work seeks to make the members of the church and community see the need to seek counseling in difficult and try moments, to propose the way forward for the church leaders and members, and also to help as a source of material for future research who might want to embark on similar studies. In this thesis, it is obvious that there is no place where crisis cannot be found, therefore, since problems are enormous, so counseling is the answer to such lingering situation. This is because, ‘‘problem shared is half solved’’. The methodology adopted in this study is descriptive and analytical to identify the impact of pastoral care on marriage and counseling in the church in regards to data collection, the primary and secondary source are used.*

**Keywords:** Impact, Pastoral, Care, Marriage and Counseling.

### **Introduction**

The essential and credibility impact of pastoral care on marriage and counseling is obvious in the United Evangelical Church in Unyi Ogugu Superintendency, Ogugu area conference and in the world when it comes to fulfillment of God’s purpose for humanity. Counseling is indispensable and it cannot be over emphasized in

the family, community, society and individual life in this contemporary time and also the perspective to resolve arises situation in our churches. There are challenges and crisis all over in the societies and communities. These challenges that people encounter are trying to crush down the peaceful co-existence among couples then found their purpose and entered to destroy our youth, polluting the heart of men and women in the church to be stubborn and corrupt. But then, what is the mind of God towards His church and why is it that what is found in the society and community are also found in the church of God and His people? The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of pastoral care and counseling on united evangelical church Unyi Ogugu superintendence, Ogugu Area Conference. The objectives are: to create an answer to the impact of pastoral care and counseling on the church; to draw the attention of the church leaders to the need of pastoral care and counseling; to make the members of church and community see the need to seek counseling in difficult and trying moments; to analyze the impact of counseling on the church; to propose the way forward for the church leaders and members. Precisely, for church and society to grow, pastoral care and counseling has become significant in the society, church or any organization to the top. If counseling services are provided, it will help individual to enlighten people to discover the mind of God concerning their lives and the right step towards career/vocation, marriage family and religious conflict and so on. Through pastoral counseling, all these challenges in church and society will be taken care of to a reasonable extent. The challenges in the church and community coupled with the negligence of pastoral care and counseling motivated the researcher to embark on this research.

### **Definition of Terms**

Impact is the powerful effect that something has on something (Hornsby 598). Impact is making positive difference; impact is to have a strong effect on something or someone. It is to imprint a message or life style on another indelibly. It is also to influence some behaviours by certain actions or reactions. Impact is to cause an inflow from you to another's life effectively. It is to be actively involved in the making of a person's life and destiny (Michael 1)

Pastoral has to do with dealing with shepherds or rural life in a usually artificial manner and typically drawing a contrast between the innocent and serenity of the simple life and the misery and corruption of city and specially court life (Merriam 505)

Caring is a feeling and it exhibits empathy and concern for others (Gilbert 116). Care is to protect someone or provide the thing that person or thing needs. (<https://dictionary.cambridge>) Marriage is the formal union between a man and a woman as husband and wife. It is for adults and not for children. Therefore, an adult remains single until he/she marries; even though he/she has all the marriageable ability. Human being needs marriage because it is an obligation from God Almighty as indicated (Godwin 2)

Counseling is the utilization of a variety of healing method to help people handle their problem and crisis more growthful and experience healing of their brokenness (Ighokparowho 12). Counseling is a process that occurs between the client and counselor in which clients are facilitated to make decision and plan their process of behaving, feeling (Syed 21).

In my candid opinion the author is not using/adopting any of the above outside the general context. Therefore, I will suggest that the definition of terms as a subheading should be expunged.

### **General Overview of Counseling**

The concept of counseling is to help build both the individual and in the area where they have problem or hearts broken. Several Christian scholars and minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ have written widely about the idea of counseling in every organization or church. The concept is to create opportunities and suitable environment for personal, social, educational and vocation growth of the individual. It is to assist children of God to explore and participate in their own development towards becoming purposefully self directed in a changing society.

According to Durajaiye, 'Counseling is a means by which the counselee come to achieve self understanding and thereby in better position understanding and solve his problems. (10).

There is nothing happen without something cause it and whatever happen, is as a result of what something causes to happen. God makes everything good and simple for man but as a result of violation of God instruction, life and everything became complicated beyond man comprehension. Counseling does not just appear, it purposely came to existence as a result of helping humanity in actualizing God's purpose. It is to assist or enable man in the area of lack of understanding in some complicated issues.

Life on earth became a mystery after God curse man, the good plan of God toward man was immediately changed from the original plan. Man became incompetent in discovering to recover God's ordain purpose on earth. Lack of understanding and inability to tackle life problems, necessitated the existence of counseling. Ability to assist others or groups of people to solve their problems by giving them guidance, direction or instruction of hope that can help people discover to recover responsibility and ability. It is the way of helping someone who is in predicament seeking for solution and the necessary step to take in order to be free from problems.

Counseling is a helping process which involves a special kind of relationship between client and counselor meant to help the counselee towards overcoming obstacles to his growth and toward achieving optimum development of his personal resources (Patterson 9-10).

### **Pastoral Care**

Pastoral care is the term that is broadly aligned to a ministry of compassion, encouragement and transformation within the Christian life. It encapsulates the need to care for support, and demonstrate unconditional love, acceptance and encouragement, bringing hope, biblical truth and practical advice to people (usually but not limited to church members). Pastoral care also involves being present with, listening to and journeying alongside the problems of people sharing burdens and pray for those in our care.

According to Wayne, pastoral care is "the Christian pastoral combined fortification and confrontation of person in times of both emergency crisis and developmental crisis (3). Anderson refers to discipline in caring for individuals; "Giving people pastoral care to people means helping them become independent in faith in a healthy way (120).

Researcher observes that in the process of providing help or solution for someone in critical condition both physical and spiritual emergency and developmental problems which intend to destroy or taken person's life that what pastoral care is all about. According to the definition of Wayne and Anderson it is an ancient model of emotional and spiritual support that can be found in all cultures and traditions. In its most general sense, pastoral care refers to the ministry/service usually performed by a pastor. Some denominations of the Christian faith use the phrase to refer to more specific aspects of a pastor's ministry, such as counseling and visitation. Thus in a sense pastoral counseling may be construed as a sub-set of pastoral care. The care idea of pastoral care is those pastors are to care. The word pastor comes from Latin word for "shepherd". A pastor is to be a shepherd or caretaker of God's flock (<http://www.got.question.org/pastoracare.html>).

### **Marriage**

Marriage is an institution initiated and ordained by God for His purpose. Whether for the believers and unbelievers, it is a universal phenomenon in every society. Scripture has proved that God is the source of marriage.

And the Lord God says, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. and of my flesh: he shall be called woman, because she was made from the rib which the Lord God had taken from man and made her a woman, and brought her unto the man and Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh out of man (Genesis 2:18, 22-3)

The need for the woman in the life of a man is not that of incompetence, but incompleteness. It is not good to be alone because truthfully man will not be complete, it is not total, but part of a whole. It is a fraction! The best thing a man can achieve alone is at best fractional! Marriage makes it complete and whole. Divorce breaks it again into incomplete fractions. No matter how decorated people make their lives; no matter how dedicated people become; no matter how decided people are; if alone

it is not good enough because it is but a fraction. The whole picture would never come to it glamour until the two become “one flesh”. (Gbile 43)

God who initiated marriage values and upholds it as a relevant and prominent in both man and woman’s life. The coming together of a man and a woman to become one flesh according to the word of God is a significant union with a concrete foundation to bring forth God’s purpose for mankind.

Marriage is the formal union between a man and a woman as husband and wife. It is for adults and not for children. Therefore, an adult remains single until he/she marries; even though he/she has all the marriageable ability. Human being need marriage because it is an obligation from God Almighty as indicated (Godwin 2)

When people from different family background, with different behaviors and culture, decide to come together for the rest of their lives to live as husband and wife for better worst according to the word of God until death do them part, signifies what marriage is all about.

It is necessary and relevant to consider four reasons for instituting marriage according to Godwin as follows: To fulfill God’s mandate in destiny, to satisfy mutual sexual desires, for the purpose of procreation and for mutual companionship.

### **Prominent Issues in Marriage Counseling**

The existence of counseling is as a result of prominent issues that are confronting man on daily basis. It is obvious that man is born into the world of war, but that was not the planned of God for man from the beginning. The challenges that are confronting man in this world are the handwork of man and is inevitable and inescapable. These problems that man is battling with get escalated everyday beyond comprehension and control. Some have died, some are at the point of death and some are at the point of dilemma. The evil in the world is escalating purposely to achieve the goals of its master (Satan) who vowed to destroy the world and the people in it. Many marriages have been destroyed and some are on fire, children of tomorrow are all over crying in the entire world where their hope, the obligation is and responsibility of the marriage had been jeopardized by both parents and their children. God with ultimate love for man have revealed in the Bible that the problems or challenges that people are facing is as a result of lack of knowledge. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:5 *KJV*).

Christian psychology has move to center of evangelism. Psychologist write best selling Christian Books. Psychologist are prominent on Christian television and radio shows; they are the ones we look to for guidance on family problems and personal growth 1991 Christian today reader. Survey suggests that evangelism are far more likely to take the problems to a counselor than to a pastor. (Thirty three percent sought “professional” help, verse 10 percent who looked to a

pastor). Pastors too have joined the surge, realizing that their congregation care more for homilies on "Healing the Hurts of the inner child" than on "the missionary mind of the Apostle Paul". Words like addition, self-esteem, dysfunctional sprinkle many Sunday morning sermons. Evangelical seminaries find their counseling department growing fast. Wheaton College, a bastion of evangelical orthodoxy, is launching its first doctoral program, not in theology or biblical studies, but in psychology. (24)

All these problems that people are encountering is as a result of lack of understanding, logical interpretation and ignorant, which necessitates the existence of pastoral care on marriage and counseling that has become ultimate indispensable solution for man problems. As the scripture says "where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov 11:14 KJV).

### **Reconciliation in Divorce and Remarriage**

As a concrete example of the crucial nature of the reconciliation, let us consider the growing problems of divorce among Christian. This is a problem with which every Christian, pastor increasingly will find confronted with.

According to Murray John sketches several situation in the back of his handbook "divorce, as paradigms for handling practical cases" (60-61). They are helpful, but limited in use. A pastor soon discovers that there are many situation that do not fit into the framework of these paradigms. However, the addition of one further factor to what Murray has said so well about marriage and divorce will bring such problem cases within their framework and will enable counselors to bring every cases to a successful conclusion.

### **Crises in Marriage homes**

Crises in marriage home cause havoc and damage that is beyond the power of husband and wife. The assertion "for better and for worst" though is not scriptural, but library taken, is what a couple should expect in marriage. Therefore, in exclaiming marriage vows, the couples should not lost sight of this, as an integral part of marriage such, sometimes parties forget all about the worst side of marriage and therefore concentrate only on the good side. Crises in marriage home do not just occur there are powers and spirit initiating people to cause asunder between couple. These are some of the causes that can generate crises in a marriage home: anger, resentment, fear, disappointment, infidelity, murder, money, sex, communication and so on. Thus:

When marriage breaks up when either one of the particular is imprisoned for a crime, either committed or not committed, however, this depend on the enormity and gravity of the offence. An offence which has to do with murder, robbery and stealing will be seriously frowned

at being a partner and member of both families. However, considering the shame embarrassment and the psychological torture this will have on the partner. On the other hand, the length or trials and imprisonment on the other hand will leave a partner with no other option but to sue for divorce based on character and long absence from home (Milham 100).

### **The Effect of Divorce on Children**

One of the concerns of most parents is the psychological effects of divorce on their children. Divorce has a long lasting effect on children. The effects do not always show up the first year after divorce since some children are able to repress their feelings. Preschooler react strongly to the separation. The children have trouble sleeping because sad and withdrawn mainly feel their behavior courses the divorce. Children of five to eight years suffer feelings of loss, rejection, guilt and loyalty conflicts. These children fear the permanent loss of absent parent and fantasize about the parents return. School worker suffers, many little boys show an intense longing for their father that seems physically painful. Intense anger is felt by children toward their parent for setting divorce. These children also suffer grief, anxiety, and acute sense of loneliness and a sense of powerless. These children also may complain somatic symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, delinquent behavior may appear such as lying, theft and early sexual misbehaviors. These children worry about their parents and try to help them cope (Cleveland 294).

The result of long-term effects of divorce on children often leads children into depression or causes them to develop irrational behavior. A child that was well behaved when both parents were together can suddenly become disruptive aggressive as well as less attentive after the divorce (John 103).

### **Barrenness**

Barrenness is another problem that is confronting this contemporary generation of believers and the society, due to wrong interpretation and misunderstanding of what marriage is all about. Barrenness is the state usually of a woman of having no children or being unable to have children. (i.e) Infertility, sterility which is the state of being unable to produce offspring in a woman. It is inability to impregnate in a man. [[www.thefredictionary.com](http://www.thefredictionary.com)>barrenness]. The mind of God for instituted marriage is for man not to be alone. "I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). A helper in this context is someone who is to assist the man, in order to accomplish the purpose and be comforted. There is no condition for separation or divorce if there is no children despite the pain and depression, there are other ways to resolve the matter without separation. That is why:

The grieving often takes place without the support of family and friends because the couple grieves for intangibles: the loss of their

self-ideal and denial of expectations, goals, and experiences. The final phase-resolution-occurs when the couple is forced to consider alternative to a natural child, such as adoption, in vitro fertilization, surrogate parenting, or child-free living (Anne. 13-20)

Many people in this contemporary society adopt adaptable false belief that is not biblical, the primary purpose of marriage is to raise children, which means without children in marriage, the status of marriage is defaulted and that is why many couples today engage in crises which always lead to divorce because their aims of getting married are not achieved. According to the Richard Onwambiko, a philosopher and a writer of African contemporary norms and customs state ‘‘the essence of marriage is production’’ (80). The interpretation or analysis of this definition of marriage is that a woman who cannot produce children has given the man an opportunity for divorce. In African perspective tradition belief, a man’s worth is determined by the number of children the man raises. Hence, a large population in a family was wealth by itself a primary pre-requisite to marital possession. A woman after one year of marriage without an issue will be equally given different names ranging from ‘‘witch’’, ‘‘wizard’’ man, and harlot and sea goddess. However, these names vary from culture to culture.

### **Impact of Pastoral Counseling on the Church and Unyi Ogugu Superintency Impact on the Church Growth**

Growth is part of what God conceived in mind for the church and everything God has created. The mind set of God Almighty toward humanity is to multiply and have dominion. Genesis 1:27-28 state that, ‘‘God created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in numbers; fill the earth and subdue it’’. If God nature conceived a heart towards humanity to increase them God Almighty is in a great demand from humanity to also play a major roles for church increase through counseling that will lead to church growth.

The growth movement began with the publication of Donald McGavran’s book the bridges of God. McGavran was a third generation Christian missionary to India, where his observations of how churches growth (the title of another of his books) went beyond typical theological discussion to the need to discern sociological factors that affected receptivity to the Christianity Gospel among non Christian peoples. In 1965, he organized the school world mission at fuller theology a seminary in Pasadena, California, which was the institution home base for church growth studies until after his death. It has been the training ground for ten thousand of pastors and missionaries of one hundred mainly evangelized denominations. (15-20). It has become apparent that people go to church to find answers to their problems and this makes the issues of pastoral counseling and care very crucial in contemporary church settings. While people may be happy to worship God, it is an undeniable fact, in the light of recent developments, that churches which fail to meet the needs of their church members stand the risk of not achieving significant church growth, as many

of their church members could easily defect to some of the other churches and ministries that appear to have answers to the problems these defecting members might be facing. Through pastors and leaders sat closer to their church members to know the problems members face in order to implement appropriate solution through counseling, brings effective church growth. "The growth of the church depend on God ultimate counseling" (David Interview 11/2021). Through pastoral counseling, the church will fulfill the great task that people who have not yet accepted the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Personal Savior are brought into relationship and responsible with Christ and now true member of the church.

### **Impact on Pastoral Ministry**

Counseling is an important factor in pastoral role toward church growth. It is a motivational role that illuminates and directs the church members to reform on effective work that will bring expansion and to make the gospel more relevant to the people situation. Pastor care and counseling is meant to impact individual's life, to guide, protect, direct, equip, people to have understanding of people to perform effective role towards the growth, and develop the church and also enable people to fulfill the will of God for their lives. Pastor as a leader for effective church growth is a leading leader.

### **Impact on the Men**

Just as people honor the bible by using it as God intended, in the same way to human life when people recognize it as God intended. God designed human being to dynamically respond to the situations around man and the response is multifaceted. In life people do not just think, people also want and choose. People need their minds instructed, but also their hearts captured. Men need to make new choices, but also need to be shown a vision of what those choices will do. People need help understanding how their private thoughts affect the way people relate to the important people in their lives, or how the events that happened to people in the past affect their assumption about the future. That is why "If God has given you his word and his spirit dwells within you, there is much more you can do than you probably realize (Jeremy. 43).

Man is God representative on this earth, authority and power have been given to man to rule the earth. God made man to be perfect but because of the disobedient, calamity and life problems became inevitable. These challenges of life brought man into untold predicament and life frustration. Man can no longer make headways and counseling came in to help men in the church that are not making it physically and spiritually.

### **Conclusion**

The researchers were able to discuss on the concept of counseling for growth in bringing out an idea and policy that will be of a benefit to church growth,

the value of church growth was also examined, in the sense that growth of our time to experience and achieve a goal of growth holistically. The mind set of God is that people and everything around man should have knowledge of growth and grow both physically and spiritually. Counseling brings growth in church leaders and the church must value counseling and place impact on it as a way for church growth to avoid the falling away of the future glory of the church. The major emphasis of this work is concerned with the counseling of individuals on one on one basis. It is well known however, that much counseling also occur in groups, led by the researcher, the group, participants come together to share their problems and help one another. Within the group there is acceptance, freedom to share and a sense of solidarity. Today, people in Unyi Ogugu superintendency have gotten freedom from some of the prominent issues confronting the church and marriage home: loneliness, infidelity, cultism and bereave and so on. Counseling has become indispensable and the bedrock for church growth. It is seen as a likely solution to church, problems, because Jesus Christ was successful by the counsel of God on the earth; so, with counseling and prayer, the growth of the church is indisputable and inevitable.

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#### **Table of Oral Interviews**

S/No	Name	Age	Occupation	Location	Date
1	David Peter	35 years	Teacher	Omonoja Aladu Ogugu	1/06/2023