

Marriage Is More Than A Feeling
Pastoral Care For Marriages In Crisis

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Doctor of Ministry Degree

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Graduate Studies Program
New York, NY

Type Date: March 1, 2010
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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

The Issue and The Crisis

Relevant Abbreviations

The following list of abbreviations will be used within the body of this document.

KJV - King James Version Bible
NIV - New International Version Bible
JBP - J. B. Phillips New Testament Bible
Msg - Message Bible

Statement of the Issue

The issue that visibly looms within our borders is the present state of the marriage institution. Undoubtedly, as we will state later, it is in a state of flux especially in our churches. The purpose of this project is to develop a host of theological and clinical means of enhancing the level of intimacy within the Christian marriage.

Hypothesis

Marital intimacy can be enhanced through educating and developing group therapy/support groups amongst Christian couples. By utilizing theological principles and clinical techniques, Christian couples will be motivated to accentuate their marriages with positive interactions instead of falling prey to negative and destructive behavior.

Focus Situation

Based upon thousands of books that have been written on the subject of marriage it is a pure interest in this subject and the problems surrounding the greatest institution involving interpersonal relationships. Men and women were not created to live alone and marriage has been the vehicle to effectuate this idea. However, due to the many

problems that impact the institution of marriage, many might strongly disagree with the previous statement.

Among the myriad of problems that adversely affect the quality of marital relations, is the following list that could also double as a list of causes for divorce.

- Infidelity
- Financial Problems
- Different Expectations About Household Tasks
- Different Expectations About Having or Rearing Children
- Interference From Parents or In-Laws
- Substance Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Incompatibility
- Intellectual Incompatibility
- Difference in Personal and Career Goals
- Lack of Maturity
- Falling Out of Love
- And the list goes on...

It is widely held that the divorce rate among first marriages is 50%; 67% of second marriages and 74% of third marriages end in divorce according to Jennifer Baker of the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri. These statistics indicate that alarming problems exist in our marriages.

This being the statistics of the nation at large, we would expect it to be much improved among Christians as demonstrated in the cliché, *"The Family that prays together, stays together."* This has led to unsubstantiated claims that those who attended church regularly, prayed together only experience a divorce of 1-2 percent. However, a recent Barna Research Group Survey casts extreme doubt on that claim. In a survey of 3,854 adults drawn from forty-eight (48) contiguous states, found:

- 11% of adult population is currently divorced;
- 25% of adults have had at least one divorce during their lifetime; and
- **Divorce rates among conservative Christians were significantly higher than for other faith groups, and much higher than Atheists and Agnostics experience.**

Obviously, these statistics were not readily accepted by several conservative Christian groups. One newspaper said, "The national study raised eyebrows, sowed confusion, and even brought on a little holy anger." George Barna answered his critics by stating "it only proves that the moral behavior of Christians is very similar to that of non-Christians" (Barna, 1991). If Mr. Barna's conclusion is true, it means more than likely that neither class of people is being introduced to new mores to alter their marital relations. Additional information taken from the Barna Survey makes the earlier statements even more earth shattering.

Barna report - Variation in divorce rates among Christian faith groups:

Denomination (in order of decreasing divorce rate)	% who have been divorced
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Non-denominational:	34%
Baptists	29%
Mainline Protestants	25%
Mormons	24%
Catholics	21%
Lutherans	21%

As shown above Baptists have a higher rate of divorce than most other denominations. This lends more credibility to the need for corrective action in the Baptist Church and more especially the Black Baptist Church as I will allude to in chapter one. All in all, these statistics demonstrate the need for the kind of ministry I am presenting through this project.

Project Relevance

In the church that I attend, there is a Senior Pastor, the Assistant to the Pastor, Youth Pastor and three other Associate Ministers. The Youth Pastor does not get involved in ministering to the adult population of the church. The Assistant to the Pastor and the other Associate Ministers have a limited role in caring or teaching this segment of our church. Basically, the primary responsibility for the caring of these individuals is left to the Senior Pastor. This occurs for a number of reasons.

Traditionally, in the Black Baptist Church, most parishioners are inclined only to receive instruction from the Senior Pastor. They express a silent phobia about any instructions coming from any person other than the Senior Pastor as being inaccurate. This sort of lends itself to the trust factor that many are selective in what they will accept unless it emanates from the lips of the Senior Pastor. Sad to state, this factor is

undergirded by the fact in many instances the Senior Pastor is the only one of the ministers with any formal training and because in the church today education is essential, it is a major determinant in whose instructions are acceptable or not. Some believe since he or she is the one being paid to perform this duty; no one else should be burdened with this responsibility. Therefore, this translates into a lack of acceptable if not including willing, ready and able bodies to assist in caring for the adult congregants much less those encountering difficulties in their marriage.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. (Acts 6:3)

This dilemma could be overcome if the other offices of the church, according to scriptures, was utilized in strengthening marriages. In the typical Black Baptist Church, one of these offices, the office of Deacon, is inherent and usually functioning.

Unfortunately, most of them have only been trained to wait on the tables of the church (Acts 6:1). This could be another potential group that could offer tremendous assistance in this area of ministry. However, this is not the case. It is unfortunate that many of our Black Baptist Churches have not sought to provide the type of training necessary to take full advantage of this extensive pool of man and/or woman power. Yes, now that women are being admitted to this office, it is pathetic they are being underutilized since some of our best marriage counselors are females.

In most churches of this persuasion, Deacons are required to be married. Regrettably, many of them are incapable of providing the assistance needed in marriage

counseling because of their own cacophony of challenges embodied in their marriages. Based on my personal knowledge, infidelity has been an unwelcomed obumbrant.

In general, their lack of immunity from many of the same challenges most other marriages encounter make them prime students. This is one of several reasons an education component/self help support group has to be established in Black Baptist Churches. Ministries need to be developed in these churches to offset the negative paradigms that are plaguing many of the marriages.

Historically, the Black Baptist Church in the technical sense of the word has lacked in providing Pastoral Care as a part of the overall church ministry. This is not an indictment that the Black Baptist Church has been totally deficient in this area of ministry, but it has failed to engage this ministry to a large degree. Pastors have been diligent in visiting the sick and comforting the bereaved, but in the area of counseling there has been a paucity.

One reason is that the "church" from its inception has not had academically trained pastors to lead the congregation in this area. This occurred on account of a host of reasons, many outside the control of Black People. For example, institutions that offered training of this type were not receptive to people of color or the few that were available had very little pastoral care training being offered, if any at all, as a part of their curriculum. By virtue of this fact, it has compounded the deficit in the lack of trained leadership in the area of marriage counseling. Consequently, the Black Baptist Church has suffered unimaginably in its ability to meet the glaring needs of many of its married congregants.

The primary focus of the Black Baptist Church has been to fulfill the "Great Commission" of the Church. God instructs Matthew, in the gospel that bears his name, to write the following words:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:19-20)

We cannot say that the Black Baptist Church has not been proficient in presenting the salvific aspect of its congregants' life only to default in being more proactive in building that very same congregant's social/relational skills and interpersonal relationships. Our belief system has largely contributed to this attitude. There is an underlying belief that despite all of the modern day social dysfunctions, pathologies looming in our view, they can be eliminated by simply believing in God. In many instances Black People have relied more so on their faith than their own intuition. This position largely impelled by the lack of finance to obtain medical treatment and/or psychological counseling. The church was neither able or willing to change this paradigm. This being the case, pastoral care and counseling have not been a part of the landscape of the Black Baptist Church.

Another factor to be strongly considered is the overall absence of trained Black clinicians in the area of psycho-dynamics. Many have heard of Kenneth and Mamie Clark, a married team of African-American psychologist who were extremely instrumental in helping Thurgood Marshall win his case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) where they helped to prove Black children's sense of inferiority to white children due to segregation and blatant racism. Overall, there is a paucity of African-American

psychologist in this nation. One of the most prominent African-American associations of psychologists only tout an enrollment of 1400. This number is low in comparison to a nation of 36,000,000 African-Americans! I know this number does not encompass all of the African-American psychologists, but I know the total number still pales in comparison to the overall African-American population. This translates into a equal if not greater deficiency/comparison of African-American psychologist in our churches and those within our nation. The absence of these professionals in our congregation makes it more likely for a ministry of marriage counseling to be conspicuously absent within our churches.

When I look at the Black Family that has been the backbone of the Black Church; I am baffled by the lack of attention given to assuage its many pathologies by the Black Church. Franklin (2000) cites some startling statistics symptomatic of these pathologies:

- The current divorce rate for Blacks is four times the 1960 level and double that of the general population.
- The rates of violence between black men and women are higher than those for other races. Not only are black wives more likely to kill their husbands than wives of other races, but the majority of the women killed by husbands or boyfriends are also black.

Paradoxically, white women have been more likely to push for tougher laws against domestic violence and for shelters for battered women.
- For couples in long-term marriages, 72 percent of the African-American husbands reported using a confrontational style of dealing

with marital conflict, compared with 25 percent of Mexican-American husbands and 18 percent of white husbands.

Earlier, we looked at the dismal divorce rate of Baptists. It ranged from 4-8 percentage points higher than the other religious denominations. However, when we analyze the divorce rate of Blacks being four times the 1960 level and double that of the general population. There is sufficient reason to be quite alarmed. Taking into consideration the latter statistic, if we would utilize an inductive approach, we could surmise that the divorce rate among Black Baptists is double that of the national average for Baptists in general.

As Black Baptists, have we reached a deplorable epidemic? Can we continue to ignore or deny that comprehensive corrective action needs to be implemented? What will it take for the powers that be to give this all important institution the proper attention? Why have many Pastors turned a deaf ear to the cry of couples?

Current Status of Marriage Ministry

Most of my earlier rationale for the absence of a marriage ministry placed the blame on society (lack of training opportunities), belief structure and lack of resources (trained clinicians), but there comes a time when those who have been given the charge to positively affect the congregant's life must be held accountable. Of course this is not intended to be an overarching indictment upon all Pastors within my persuasion, but many of them must be willing to shoulder much of the blame.

Therefore, the question is raised, why have many of them been personally reluctant to pursue a ministry of this nature? We can't justify their position all on the lack

of training. There are other viable reasons much to my chagrin. Some of the reasons I am going to state may or may not ever be substantiated because most Pastors would never take ownership of some of them. But you ask, why include them in this work? I am inclined to include them because it may convict the Pastor who may elect to read this document to alter their way of thinking if he or she is a victim of this unproductive thinking.

Many Pastors do not have the time. They are under the strictest of beliefs that if a project of this nature is going to be effective and noteworthy, they will have to conduct it themselves. They are already overcommitted. Between preaching, visitations, community functions, weddings, funerals, familial commitments, personal study, and biblical instructions, there is no room to add more to their schedule. Many take the position that a marriage ministry is not a priority. The church has been doing alright without it; so, we can continue to remain status quo.

The problem with this type of thinking is that it indicates a more serious problem. It reveals a lack of vision among other reasons. I know people have a tendency to subscribe to another ole cliché, *"if it isn't broken, don't fix it."* A vision is birthed out of an existing need (present condition) yet they anticipate the need (future condition). Church ministry should be more proactive than reactive. Unfortunately, the latter seems to be more the case than the former. Because a church has a healthy family structure within its pews today does not mean it will remain unchanged.

The latest forecast of the status of the Black family does not support its continuous viability. Look at the statistics taken from an article entitled, *"Poverty and the Father Factor"* by William Raspberry, columnist for the Washington Post. He cites

some interesting statistics. For example, in 1890 it is reported that 80 percent of Black American households were headed by husbands and wives. Note, that is only twenty-five (25) years after the end of the Civil War. I find this an amazing statistic when it is only a few years removed from the most vicious attack on the Black family brought on by the inhumane atrocities of slavery. The article further states this percentage remained constant in 1900. Even in 1910, 1920, 1930 and every decennial census report thereafter, this percentage hovered around the high 70s and the low 80s until 1970 it dropped to 64%.

Most disturbing is what is reported in the 2000 Census. Black families headed by married couples had drastically dropped to 38%. The only consolation in this mouth dropping percentage is that it mirrors the percentage reported in 1990. Therefore, one can easily conclude this downward spiral may have bottomed out.

Based on these statistics a Pastor with a congregation of married Black couples should be implementing programs to assist them in their vitality. This includes some type of marriage ministry. Coupled with this ministry should entail a comprehensive analysis of the other factors that have contributed to this significant downturn and ministries/programs to counteract these factors.

This may appear to be highly polemic in nature, but another reason some Pastors in our circles may elect to forego a marriage ministry is because he or she may find they are undercompensated for their present job description and are not about to add any more tasks to it when they are not being adequately paid for what they are doing now. This may sound harsh, but this is a reality. I often hear, the new crop of Pastors are more package (salary, benefits, frills, and vacations) driven than ministry driven. It is a

downright shame what is happening to the overall ministry. I concur, the Pastor should be compensated. Paul addresses this matter in I Corinthians:

For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God care for the oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you in spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall we reap your carnal (material) things? (1 Cor. 9:9-11)

As we know there is always another side to the coin. I stated earlier that Pastors should be compensated for their work. However, I think it is unethical to forego any ministry because they will not be compensated for the added work. Ministry is to come before money. Since a Pastor's calling emanates from the Lord and not people, he or she is responsible to follow the Lord's direction. Therefore, if the Lord has placed a particular task on a Pastor's heart, it would be in their best interest to submit to the Lord no matter if money is involved or not. Personally, I believe God will take care of his own. God proved this over and over in the life of Paul. For example in the Book of Philippians Paul writes these words:

Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. (Phil. 4:15)

I continue this argument for the realization of a marriage ministry. What I have found most intriguing is that some Pastors are apprehensive not because of time or money, but they don't trust anyone else to instruct their flock. This has nothing to do

with the other person's skill set. It has nothing to do with the person, but actually with the Pastor. The Pastor may have a low self-esteem and he or she may think if a particular individual was given the authority to head such a ministry; they may as well kiss their church good-bye. Unfortunately, an unsavory pattern has been forged when some individuals were given permission to managed certain ministries. Instead of being a facilitator, they assumed ownership of the ministry and people; thus, abducting the people and starting a new church. Because of this, the Pastor would prefer such a ministry remaining in its ethereal world than lose some of his or her good members.

The opposite end of the spectrum is that the Pastor does allow an individual to direct this ministry, but because of mistrust he or she micromanages it to the point that it becomes highly ineffective. What is worse no ministry or an ineffective ministry?

In a time when many marriages are on the brink of extinction, especially in Black Churches, can any Pastor be so callous or indifferent to eventuating of a marriage ministry? One astounding inductive fact that I have not discussed. Within that cluster of Black Christian divorcees, one can imagine it includes a numerous Pastors and "First Ladies." Since it may be his or her marriage that is about to fade into the abyss, why would you not be enthusiastic about starting a ministry that will salvage your most deepest relationship? Maybe, their fleshly lust is supplanting the call of the Holy Spirit. Maybe, they think the grass is greener on the other side. Maybe he or she doesn't care what happens to the their spouse even though they have worked their fingers to the bone or sacrificed their lives; so, the Pastor could have a career and/or enjoy an impressive lifestyle.

We cannot continue to ignore this very important institution within our church or any other church. Its problems need to be addressed and not put on the back burner. No reason, whether within our control or outside of our control is sufficient enough to ignore the earnest plea of marriages. I am confident by the use of this ministry, many marriages can be rejuvenated. Christians have someone working for them, that those outside of the halls of faith do not have working for them and it is Jesus Christ. Jesus pleads with his followers. Jesus unequivocally states, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). It is now or never. Many marriages are in their eleventh hour and the remaining time is swiftly fading into oblivion. I do not know what others are going to do, but I hear the call of God to make a difference in this area. I am placing my energies in the implementation of a marriage ministry. At this juncture, my focus will place emphasis on the intimacy of marriage. After being married more than thirty-five (35) years, I am convinced that intimacy should be the primary motivation or driving force within a marriage. Tangibles (clothing, money, cars, houses, vacations and the like) cannot be the primary motivation. They are nouns. Nouns are things which are the results of the motivation. Intimacy has the underpinnings of a verb. Intimacy calls for action and the nouns are visible expressions of intimacy. The next chapter will further familiarize us with intimacy.

CHAPTER II

INTIMACY AND MARRIAGE

Intimacy Modeled By Jesus

As clergy first we draw upon religious principles in establishing our modus operandi. Those principles have to be grounded in truth- wisdom that is eternal and immutable. Because Jesus is the truth as He so states, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6a) - I believe his life presents the perfect model. Indeed, Jesus who is perfect, who is without sin or the lamb without spot or blemish, I cannot think of anyone who more appropriately meets all of the qualifications to be the model by which to discover and flesh out intimacy in our marriages.

It is unfortunate that mankind needs a model. Incidentally, mankind is incapable of fulfilling this role. Man is the cause of this axiom. Man can protest this fact, but all of his remonstrations would produce innumerable frustrations.

When we visit the biblical narrative of the creation, it affords us vast knowledge about the genesis and going-on of mankind. From a scripture basis Genesis 1:26-28 encapsulates this history.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the

sea; and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Gen. 1:26-28)

A few verses later, the narrative accentuates the earlier scriptures by the following words, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31a). Yes, the text clearly states everything God made was good. The Hebrew word for good transliterated is "tov" which ascribes to the object as being the beautiful, the attractive, the useful, the profitable, the desirable and the morally right. We must not forget it was God who made this evaluation. God whose standards far surpass man's standards makes this judgment. Therefore, we have no reason to doubt the impeccability. This being the case, undoubtedly mankind is included in this evaluation based on verse 31a.

However in the stick of things, man loses the label of good. Adam, the first man and Eve, the first woman elect to eat the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6). Consequently, mankind - his entire being (spirit, soul and body) becomes corrupted. Mankind can no longer be considered good - he becomes morally depraved. Mankind becomes deficient, defective and decrepit. It is a far cry from how God originally created mankind. To a large degree mankind has fallen beyond recognition. This sad chapter in mankind's life makes him unfit to be a self-model.

Man needs someone else to set the paradigm. It will take an extraordinary man to set the stage to provide the pattern and power for this great feat. The responsibility is thrust upon Jesus. As alluded to earlier, no mere man or woman possesses the mindset or skill set to accomplish the ideal or assist man reclaiming the pre-garden status.

Man is a prime candidate to relearn the behavior expected by God. Employing the social cognitive theory and its characteristics theorized by Albert Bandura helps us to see why God chose Jesus as the model for mankind. God employed this theory well in advance of man making its discovery.

Social cognitive theory is a learning theory based on the premise that people perceive by observing someone else and the human thought processes play an important role in understanding personality. When we talk about object relations theory we will equate the connection. Social cognitive theory is enhanced by the observer being able to closely identify with the subject. God not only sent someone who matched our DNA to redeem mankind from sin since the blood of bulls and goats was inadequate (Hebrews 10:4 - For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins, cf. Colossians 1:14 -In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins), but someone we could feel a one-to-one connection which guaranteed the greater possibility mankind was more apt to imitate. Jesus being 100% man, yet 100% God (hypostasis of Christ), became the person God chose to be our redeemer and the conveyor of the wisdom notwithstanding the model of the behavior God deems acceptable especially in modeling intimacy.

Jesus the model of intimacy reveals himself as being the ultimate role model at a time when the human senses were unable to witness much less perceive his presence. The human senses are limited in that they can only perceive or apprehend a figure when it is in the range of its perception. For example, a person can only hear the sweet melodies of a bird that is within range of his or her hearing capacity. The same applies to sight. We can only see images that are within the range of visual possibilities.

What I am presenting is the truth that Jesus portrayed the greatest level of intimacy before he walked down the dusty roads of Galilee. We get our cue from the following scripture, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Fellowship With The Father

The term "in the beginning" denotes earliest point of measured time (Butler 2000). However, it does not take into consideration eternity because eternity is not bound by time. Actually time is only a fraction of eternity because you cannot establish when eternity began or ends. Christ was before time for he is eternal. Time marks its genesis from man's viewpoint with the creation of the universe. Our finite minds cannot really comprehend eternity in the truest sense since we measure existence of objects by the use of time lines. We use terms such as ages and/or eras.

In order to fully understand the full import of this term, we must compare the same term where it is first mentioned in the bible. This term is found in Genesis chapter 1, verse 1. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth."

There is a major difference in the time line being emphasized in these two texts. Yes, Moses who wrote the Genesis text has something totally different in mind than that what John writes in the Gospel of John. Obviously, the difference is not in the term itself since in both cases the term is synonymous. The difference was realized when we study the immediate text following each term. Moses emphasis is on what happens after the inception of time. God created the heaven and the earth. John emphasis is on what occurred before the inception of time, that is, Jesus (Word) "was."

It is understood that the Word is another name/description for Jesus. The Word was his heavenly name before time began. Jesus is the earthly name given the Son of God meaning "He shall save." Notice the term Word is capitalized noting a person. It is believed in Protestant circles, this is further confirmed, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory a of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John, 1:14). Note, the word begotten does not mean born or created because if it did, then the bible would be contradicting itself. Remember, in verse one we have already concluded that Jesus (Word) was before the creation. Its means unique, one of a kind. Therefore, Jesus is unique, one of a kind. Verse 3 further supports Jesus was around before time began.

(3) All things were made through him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Jesus along with God the Father is responsible for the world being in existence. An additional point will be made later in reference to the aforementioned statement. Jesus had to be alive before the world began in order to make it.

As the verse goes on to say, the Word (Jesus) "was." Was is in the imperfect tense (tense found in Greek grammar). The imperfect tense denotes "continued action in past time." In other words, Jesus existed continuously before the world began. Based on all of the above, we can safely say Jesus was before time as God was before time.

Going a step further the text places them in fellowship or communion with one another before time, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (John, 1:1a). The key word is "with"! The Greek word is *pros*. This word goes deeper than being near or beside, but a living union and communion. John is revealing the intimacy

that characterized the relationship between he and the Father. A special note of sort is that each person of the Trinity enjoyed this type of intimacy, but for this discussion I am restricting it to that of the Father and the Son. Without a shadow of a doubt the Son and the Father (God) enjoyed the closest of relationship. The famous bible scholar William Hendriksen describes the Word as being, face to face with God (The Father) (Butler, 2000). If I could use a contemporary metaphor. They were breathing each other air (note, Spirits do not need air) or they were tight. With can also insinuate tabernacled or dwelt. This was no ordinary relationship. An intimate relationship is abnormal. You can sense the bonding of the Father and the Son. They were inseparable. This kind of relationship is more lucid in these verses, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and:

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. (John, 14:10-11).

One of the vital signs of intimacy is fellowship, dwelling with one another, being in the presence of one another, being close to one another, touching one another. Jesus was certainly exemplary in this regard when it came to his relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit having moved John to write chapter 1 verses 1 and 2 of the Gospel of John. It shows that God was intentional to let us know how the Son related to the Father. Those as Christians we take our cues from Jesus.

Response To The Father

Another indicator of the presence of intimacy is how persons within the relationship respond to one another. The antithesis of response is to ignore or deny. However, to fully understand the processes to one's response, we must consider combined psychological and physiological steps that are engendered. Response can be considered an involuntary and unconscious reaction, but it is neither. It is both voluntary and one is conscientious.

In order for there to be a proper response, each of these steps must be realized. First, the other person must be recognized. There must be a mental image of that person within one's psychic. They must be brought from the unconscious to the conscious. Secondly, one must resolve in their mind any conflictive thoughts either pertaining to the other person or the quest being sought by the other individual. Note, this quest can cover a wide array from the physical to the emotional. Thirdly or lastly, one is ready to react. This last step is largely contingent on mastering step two. Understandably, step two is crucial to step three being manifested. This does not mollify the importance of step three. Too often we witness people that appear to have no objection to the other person, yet they fail to implement the request. This could occur on account of a number of reasons, but the ones that most readily comes to mind are lack of priority and procrastination. Yes, these two abhorrent deferments can have a major impact on the culmination of step three. No individual should let either of the two prevent them from enacting step three.

I am sharing this equation because Jesus being our model carried out these steps without hesitation. Jesus recognized the father, resolved any conflict and reacted accordingly. Some might say Jesus never exhibited any conflict; however the following

text is indicative of conflict. This text is spoken by Jesus just before he face his tormentors and Calvary, "Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine will be done" (Luke, 22:42). Overall Jesus responded to the Father in a manner that is both laudable and noteworthy. He expresses it in various texts in the fourth gospel penned by the "Apostle of Love", none other than John, the brother of James. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work (John, 4:34). For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John, 6:38). No, you cannot be intimate if you always act contrary to the desires of your mate.

Respect Of The Father

Jesus is a remarkable person. He revealed a side to humanity that we ought to always attain to mimic. Personally, I stand in awe of how Jesus modeled the epitome of intimacy before us. Jesus was the total package in the relational department. He exuded the host of characteristics that placed his level of intimacy in the par excellence category. I believe he manifested the granddaddy of them all and that was respect. I will present my case when I look intensively at intimacy. Jesus respected the Father.

No individual can be considered intimate by the other party and not respect him or her. You must see the worth of that individual. You must think of the person in question as possessing high quality or ability. He or she is not just an ordinary person in your eyes. They surpass the common qualities to the degree they unconsciously demand honor.

This is how Jesus viewed the Father. The Father stood out in the eyes of Jesus. He respected him; even though he was equal to the Father. He was equal to the Father in knowledge and power yet he highly esteemed the Father:

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me. (John, 8:49)

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you, If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. (John, 14:28)

I cannot conclude this section without alluding to the characteristic that is crucial to establishing respect. Respect is nonexistent without humility. We can best respect another when we humble ourselves. It is awfully difficult to highly esteem someone who you see as unequal to you. Again, Jesus did not see the Father as unequal. He humbled himself before the Father. He took a position that exalted the Father and later he received glory. Look what was written in the book of Philippians:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him in the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (2:5-11)

A.W. Tozer says it best, "Because Christ Jesus came to the world clothed in humility, he will always be found among those who are clothed with humility. He will be found among the humble people" (Tozer, 1978)

Again, Jesus is our model.

MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO GOD

Covenant Marriage

A covenant marriage is the type of marriage preferred by God. This type of marriage is more than likely to generate the intimacy God expects. We do not talk much about covenants in this society, much less in the church, which is somewhat surprising. In this secular society we are more prone to discuss contracts. Being that this type of agreement is more common, I am going to look at it that we may gain a better understanding of what a covenant entails.

Normally, a contract is written, but there are some non-written or verbal contracts. A contract is an agreement between two or more persons specifying conditions and obligations all of each party (Chapman, 2003). These conditions and obligations have to be agreed upon by all the parties participating in the execution of this contract. An offer has to be made and an acceptance indicated or meeting of the minds, but after this part of the contract process is implemented, the dichotomy between a contract and a covenant begins to develop. Let's look at some of the characteristics of a contract.

Contracts come in many forms. There are business contracts, construction contracts, government contracts, real estate contracts, employment contracts, entertainment contracts, consulting contracts, rental contracts, service contracts,

management contracts, manufacturing contracts and the list goes on. Imagine that each of these contracts contain different wording related to the terms and conditions. This certainly differs from a covenant. There is only one covenant which means you will not find varying terms and conditions.

Contracts can be unilateral. In this case only one person makes a promise. The other party is not obligated to fulfill any terms. The major burden of the contract's execution falls on the shoulder of one party (person); whereas, in a covenant all parties (persons) involved play a major role.

Contracts usually specify a set time of its enforcement (Chapman, 2003). When we purchase a car, the loan contract is typically for five (5) years. The same holds true if we are renting a business space, the rental contract is for set a period of time normally five (5) or ten (10) years. These legal contracts grant a particular time they shall remain in force. These contracts are executed for the mutual benefit of the parties involved, but either party can break them. If the contract is broken, some type of relief is sought in the form of a penalty.

When couples state their vows at the beginning of a marriage ceremony, they express an intention to remain in this union for an indeterminate period. They confirm these words as requested by the Officiant - "so long as we both shall live" or "till death do us part." Too many couples looking at the divorce rate interpret these words according to their feelings and not God's request. We see this happen much too often that they sever the marriage when the conditions are no longer to their liking. It could have been only one (1) or as long as thirty-five (35) years.

Contracts specify certain conditions have to be complied with. Contracts are very intentional in this area. It is the area of the contract that garners the greatest amount of attention. Each party wants to know what is expected of them and what they can expect from the other party. They are in some cases inconvertible. There are no exceptions. Covenants are not intended to be "laden in iron." Characteristic of a covenant is flexibility.

I mentioned earlier, contracts can be unilateral. They can be one-sided because the party to the contract is fixated on getting what he or she craves. The same applies if it is a bi-lateral contract. Both parties come to the table with pre-determined goals for their benefit. Salespersons are most guilty of this attitude. They seek to justify it by saying to themselves, "if I help enough people get what they want, I will get what I want." This attitude totally differs when a covenant is put into place. The parties are looking out for the well being of the other party more so than their personal well being.

Contracts are negotiable. The parties to the contract can make counteroffers. They can even protest and refuse to be a party to the contract unless they are granted the conditions they vehemently demand. We have seen this played out repeatedly in the negotiations between city workers and the city. We have witnessed the same in negotiations between pilots and airline companies. Those persons who engage in the covenant agreement have no bargaining room. God writes the covenant and he doesn't change. Malachi 3:6a confirms the prior statement, "For I am the LORD, I change not".

We have seen that a contract has some glaring differences. Contracts are more man-made. They respond to the whimsicalness of mankind. Contracts are indicative of mankind totally being out of touch with God's program. It further confirms God's ways

are not mans' ways. Mankind has his own set of rules to play the game of life and they do not correspond to God's set of rules. You can sum it up by saying God is a covenant God, not a contract God.

Establishing of Covenants

In English the word "covenant" signifies a mutual understanding between two or more parties, each binding himself or herself to fulfill obligations. In scripture, the Hebrew and Greek Words denote somewhat of a different meaning. The Old Testament word for covenant is *beriyth*. It means "to cut, to contract" (because of being made by passing between pieces of flesh). The passing between the pieces of meat was a means of solemnizing the covenant. The New Testament word for covenant is *diatheke*. It means "a disposition, arrangement, testament or will."

Covenants were ratified by the death of something or someone, the shedding of blood. In the Old Testament an animal was slaughtered. In the New Testament the covenant or testament is ratified by the death of Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:28). A covenant could have been ratified by shaking of hands, but I am referring to covenants between God and man, not between men. As we will see later God is seen as the initiator of the covenants that he was a participant. Man did not come to God with a proposal seeking God's approval, rather God came to man declaring His will and seeking man's adherence. It is an agreement between God and man drawn up by God and presented to man. Man can either accept it or reject it, but he cannot change it.

In applying the First Mention Principle of Hermeneutics we find the first mention of covenants in Genesis, "But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee"

(6:18). This covenant was initiated by God. Noah was asked to build an ark. By doing so he would save he and his entire family from the ravages of the flood. Noah was the one who benefitted most by this covenant yet it was God who supplied all the materials to build the ark. He is the creator. Genesis 1:31a summarizes God's creative power.

As I stated earlier, covenants were put in force between men. They were used for a host of purposes:

- Establishing friendship - Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. (1 Sam. 18:3)
- Procuring assistance in war - Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, there is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel , that he may depart from me. (1 Kings 15:18-19)
- Establishing peace - And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them. (Josh. 9:15-16)

In the above we see several instances of covenants being established between the male gender (men, kings and leaders). However, in Proverbs, we are exposed to a

covenant between both the female and male genders (2:17). This covenant is called the "covenant of God" (Prov. 2:17) because it was made in the name of God. This applies to marriages of today.

Dearly beloved we are assembled in the presence of God to unite (groom) and (bride). The bible teaches that marriage is to be a permanent relationship of one man and one woman freely and totally committed to each other as companions for life. Our Lord declared that man shall leave his father and mother and unite with his wife in building of a home, and the two shall become one flesh. You are exhorted to dedicate your life to the Creator. Take his Word, the Bible, for your guide. Give loyal devotion to his church, thus uniting the mutual strength of these two most important institutions, living your lives as his willing servants and true happiness will be your temporal and eternal reward. _____, will you take _____ to be your wife (husband); will you commit yourself to her (his) happiness and her (his) fulfillment as a person, and to her (his) usefulness in God's kingdom; and will you promise to love, honor, trust, and serve her (him) in sickness, and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to her (him), so long as you both shall live?
(Segler, 1969)

In the above abbreviated wedding ceremony, God is alluded to no less than six (6) times. This is revelatory in two respects. It is indicative of who should be a third party in this covenant and who should exercise a controlling interest in the institution of marriage. God established the marriage covenant; so, we ought to abide by his principles. Let's look at some of these principles that distinguish a covenant marriage from that of a marriage based on contractual arrangements.

Principle #1 Prioritize Relationships

Then God walked around,
And God looked around

On all that he had made.
He looked at His Sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at his little stars;
He looked at His World,
With all its living things,
And God said, "I'm lonely still."
Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His Head in His Hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, "I'll make me a man."

Excerpt of "The Creation" by James Weldon Johnson

God did not have to make man. God is self-sufficient. He needs no one. Isaiah writes these words about God:

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out
heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a
measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?
Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught
him? (Isa. 40:12-13)

Whether we accept James Weldon's version as to why God made man or not, we know God desires to be in relation with man. God is a relational God. Don't be fooled because man was created on the last day. God saved the best for last.

The greatest commandment "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30) refers to man's relation to God. God prefers and places extreme worth on relationships. Based on the above verse nothing comes before God's relationship with man. God wants to be in covenant with man.

God has shown that He wants the same for man. He expresses his thoughts:

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto man. (Gen. 2:18 & 22)

God did not want man to be alone. God wanted man to be in relationship with another person. Remember, God had already made the animals. God wanted Adam to be in relationship with someone of like quality and substance.

If God prioritize relationships, He expects the same in our marriages. A covenant marriage puts the relationship before everything else. The relationship is worth more than money, clothes, cars, recreation or any other material item. Covenant marriages place the highest value on relationships (Holladay 2008). Covenant marriages are more concerned about the intangible whereas the contractual marriage is more concerned about the tangible. Without researching it, I would submit that marriages with a pre-nuptial agreement that I would classify as a contractual marriage, unconsciously are more concerned about the assets that are seen than those invisible assets.

Principle #2 Abides In Love

I am reminded of a song sung by Tina Turner, "What's Love Got To Do With It?"

In the eyesight of God love has everything to do with it. In the marriage ceremony I purposely left out the one scripture that is most often read:

Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of the truth,

Puts up with everything,
Trust God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end. (Msg. 1 Cor. 13:4-8)

The verses just before these verses stress the presence of love. Verse 3 summarizes the importance of love:

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be
burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter
what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. (Msg.
1 Cor. 13:3)

A covenant marriage is based on God's definition of love. This is not puppy love either ebb and flow love. This love is constant because it is unconditional. This love is not cyclical nor of a roller coaster effect. God is most concerned that love flourishes in a covenant marriage. First, God admonishes men to love their wives, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (NIV, Eph. 5:25). Later, he gives older women instructions to help younger women properly love their husbands, "Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children" (NIV, Tit. 2:4). Urgency of this nature will not be considered in a contractual arrangement, parties to a contract are not concerned about intimacy, that is, the giving of themselves, but what they can get out of the deal.

Principle #3 Allows for Shortcomings

Quite often parties to a marriage come up short. They cease to function at the same level in the marriage at various times. They arrive at a point where they are unable to handle the day to day activities (washing, cleaning, shopping, overseeing the

checkbook, managing the children, etc.) of the household. This could be for reasons out of their control (sickness, stress, or age).

I stated earlier in the marriage vows it takes in consideration a couple may not always be at its apex. It could become worse before it becomes better. The partner that experiences the secondary pain, has to determine how he or she is going to react to this change. Are they are going to learn how to accept this challenge and use it to strengthen their intimacy or seek to divest themselves either physically or mentally? We read in I Corinthians chapter 13, verse 4 that love never gives up and cares more for others than for oneself. This does not sound like one of the partners becoming insensitive and indifferent. Instead this partner captures the opportunity to show more passion and commitment for the other. The contractual marriage responds just the opposite. They take the movie star approach. They desert the ship when the going gets a little rough.

Principle #4 Advocates Perpetuity

This entire paper's premise was birthed out of the current divorce rate. Needless to say, the divorce rate is startling. We know some marriages were born in hell (abusive behavior) and not heaven; so, marriages of this type should be temporarily or permanently halted. When we see marriages being dissolved for minor reasons (financial problems, different expectations about having or rearing children, different expectations about household tasks, falling out of love and difference in personal and career goals) we just scratch our heads. It is disheartening to think some people only get married to get a divorce. They are not willing to struggle through the difficult periods. Normally, it is those difficult periods that will solidify the marriage if both spouses are willing to change their course (Smalley, 1996). They have to resist the Titanic syndrome. The experienced

captain of the Titanic was warned six separate times to slow down, change course and take the southern route because icebergs had been sighted. Instead he ignored all six specific warnings because he was the captain, and he thought this ship was unsinkable. We know the end of the story.

The bible talks about couples who refuse to change their course. Ed Young says they have an acute case of *pigitis* (2003). Pigitis is associated with persons who are usually immature, insensitive and stubborn-stubbornness being the most glaring of the three traits. Jesus calls them hardhearted:

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. (Matt. 19:7-8)

Covenant marriages are not so selfish and stuck in their own ways. They seek ways to improve their marriage. They attend marriage conferences at the advice of others whether in a group setting or a one on one setting. Most of all they want to please the covenant maker. They want to adhere to his words "I hate divorce, says the LORD God of Israel" (NIV, Mal. 2:16a). Those who subsist in their marriages with a contract mentality aren't about to please no one but themselves. They refuse to comply with the Lord's instructions. They live by their own set of rules in lieu of the Lord's. Covenant marriages know they are to abide by "what thus saith the Lord."

Principle #5 Abbreviate Infractions

There isn't any marriage where there are some infractions. There is no perfect marriage not even in Hollywood. We are hurt by one another either intentional or unintentional. Intentional infractions are normally the retaliation of a hurt the injured

party has endured. Covenant marriages are not in the retaliatory mode, but in the repenting mode. Those persons acknowledge their wrong doing and seek restoration through forgiveness. The injured party welcomes the admission of guilt and releases the offending party from any pain. Covenant marriages understand forgiveness is part and parcel to their relationship. The injured party understands forgiveness is not an emotion, but a promise to no longer think the culpable party still owes them something. They overcome their harsh feelings by the instructions God administers. They remember God saying to the church at Ephesus:

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath...And be ye kind to one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Eph. 4:26 & 32)

Yes, they abbreviate infractions. They don't let hurts linger or fester. They know this is one of the deterrents to intimacy. This causes undue stress and tension. They swallow their pride and seek ways to return the relationship to status quo. Unfortunately, those within a contract marriage setting prefer to brew and steam. Some may have had an outlandish statement like, "I will let hell freeze over before I forgive him or her." They have not listened to themselves pray the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive what we owe to you, as we have forgiven those who owe anything to us" (JBP, Matt. 6:12)

The bottom line is, why stay angry? Who does it help? Life is too precious. We need to live every moment we have left and not waste any moments being in a foul mood.

Principle #6 Live For The Other

Martin Buber postulates the I-I position, the I-It position and the I-thou position. Each is a gradual elevation to the ultimate position (I-thou). I-It is a position of

separateness and detachment. I-thou position is one of mutuality and reciprocity.

Covenant relationships are marked by this approach. They have learned that a woman needs to be cherished and a man desires to feel needed (Brown, 2009). As such each spouse makes valiant attempts to please the other instead of themselves. Furthermore, they no longer engage in childish ways-being selfish and stingy. They see it as better to give than receive. They also realize the gift is in giving. It is not so much the return, but the pleasure one acquires when he or she gives. Gifts speak volumes and "are visual symbols of love" (Chapman, 1992, p.83). Giving oneself is just as important as giving a material gift. Most times a woman or a man will prefer the person. This is truly a sign you are living for the other, instead of yourself.

Covenant marriages remember how Jesus lived for the other. They remember how he gave his life for us who were sinners. They remember what he endured on our behalf. They mimic Christ.

Principle #7 They seek to be one

This principle ranks at the top because God values oneness. Throughout the bible God places oneness above any other order. The number is the number of primacy and unity. The numeral one dominates God's spiritual order. Note the scriptures found in the New Testament that refer to oneness, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6). "that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27b). "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2).

God expects the church to be of one mind. God expects the marriage that he compares to the church to be no less. The gospel of Mark chapter 10, verses 7,8 and 9 reveals this truth, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and be united to

his wife. And the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (NIV).

God requires the covenant marriage to exist in oneness. There are two persons involved, but they shall live in oneness or unity. They are not to be divided over matters. They just be unified in the following seven areas:

- Faith - having a common spiritual foundation with the inclusion and worship of God.
- Friendship - sharing of similar interests with one another.
- Frankness - being able to speak freely with one another without recrimination.
- Fidelity - forsaking all others and being trustworthy
- Forgiveness - learning to let go of issues and hurts
- Finances - handling your business matters including purchases in a prudent manner.
- Family - approaching the internal family (children) and external family (in-laws) with the same mindset. (McMickle, 2003)

Because the numeral one expresses primacy, your spouse should be your numero uno. He or she should be number one in your life.

INTIMACY WITHIN A MARRIAGE

The Primacy of Intimacy

Intimacy has been the primary theme of many great movies [*An Officer and a Gentleman* (Navy recruit's romantic entanglement with a beautiful young lady), *Jason's Lyric* (a young man must confront his own fears about love as well as his relationships

with family and friends), *Gone With the Wind* (love affair during the Civil War that portrays a selfish woman's denial of her true feelings) and *Barefoot In The Park* (romantic complications of a newly married couple)]. Intimacy has been the focus topic of many great books [(*You Can't Hurry Love* (an intimate look at first marriages after 40), *Making Love Last Forever* (reveals love-for-life factors and principles for sustaining your spouse's love) and *52 Simple Ways To Say I Love You* (provides 52 suggestions for expressing your love to your mate)].

I cannot cite the number of movies and books that have been produced or written respectively in this last century alone. You might think that Hollywood was obsessed with this subject. It has delivered billions of dollars into the coffers. Really, Hollywood can be viewed as an extension of mankind. Those who control Hollywood are only expressing the essential need of the human species. Mrs. Johnson, Director of Ottawa Couple and Family Institute and professor of clinical psychology at the University of Ottawa defines intimacy as "the need to be held and soothed while staying in the loving arms of another extends from cradle to the grave" (The Washington Times, 2008). Hollywood is expressing one of man's basic's needs. Men and women are at their best when they express the many forms of intimacy.

Seldom will you find persons disputing that intimacy is a key element in determining marital quality as well as psychological and physiological well-being (Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994). Indubitably, it is widely accepted intimacy is a vital element in the development of interpersonal relationships (Harper, Schaalje & Sandberg, 2000). Intimacy is at the core of loving relationships and is a major bonding force in marriage (Heller & Wood, 1998) Rev. David Wong in a sermon given at the Washington

International Church said it most succinctly, "A key facet of love and marriage is intimacy" (The Washington Times, 2006).

False and Real Intimacy Exposed

Intimacy has a multiplicity of definitions. This statement is personified among leading professionals of marriage gurus. Intimacy is defined as those feelings in a relationship that promote closeness, bondedness and connectedness (Heller & Wood, 1998). Later in this paper I will challenge this definition. Dandeneau and Johnson (1994) defines intimacy as a relational event in which trusting self-is responded to with communicated empathy. Heller and Wood (1998) take it a bit further. They envision "intimacy as the process of being in touch with or knowing oneself as well as the disclosure of self in the presence of a partner" (Heller & Wood, 1998). This to a large degree relates to persons in these relationships having no inhibitions to express normal suppressed behavior (Betcher, 1987). Persons desire to be in relation with those who will accept the hidden parts of them. Putting it more in layman's terms: you can let your hair down without losing your dignity or being censure.

Another working definition of intimacy is the "joyful union that comes when two people learn together how to give love and how to accept love" (Stoop and Stoop, 1993). The three characteristics (see below) of intimacy expressed in this definition are crucial to real intimacy.

(1) Joyful Union

(2) Give Love

(3) Accept Love

Many men define intimacy as sex, every time I feel like it creates a joyful union. Women define intimacy as unity and closeness, which creates a joyful union. Then both parties must be able to give love and accept love. In some cases, that has proven to be difficult for either party for various reasons.

Some of them are:

- Fear of intimacy;
- Poor boundaries;
- Lack of parental modeling;
- Fear of trusting someone else with your innermost thoughts and feelings;
- Guilty feelings of the past;
- Intimacy being unfamiliar territory; and
- Lack of instances of support displayed in crucial moments.

Earlier, I alluded to the fact that genders approach the idea of intimacy differently. Much of this difference is shaped by cultural differences. Culturally, society does not demand the same level of intimacy in the formative years of a male child versus a girl child. We treat them differently during this developmental stage. We have a tendency to embrace little girls much more readily than little boys as if this will create feminine tendencies. We must not forget that economic and social status serve as a mold in shaping intimacy, providing and maintaining different limits for men's and women's experience of intimacy (Heller & Wood, 1998). Because men have functioned more predominantly in the work sphere, which restricts close personal relationships and fosters increased selfishness and heightened distrust of others it has affected how men approach intimacy. Whereas, women have functioned more so in the domain of the

home, which is sustained by the intimacy and emotional support of close relationships. These entrenched roles have powerfully influenced gender differences in defining and experiencing intimacy in our American culture (Heller & Wood, 1998). It is not difficult to imagine the level of intimacy being displayed in the home in comparison to the workplace. How many times will a man embrace a man versus the number times a mother will show some type of affection toward her child.

This may be one of the contributing factors that appear to show women as being more emotional. They have a tendency to express their emotions more so than men physically and verbally. For example, studies have found that women are more likely than men to express their anger, love, happiness, and sadness (Cordova, Gee & Warren, 2005). In addition, it has been discovered that men score higher than women on measures of difficulty of identifying and communicating emotions (Cordova, Gee & Warren, 2005). In 1978, Barbara and Allan Pease conducted an experiment for a television program. This experiment focused on the women's ability to read the body language signals of babies. At the maternity hospital, they collated a selection of ten-second film clips of crying babies and asked the mothers to watch the clips with the sound turned down. In this manner, the mothers only received visual information. Most mothers could quickly detect a range of emotions from hunger and pain to gas or tiredness. When the fathers took the same test, their success was downright pitiful-less than 10% of the fathers could pick out more than two emotions. Even with the father's having that level of success, researchers suspected they were guessing. Many of the fathers would just surmise "the baby wants its mother" (Pease and Pease, 2000).

Therefore, we can conclude that women have a greater grasp on longitudes of emotions. This helps us to better understand the gravity of emotions with regard to women. This leads us to believe that men's communication of emotions is more important to a women's marital satisfaction than women's communication of emotions is to men's marital satisfaction because the exchange of normative social process for women than for men (Cordova, Gee & Warren, 2005). All of this contributes to women being more relational and more apt to engage in ways and means to restore deficiencies that may arise in the relationship.

Intimacy incorporates our emotions. Some define intimacy as being close emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and sexually. Some marriage therapist have a tendency to segment intimacy in several categories (emotional, mental or intellectual, spiritual, recreational, financial or monetary and sexual). No matter whether couples adopt the thinking of some marriage therapist and compartmentalize intimacy, the following principles will apply to each of those categories for sustaining acceptable marital intimacy.

- Set goals.
- Identify your feelings and communicate them in a mature manner.
- Share your innermost thoughts, needs and desires.
- Communicate in a style that promotes trust and that you have the other persons best intentions at heart.
- Learn your spouse's love language [words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service and physical touch (Chapman, 1992)].

Intimacy is achievable in marriage. As I started this section, it is contingent on several factors, but the first is knowing what intimacy means and/or what it consists of.

Misconceptions About Intimacy

For example, intimacy and falling in love differ tremendously. Intimacy grows whereas falling in love fades. According to the longevity of the relationship, sooner than later one will fall out of love (Peck, 1978).

There are other misconceptions about intimacy that confuse couples significantly. Earlier, I stated the definition of intimacy presented by Heller & Wood. They state that intimacy is a feeling that promotes closeness, bondedness and connectedness. To a degree I agree with the statement, but I am leery about the inclusion of the word feeling. Because feelings are so transient, I would have been more selective in my choice of words. Our feelings shouldn't be the engine that moves and steers our actions. Our actions should be driven by motivations that lie within our hopes, values and aspirations. These three motivators should be underscored by our purpose. People who are led by their feelings can be unpredictable. They are usually undisciplined, inconsistent and unreliable. The opposite holds true for those who are driven by their values and purpose. They are usually more disciplined, consistent and reliable (Kelly, 2005).

Sometimes feelings further complicate intimacy by providing the urge for sexual satisfaction; consequently leading couples to believe sex is intimacy. It may provide an intimate moment, but sex cannot be construed as being intimacy. Actually, sex can be an tool to block an individual from really being affectionate. He or she uses it as a camouflage to letting the other person in their world experience their deepest emotions. Yet in the truest sense they are fearing affection and vulnerability (Stoop and Stoop,

1993). Sex has its place in a marriage, but it can't be considered a sign of true intimacy because we are drawing the conclusion that if sex is intimacy, does that mean those couples who have some sexual dysfunction due to disabilities or illness intimacy has no place in their marriage?

Some couples mistake being able to read the other person's mind as being intimacy. What could be farther from the truth? Furthermore, most spouses aren't mind readers. They are incapable of meeting one another's needs without some type of verbal request. Possessing this unfulfilled myth can lead to aggravation and frustration.

Some individuals think intimacy is when they lose their self-identity. They confuse a merger with closeness. Each mate has to continue to be him or herself. They have to learn to be one without being able to individuate. Each mate must be distinctive. If God wanted them to be the same, He would have made only one. When persons enter into a relationship, they do it in most cases because they see something in the other person that is different. To a large extent, they should not lose this magnetism. The bottom line is that intimacy is not sameness (Chapman, 2003).

As bizarre as it might sound more intimacy and abuse such as verbal, psychological, emotional, physical and sexual have become strange bed fellows. Those incidents that are reported stem from the least expected, between intimate partners and between parents and children. This defies common sense. Emotionally, it should be easier to batter, molest, assault, or humiliate a total stranger. It is as if intimacy causes abuse, incubates it and nurtures it.

Many abusers are under the false assumption that their abusive conduct fosters, enhances and cements their intimate relationships. To them, pathological jealousy is

proof of love. Possessiveness replaces mature bonding and battering is a form of paying attention to the partner and communicating with them. Intimacy is construed as a license to abuse. The abuser, treats their nearest, dearest and closest as mere objects, instruments of gratification, utilities, or extensions of them self. They feel that they "own" their spouse, lovers, or other intimate partners. They feel as the owner, they have the right to "damage the goods" or even dispose of them altogether.

What is the contrasting fact, most abusers are scared of real intimacy and deep commitment. They pretend and fake real relationships. The abuser seeks to put distance between themselves and those who truly love them, who cherish and value them as a human being, who enjoy their company, and who strive to develop a long-term meaningful relationship. Abuse, in other words, is a reaction to the perceived threat of looming intimacy aimed at repelling it, mitigating any closeness, tenderness, affection, and compassion before it matures and consumes them. Abuse is the panic reaction and the batterer becomes more scared out of their wits making them feel more entrapped, imprisoned or shackled. They are enveloped in a vicious cycle and the only way they can get any relief is to lash out in a blind and violent rage. We know this type of behavior totally violates the more practical and affectionate person's version of intimacy.

Following is a list of characteristics that will manifest from a loving mate:

- Intimacy allows you to enjoy the otherness of your spouse. This is birthed through the appreciation of your mate.
- Intimacy is generated through discovery. The relationship blossoms as new traits unfold.
- Intimacy is fortified through openness, acceptance and mutual trust.

- Intimacy has greater possibilities as each spouse becomes more transparent-being known totally by the other.
- Intimacy is fluid and not static.
- Intimacy is not something that we acquire, but we can retain it forever.
- Intimacy expresses sensitivity and tenderness.
- Intimacy establishes the proper boundaries and expects each spouse to respect his or her boundaries.
- Intimacy is aware of the possibility of the other spouse making a mistake and allowing the necessary apologies.
- Intimacy is caring about the other spouse.
- Intimacy is conveying an open line of communication.

Enriching Marriages Clinically

Inclusion of Clinical Methods in the Black Baptist Church

It is important in the formation and the execution of my project to look at the history of the use of psychodynamics in the Black Baptist Church. We must be cognizant how it has informed the church or has not played a major role in the church's Pastoral care. Regarding my project, based on the familiarity of clinical methodologies, they will constitute a major factor in my project's effectiveness. Familiarity does not always breed contempt, but I am under the strongest belief in this instance, familiarity will facilitate my project's receptivity and overall outcome. By knowing the history it will help me to determine what clinical methodology is analogous to previous unscientific methods.

Based on my empirical knowledge, observation and research, I discovered the lack of usage for psycho-dynamics. Understanding the reasons for its limited use or total

absence gave me a deeper appreciation of the struggle the Black Church on a whole has endured and how far it has progressed. To a large degree I alluded to some if not all of the reasons in my introduction, but I am deeply inclined to reiterate them just in case I have omitted any. Many of these reasons extended beyond the control of the Black Pastor/Church:

- Leading colleges and universities discriminated against people of color denying them the opportunity to study in this field.
- Due to discrimination in the employment sector, people of color were unable to secure well paying jobs offering them the financial independence to attend institutions of higher learning.
- Historical Black Institutions did not offer this discipline due to the inequity in funding.
- Historical Black Institutions were not established to teach Black students this discipline. Most of them were established to teach Black students the trades or to become teachers.
- The masses of Black People were not exposed to psychodynamics because they could not afford the treatments.
- Many Black People attached a stigma to psychodynamics. They felt it was for only the mental insane.
- Many Black People feared this practice due to the abuse (e.g. electric shock treatments) of it by the dominant culture.
- Most Black People found an alternative means of solving their psychological issues.

All of the above contributes to my approach to the my project. By being familiar with those barriers it will help me overcome them (e.g. fears and stigmas) in the actual implementation of my project.

What is more remarkable, is that I needed to be intimately familiar with what Black People have used over the years to substitute for psychodynamics. Knowing its strengths and weaknesses will help me to convince the counselees to accept my methodology. I knew the familiar practice or methodology, but I was unable to put a face on it. In my reading I came across a book that is entirely devoted to this practice. The book is entitled, *African American Pastoral Care* by Edward P. Wimberly.

Mr. Wimberly is certainly qualified to write on the subject. He is currently the Jarena Lee Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Other knowledgeable persons in this field critiqued the book and had made some interesting statements. Homer L. Jernigan, Danielsen Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Boston University School of Theology writes, "Wimberly... recognizes the importance of the sharing of stories in the African-American tradition and the significance of a narrative approach to pastoral care in that tradition. Wimberly illustrates the use of stories in many of the personal and family situations the pastor faces in the life of the congregation."

In Professor Jernigan's assessment, he basically reveals the widely used approach. Biblical and personal stories are being used to help persons and families to visualize how God can work in their lives to receive healing and wholeness (Wimberly, 1991). This approach has its limitations:

- Biblical storytelling may not be effective for the un-churched.

- Personal storytelling may be more of a detriment than a help. You may attempt to identify with the counselee and show empathy, but instead it spurs the conscious greater anxiety.
- Due to poor exegetical work on behalf of the Pastor, the wrong biblical story may be applied to the counselee's problem.
- Fails to incorporate the analytic psychodynamic approach.

Being familiar with this methodology helps me to analyze its weaknesses and draw my participants into the psychodynamic approach.

Obviously my approach will incorporate both disciplines (psychological and theological), but that doesn't totally mitigate the tension in how to properly formulate them in the overall process. I agree with Deborah Hunsinger as she summarizes Thomas Oden, a United Methodist theologian's stance on the two disciplines, that is, "pastors need psychology, but their psychology needs to be compatible with their theological convictions"(Hunsinger, 1995). I am not about to make Eduard Thurneysen's "indissoluble differentiation" so concrete that these disciplines become extremely conflictive. In defense of Thurneysen, he does advocate the need for psychology in pastoral care (Hunsinger, 1995). However, I must be ever so vigilant in the proper application of these two disciplines in my project.

Object Relations Theory

My focus in this section of the paper will be to address the clinical approach and terms that will impact my project indirectly or directly. Psychodynamics will play a greater part in the analytic and reparative perspectives. We will seek to inculcate the marital status through the presentation of seminars and conferences.

Because we will be focusing on relationships (intimacy within those relationships) it makes sense to gravitate more to the object relations theory more so than the drive theory promulgated by Freud. Dr. Thomas Klee confirms my prior statement. He states that "object relations theory places less emphasis on the drives of aggression and sexuality as motivational forces and more emphasis on human relationships as the primary motivational force in life" (Klee, 200-2007). Professionals who fall in the category as object relations theorists contend humans are more driven toward a meaningful relationship than pleasure. They further assert humans have an innate drive to form and maintain relationships and drives such as libidinal and aggressive drives are affected by it.

The modern object relations theory identify objects as people (father, mother, others) or things, such as transitional objects (toys, pets, stuffed animals) with which we form attachments. We enter into this world with a certain gene pool that determines our self or personality. Our interactions with significant others from infancy onward influences how our genetic dispositions will be expressed. This carries on into adulthood and affects our relationships with our spouses. (Klee, 2000-2007)

This along with other factors contribute how couples respond to the stressors could implode a relationship. Stress is seen as a "state which arises from an actual or perceived imbalance between demands (e.g. challenge, threat) and capability [(e.g. resources, coping) (Karpel, 1994)]." Stressors are divided into two main categories (horizontal or vertical). Horizontal stressors deal with the family's development over time. Horizontal stressors have two sub-categories (predictable stresses and unpredictable events). Predictable stresses include marriage, the birth of children,

children reaching adolescence and later leaving home, and the death of elderly parents.

Unpredictable stresses illness or serious injury, job loss, death of a child fall, geographical moves, political instability, criminal victimization, violence and sexual abuse. Vertical stressors can be considered more internal. They involve "patterns of relating and functioning that are communicated from one generation to another. These stressors are birthed out of our belief systems, family attitudes, taboos, expectations, labels and other loaded issues with which we grow up. You may find many of the relational challenges (commitment, fairness and trust, communication, gender roles and unrealistic expectations) are closely intertwined with the vertical stressors.

These stressors can produce anxiety. Anxiety can be manifest through anxiousness and nervousness or an actual panic attack. Anxiety is reduced by the ego defense mechanisms. In object relations, it helps in the restructuring of the marital relationship (Scharff and Scharff, 2005). Some of those ego defense mechanisms are:

- *sublimation* is a defense that often goes with acceptance of a reality limitation within the relation for either or both spouses (Sager, 1977);
- *altruistic surrender* of one's own yearnings and desires is most obvious and commonly observed when a wife supports her husband's fulfillment while refraining from her own, except as secondary to his;
- *regression* is one of the most popular mechanisms used in marriage. Almost invariably the therapist observes regressed behavior on the part of one or both spouses in the first session. The transferential components in marriage and mate selection appear to make this defense an inevitable choice for many couples.

One spouse, male or female, may assume a "permanent" regressed stance with

the other or both may be regressed. Yet both spouses may relate with people other than the mate in a perfectly mature and appropriate manner;

- *repression* is common defense used to cope with impulses and affects generated in the marital system that produce anxiety;
- *reaction formation* is very commonly used in the marital system, especially to obviate aggressive and hostile feelings. For example, one wife who had already unconsciously made a decision to leave her husband suddenly felt compelled to give him an expensive gift;
- *denial* means protecting myself from anxiety by failing to perceive or by misperceiving something in the world outside of my own thoughts or feelings. A classic example of denial of our present world is the persistent unwillingness of large parts of the population to acknowledge known health risks, most flagrantly cigarette smoking (Kahn, 2002);
- *Inhibition* of impulses includes not only "instinctual" impulses such as sexual ones, but any impulse to feel, think, act, or say anything which may arouse anxiety or cause the mate's disapproval or cause him or her to think less of the mate.

These are the clinical principles that will chiefly inform us of the psychoanalytic approach. In the utilization of these principles, I am inclined to use the integrative family therapy. In this instance I focus on six (6) areas:

Presenting Problem: Identify the problem that brought the couple in for counseling.

Problem Solving Assessment: Determine if the identified couple have sufficient skills to resolve their own problem.

Interactional Assessment: Determine the status of their relationship, how well they respond to one another.

Cognitive Assessment: Determine each spouse belief system-what they think about the marriage.

Family-of-Origin: Create a genogram of prior generations family members.

Individual Developmental Assessment: Conduct a psychoanalysis of the one of the spouses, determine their pathology and treat it accordingly.

An actual case study is presented in the appendix to provide a working case of the above system.

Chapter III

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Narrative of Project

A. Awareness

My wife and I began attending Bethany Baptist Church the first Sunday in January of 2009. We have gotten to know a large percentage of the adult population, but I confess there are still quite a few I am still unfamiliar with. Since, my wife and I had only been in the church a little over a year, I was apprehensive about how receptivity the congregation about attending these seminars. Not letting that deter me, being that I am not the Pastor Brown I spoke to with our Pastor about presenting these marriage seminars. He was extremely in favor of them. One of the main reasons Pastor Brown was so receptive is that they were being scheduled at a time when he had become aware of several marriages were experiencing conflict. Pastor Brown said this would be a means to provide them with some indirect counseling. Our church secretary was instrumental in placing the flyer in the bulletin and making some extra copies. In addition, I spoke directly to some of the participants, personally inviting them. I don't recall anyone turning me down that I personally spoke with. However, a few of the couples said they would not be able to attend due to a conflict in their schedule.

B. Preparation

My wife was instrumental in helping me to prepare the list of items we needed to host the seminars January 15th and 29th. She determined the menu and how we would decorate the fellowship hall. With reference to the food, we decided to buy a 3 foot sandwich along with sodas, chips, peanuts and cookies. Since Valentine's Day was

nearing, we purchased little heart shaped candies, table pieces and ballons for decorative purposes.

C. Goals and Strategy of Seminar held on January 15,2009

Goals

- a. Assist the men and women in better understanding of one another
- b. Help each partner to become more familiar with differences in the mental make-up of the other gender.
- c. Help the men and women understand why each gender acts and responds in a certain manner.
- d. Help each gender understand the emotional needs of one another.
- e. Improve their understanding of one another to reduce uninvited tension that reduces intimacy in the relationship.

Strategy

I would present a teaching on gender differences (Gray, 1992). I would offer hand-outs. The stratagem would allow open and frank discussion.

D. Implementation of Seminar held on January 15, 2009

My wife and I arrived at the church about 6:15 and began setting up the hall (rearranging the tables, setting up the food and decorating the hall). The attendees began coming through the door about forty (40) minutes later. We allow them to enjoy the food. By 7:30 all of the attendees were present and we began our session.

First I opened the seminar with prayer and a scripture. Afterwards my wife did a ice-breaker. It consisted of three questions (see below). The men were challenged to see how much they knew about their wives. My wife prepared ten (10) questions

(See Appendix 4). They were asked to answer all of the questions. They were given ten (10) points for each question answered correctly. The questions with their answers were given to their spouse to answer/score. The men with the top three highest scores were given a gift. After some laughs we began the teaching session (See Appendix).

E. Goals and Strategy of Seminar held on January 29,2010

Goals:

- a. Familiarize the couples with the concept of love language.
- b. Help each spouse to become familiar with their love language.
- c. Encourage each spouse to implement appropriate action to honor their spouse's love language.

Strategy:

I didn't want to do another teaching. I wanted to do something bit different. I presented a video prepared by Gary Chapman on The Five Love Languages. The video is approximately a hour long in two thirty (30) segments.

F. Implementing of seminar held on January 29, 2010

Basically, this seminar mirrored the other previous seminar. My wife and I arrived early and set-up the fellowship hall. Our menu was basically the same. This session we were blessed with two new couples. I opened the seminar with prayer and scripture. I made some opening remarks and afterwards my wife did the ice-breaker. This time the women were given the questions (see appendix). Upon completion, the men were asked to grade them. The women with the highest three scores were given gifts. Again after a few laughs, we began the video. We provided each spouse with a

hand-out that they were able to write down answers to statements made by Gary Chapman. At the end, they did a survey that allowed them to identify their love language. Lastly, I gave the men a small heart shaped box of candy to give to their wives. It was totally unexpected. I wanted to emphasized giving.

G. Valentine's Day Fellowship

We knew that we wanted to do another seminar. We were thinking about doing it on February 12,2010; however, one of the spouses suggested to do it on Valentine's Day. We surveyed the couples and they consented. This was unusual because most men and women would prefer going out to dinner on Valentine's Day. My wife and I decided to host it at our house. We had quite a bit of preparation. Five-seven couples were expected. I ordered chairs and heart shaped balloons. Again, my wife and I worked out the menu. It was more sophisticated this time. We agreed to meet immediately after church-about 2pm. Most of the couples did not arrive until 3pm. We sat and talked awhile. Afterwards we went to the table. We had a feast. The food was just delicious. Following the meal we went down stairs.

G. Goals and Strategy

Goals:

- a. Assist the couples in visualizing how they engage one another in conflict resolution.
- b. Identify their style of conflict resolution
- c. Identify their attitude during conflict resolution and determine where improvement may be needed.

Strategy

We would engage in meaningful dialogue. I would facilitate the exchange of ideas. I wanted to concentrate on conflict resolution and how we handle conflict. This is an area that can damage our sense of intimacy.

Methods for Assessing Outcomes

My approach to this demonstration project was to prove the need for a marriage ministry in our church. I spoke about the lack of man/woman power in our churches to implement this ministry. The thrust of this paper focused more on proving the need for such a ministry. I am fully aware my test group was relatively small. The accusation could be raised that I did not have enough respondents to draw any creditable conclusions. I submit that is debatable since I believe the participants were representative of the members found in today's Black Church.

You may recall, that Pastor Brown was amenable to me engaging this ministry. He expressed no reluctance. Pastor Brown felt in our particular ministry people would attend even though he was not coordinating or conducting the sessions. Assessing the attendance at each of the sessions (January 14th, 29th and February 14th, certainly proves Pastor Brown expectations was not unfounded. We averaged 5-7 couples in each session.

The participants interest is difficult to measure, with the exception of testimonials and attendance. The level of interest was a crucial factor in helping Pastor Brown determine if this was worthwhile. I wanted to give him a good report even if attendance was the sole barometer.

I discovered another tool for assessing the need was a survey. The survey provided some interesting information I will present the study results later in my discussion. I expected some of the responses and did not think the group would reveal as

many problematic areas as they did on the surveys. These areas are certainly hindrances to obtaining the intimacy most couples desire within a marriage.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Survey Observations

Purpose of Survey:

- A. Determine if males handle conflict resolution different from females.
- B. Determine if the number of years of marriage impacts their conflict resolution
- C. Determine if there is a difference being raised in a single parent home versus a two parent home.
- D. Determine if the parent's marriage effected their approach to marriage
- E. Determine if there was any continuity in gender emotional make-up.
- F. Help them to identify their style in conflict resolution.

Number of Respondents: 10

Question #2 Years Married: Ranged from 4.5 years to 11 years.

Observation: These were not newlyweds. They were all seasoned and mature individuals.

Question #3 First Marriage: Yes (6) No (4-second marriage)

Observation: Most of the respondents had not been married before. This effects how they approach marriage.

Question #4 Childhood Household: Single Parent Household: 3

Two Parent Household: 7

Observation: Most of them witnessed the interaction between two parents. From an object relations theorist point of view, you can imagine the effect these parental objects had on them as children.

Question #5 Describe Most Pleasurable Moments of Parent's Marriage:

(1) Celebration of Parents 50th Anniversary

(3) Family Time@ Dinner Table

(2) Vacationing Together

(1) Interaction of relatives @Grandparents house during adolescent

(3) No Answer

Observation: Quality time ranks high on 50% of the respondent's list

Three chose to not to answer the question and that disturbs me.

Question #6 Describe the Most Distressing Moment of Parent's Marriage

(1) Dad was kicked out for being a rolling stone.

(2) No answer.

(2) Death of parents.

(1) When Parents almost divorced.

(3) Parents arguing

(1) Divorce

Observation: Further inquiry will allow me to determine how these negatives affected the respondent.

Question #7 Of Your Parents, Whose Emotional Make-Up Do You Most Identify With

(2) Males whose Mother was very outspoken

(1) Male whose father craved love.

(2) Father

(3) Females identified with Mother or Grandmother

(2) Females identified with Father (One desired more love)

Observation: In most cases both male and female identified with the most dominant gender in the household.

Question #8 I am a patient person.

(2) Females - Always

(3) Males - Most of the Time

(2) Females Most of the Time

(2) Males - Sometimes

(1) Female - Rarely

Observation: Over 50% are classifying themselves as being patient.

Question #9 I can express my thoughts openly and honest with spouse.

(1) Female - Always

(1) Male - Always

(2) Males - Most of the Time

(2) Females - Most of the Time

(2) Females - Sometimes

(2) Males - Sometimes

Observation: 60% reported that they can have a open conversation with their spouse.

We need to address the balance. Remember, these are not newlyweds.

Question #10 I can express my thoughts without getting angry.

(1) Female - Always

(2) Males - Most of the time

(1) Female - Most of the time

(3) Females - Sometimes

(3) Males - Sometimes

Observation: 60% report that can have a problem expressing themselves without getting angry. This certainty does not correlate with the prior answer if the same amount is capable of having an open conversation.

Question #11 I am willing to allocate proper time to discuss issues with my spouse.

(3) Females - Always

(1) Male - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(2) Females - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

Observation: 60% are in the unacceptable range. This is an area we can address.

Question #12 I am open to hear my spouse's opinion.

(3) Females - Always

(1) Male - Always

(1) Male - Most of the time

(1) Female - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(1) Female - Sometimes

Observation: 60% are in the acceptable range. It sort of refutes the previous answer.

You cannot be open to hear your spouse's opinion unless you allocate the proper time.

Question #13 I value my spouse's opinion.

(2) Females - Always

(1) Males - Always

(2) Females - Most of the time

(3) Males - Most of the time

(1) Male - Sometimes

(1) Female - Sometimes

Observation: 80% are in the acceptable range. There is significant improvement.

Question #13a I am usually right.

(4) Females - Most of the time

(2) Males - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(1) Female - Sometimes

Observation: The connection is that no one checked always.

Question #14 My view of life is shared by my spouse

(1) Female - Always

(2) Males - Always

(2) Females - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(2) Females - Sometimes

Observation - 60% have good cognitive skills.

Question #15 My spouse and I discuss the issue until we can reach an agreement.

(2) Males - Most of the time

(1) Female - Most of the time

(2) Males - Sometimes

(3) Females - Sometimes

(1) Female - Rarely

(1) Male - Rarely

Observation: Majority of the group have past problem skills. One couple needs a great deal of assistance/counseling in this area

Question #16 I try to avoid the issue.

(3) Females - Most of the time

(1) Male - Most of the time

(2) Males - Sometimes

(1) Female - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

(1) Male - Never

(1) Female - Never

Observation: 70% try to avoid the issue. There might be a problem in either or both the problem solving and interaction sphere.

Question #16a I am more competitive in nature.

(2) Males - Always

(2) Males - Most of the time

(2) Females - Most of the time

(1) Male - Sometimes

(1) Female - Rarely

(1) Female - Never

(1) Female (No Answer)

Observation: 60% are competitive, it could affect their interaction skills.

Question #16b I am more accommodating.

(1) Male - Always

(4) Females - Most of the time

(1) Female - Sometimes

(2) Males - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

(1) Female - Rarely

Observation: The latter two may indicate some rigidity.

Question #16c I am more collaborative.

(1) Male - Most of the time

(3) Females - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(1) Female - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

(1) Female (No Answer)

Observation: This question and response may insinuate more rigidity than the previous one.

Question #16d I am more compromising.

(1) Male - Always

(1) Female - Always

(2) Females - Most of the time

(2) Females - Sometimes

(2) Males - Sometimes

(2) Males - Rarely

Observation: 60% of the respondents fail to compromise. This is a presenting problem, creates problem solving issues, interaction issue and cognitive issues. It could stem from the body-or-origin issue. There might be need for individual development assessment.

Question #17 I blame my spouse for the problem.

((2) Males - Most of the time

(3) Females - Sometimes

(1) Male - Sometimes

(1) Female - Rarely

(2) Males - Rarely

(1) Female - Never

Observation: 50% are on the negative side. We definitely need to engage in a cognitive assessment.

Question #18 My spouse and I discuss issues when we are not tensed or frustrated.

(1) Male - Always

(3) Males - Most of the time

(2) Females - Most of the time

(2) Females - Sometimes

(1) Male - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

Observation: If the last male understood the question, his response may be a signal that he needs to be individually assessment.

Question #19 I have found ways to lessen tension in a difficult situation.

(3) Males - Most of the time

(4) Females - Most of the time

(1) Female - Sometimes

(1) Male - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

Observation: This one is troubling me. He's consistent. He needs some individual.

Question #19a I don't engage in name calling.

(1) Female - Always

(1) Female - Most of the time

(1) Male - Most of the time

(1) Male - Sometimes

(3) Males - Rarely

(3) Females - Never

Observation: I wonder if the female at the top of this chart and the male that I alluded to are related, if so couples therapy would be recommended.

Question #20 I try to end a tensed situation without the tension continuing to loom.

(1) Female - Always

(3) Female - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(1) Female - Sometimes

(1) Male - Rarely

(1) Male (No Answer)

Observation: This male that answered rarely appears to necessitate individual therapy.

Question #21 I am usually pleased with the decision.

(2) Females - Most of the time

(3) Males - Most of the time

(3) Males - Sometimes

(2) Females - Sometimes

Observation: It appears that the respondents' problem skills are improved.

Question #22 I am not normally pleased with the decision.

(1) Male - Most of the time

(1) Female - Most of the time

(3) Females - Sometimes

(2) Male - Sometimes

(2) Males - Rarely

Observation: This response is consistent with the prior response of the prior question. Their problem solving skills do not appear to be deficient.

As I fore stated, the survey proved to be instrumental in providing some crucial and vital information on the status of marriages in our church. Some of the determinants that I discussed earlier that led me to conduct the survey were not necessary to observe the results. More studies in those areas would be beneficial for the future. The survey has several components but the theme centered around conflict resolution. A theme of this nature demonstrates the need of such a ministry. Deficiencies in this area will do tremendous damage to any marriage.

By focusing on assessing the couple's cognitive thinking it will provide valuable insight on how they approach potential conflicts. I was interested in the family-of-origins, looking at the structure of the home during their adolescent. Their childhood experiences largely contributes to their current behavior. The family-of-origin can be either a positive or negative force. Seventy percent (70%) of the participants came from a two parent household. This is quite important. A later question (#6) reveals only one of the respondents' parents actually divorced. Another respondent witnessed his/her parents on the verge of getting a divorce. We know those instances where divorces have produced scars that remained for a lifetime.

I was glad to see the positive answers that dominated question #5. From all indications, the respondents came from stable homes. This makes a difference. They were given positive memories to build their marriages upon.

Purpose of The Survey

Without engaging into any further analysis or drawing anymore assumptions, I deem it best to elaborate on the purpose of this survey and what was accomplished.

- To determine if males handle conflict resolutions different from females. Let me preface my remarks with this statement. In response to the opening statement (males vs. females handling of conflict resolutions) there is no decisive answer because question #10 that may have given a clue to the answer was split 50/50.
- To determine if the number of years of marriage impacts their conflict resolution. As I stated earlier, the participants were married between 4.5 and 11 years. To reach a definitive conclusion the survey would need to be

revised; specific questions should be added to actually identify the couple taking the survey. Instead of it being an individual survey, it would need to allow for each couple to take the survey together. This just further points out the challenges when conducting surveys. Sometimes you have to go back to the drawing board.

- To determine if there is a correlation between a couple's marriage and whether or not they were raised in a single parent home versus a two parent home. Even without results from a survey there are stereotypical differences that lead one to believe those from a single parent home would have marital stress. I might be a little bias since I was raised in a two parent home. In order to obtain a comprehensive determinant it would require more questions and perhaps a different format. It might be best to do separate group discussions between the persons raised in these two different settings. This would enhance the possibilities of being able to conclude how either setting affected their current marriage.
- To determine if the parent's marriage affected the couple's approach to marriage. Questions 5 & 6 were intended to provide some insight for this purpose. The family-of-origins fascinates me. I wanted to know its impact. We were given some insight, but not enough.
- To determine if there was any continuity in gender emotional make-up. Basically, since women are considered to be more emotive, does this make them poor candidates for conflict resolution? The survey results were inconclusive. More exploration should be done in this area.

- To identify the couple's style of conflict resolution. I believe the survey by its line of questions was able to help the respondents make this determination.

We have yet to discuss their responses, but I know they are more cognizant of their styles.

This survey offered a host of challenges because we were attempting to answer the question of many areas with a short survey. Looking back in hindsight, I followed my heart instead of my mind. In my haste, I became enthralled at the potential without fully realizing all of the pieces warranted to make a survey of this nature provide the factual analysis. As a result I realize a team approach and the involvement of other professionals (therapists, psychologists, marriage counselors, etc.) would be beneficial to creating the survey. In other words, anyone deciding to do marriage ministry must realize it is a collaborative effort. However, this does not preclude me from taking advantage of the information that was gathered. Some valuable information was gleaned. I intend to discuss these results with the group and use it as a learning tool. Because we have evolved into a support group, much can be achieved with the information that was generated.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

Looking back at the closing paragraph of the prior chapter, I allude to the enormity of this project. The enormity of this project is not just due to the vast material that needs to be covered, but also to the complexity of marrying clinical and theological thought. Both are essential to deal with the challenges being placed on today's marriages. I recognize that the Black Church is fertile ground to utilize these clinical models. As more seminary trained preachers enter the pulpit we will see both principles used in a more efficient manner. Jesus, the model will be merged with couples therapy. The forgiveness of God will be merged with uncovered trauma.

There is much work awaiting me! Marriages in the Black Baptist Churches are at great risk. Couples need to be given these tools to confront and combat the enemies of a covenant marriage. Intense work has to be put forth.

As I mentioned earlier, we evolved into a support group. I had no idea we would be so open and candid about the pain and hurt in some marriages. Support groups are essential in this world of self-centeredness.

I believe much was achieved in this project. Couples were given the opportunity to look at intimacy in light of scripture and clinical principles. Some of the women shared your newfound definition of intimacy (see appendix). It clearly shows they were motivated to look more into their needs and strive for growth in their marriages.

In addition, couples have been given the impetus to work at their marriages. They know marriage is not something to be taken for granted. You have to work at it. This has been instilled in them.

I am glad for the opportunity to have worked on this project. It had great impact. Pastor Brown has approved the formation of a marriage ministry or couples ministry (see appendix). This excited me, but I am more excited by what one of the couples shared with us. They said, "these seminars stopped [them] from getting a divorce." That's the bottom line.

Appendix A

Icebreaker For Marriage Seminar

DO YOU KNOW YOUR HUSBAND?

1. Does your husband prefer stuffing or mashed potatoes with chicken?
☐ *Stuffing*
☐ Mashed Potatoes
2. What's your husband's favorite holiday?

3. Where do you go on your first date together?

4. What is your husband's favorite fruit?

5. What piece of furniture in your house would your husband most like to replace?

6. What is your husband's favorite part of the chicken?

7. In what category would your husband place your family?
☐ Rich
☐ Comfortable
☐ Just Managing
☐ Poor
8. If given a choice, what would your husband rather?
☐ Wash Dishes
☐ Laundry
9. Who is your husband's #1 friend?

10. What is your husband's shirt size?

Appendix B

Icebreaker For Marriage Seminar

DO YOU KNOW YOUR WIFE?

1. What is your wife's favorite perfume?

2. How much cash does your wife usually carry?

_____ Under \$10.00

_____ Between \$10-35

_____ More than \$35

3. When your wife is dressing for an evening out, which does she put on first?

_____ Dress

_____ Make-up

4. Can you name (2) fairly common foods your wife cannot stand?

1. _____ 2. _____

5. How often does your wife usually shop for groceries?

_____ Once a week

_____ Twice a week

_____ Three times or more a week

6. What does your wife believe is the most common cause of fights in your home?

7. How many credit & charge cards does your wife carry?

_____ None

_____ One - Three

_____ Four – Six

_____ Seven or More

8. What is your wife's favorite ice cream?

9. What color is your wife's wallet?

10. What is your wife's favorite restaurant?

Appendix C

Flyer for Marriage Seminar on Love Language

How do I love thee, let me count the ways!



A MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

THEME: "THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES"

*Rev. Leonard & Gloria Jarvis presents this life
changing conference that will strengthen, ignite, and empower your relationship at...*

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

157-11 111th Avenue, Jamaica, NY
Rev. Craig Scott Brown, Senior Pastor

Friday, January 29, 2010 * 7pm

FREE!!! Register at: church office / or call 718.659.6099

SPACE IS LIMITED

Tear off and return to church office or Rev. Jarvis

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ email _____
Years married _____



Appendix D

Flyer for Marriage Seminar on Intimacy

How do I love thee, let me count the ways!



A MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

THEME: "LOVE (INTIMACY OUTSIDE THE SHEETS)"

Rev. Leonard & Gloria Jarvis presents this life changing conference that will strengthen, ignite, and empower your relationship at...

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

157-11 111th Avenue, Jamaica, NY
Rev. Craig Scott Brown, Senior Pastor

Friday, January 15, 2010 * 7pm

FREE!!! Register at: church office / or call 718.659.6099

SPACE IS LIMITED

Tear off and return to church office or Rev. Jarvis

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ email _____
Years married _____



Appendix E

Testimonials from Couples at Marriage Seminars

Dear Husband,

Dictionary.com defines intimacy as a close, familiar, and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group. When most people hear that automatically the use of touch is at the forefront of their mind. However, for me intimacy is highly-correlated with quality time. Walking in the park holding hands, watching the sunrise on a beach, sitting at home in front of a fireplace are true examples of intimacy. For me, it is the little things that count which make me feel the most intimate with you. It is something that I need in order to have a healthy and loving friendship and marriage with you. Intimacy is the core of the bond that we have together. I believe we learn about our emotions and true feelings about each other during true acts of intimacy. I need it from you in order to survive. There is a level of sincerity and passion when the intimacy is real. It is when you can close out everything and everyone else and simply focus on me. It is like we are the only two people left on the face of the Earth. A simple act of kindness, such as a random card is an example of intimacy. Intimacy is also doing things that you don't always want to do in order to make me happy. If I want to go to the mall and you have no desire; however, you swallow that and go –makes me feel like the most special person in the world. You may think making love is the ultimate act of intimacy and I believe it can be when we are both focused on each other needs and desires. True and passionate love making results from great moments of intimacy that occurs outside of the bedroom. Making love can be like a chore when there is no real connection or passion. When your focus is on my pleasure and happiness then true intimacy is present. I pray to God that he will continue to show us what makes each other happy and how we can grow our intimacy together.

Signed,

Your Wife

What Is **INTIMACY** to me? What Does **INTIMACY** mean to me? Intimate-defined as “Characterized by close friendship or association” (intimacy, intimateness)
[adj] Close, friendly, familiar; private, personal. Nearness; suggest, imply; impart.
Impersonal, companion.

As a married Christian; raised and bought up in the Church, having my marriage officiated in the Church. I feel that *intimacy* is shared only between two consenting adults having a Loving, mutual, sexual, passionate, love making, very romantic relationship. That is a personal and shared commitment between the two; Man and woman. {Husband and Wife}.

For me in my marriage *intimacy* is an emotional need as well as a physical need. Just being very affectionate with one another; as well as toward each other. Having an unconditional, undying, loving, enduring, touching romantic involvement. I am truly an affectionate person and I am so glad that the man I married share in that same affection. In our five Love Languages #5 is “Physical Touch”, which to me is definitely *intimacy*. Also our 4th Love Language tells us “Quality Time”, to me that’s a very big part of *intimacy*. The 3rd Love Language is “Acts of Service”, *intimacy* is sincerely a service rendered to each other. #2 Love Languages is “Gifts” this certainly seems like a wonderful gift to be exchanging and giving to one another. Then we have our #1 Love Language “Words of Affirmation”, well *intimacy* if affirmation just by the start with kisses that can be quite passionate; which is expressions of how good you look to me.

I enjoy all that *intimacy* has to offer, even if it’s cuddling on the couch, or especially in the bed, when were rubbing feet or locking up with one another. I have an intimate moment looking into my husband eyes even in restaurants over a meal. Talking, gazing and the holding hands I simply adore.

I have a different kind of **intimate** relationship with Jesus Christ, that’s a separate, personal intimate commitment between me and my Lord and Savior.

Signed,
Love & Intimacy

Appendix F

Survey for Marriage Counseling Workshop

Looking Into Our Marriage

Place an **X** near the correct answer when applicable.

1. Gender: Male_____ Female_____
2. Years Married_____
3. First Marriage: Yes_____ or No_____ If no, indicate whether 2nd, 3rd or_____
4. Childhood Household: Single Parent Yes_____ No _____
Dual Parents Yes_____ No_____

5. Describe Most Pleasurable Moment(s) of Parent's Marriage

6. Describe The Most Distressing Moment(s) of Parent's Marriage

7. Of Your Parents, Whose Emotional Make-Up Do You Most Identify With
Mother or Father (Circle the correct answer)

Describe_____

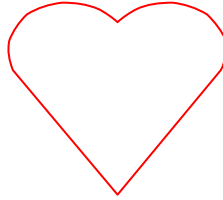
Insert the number that best describes your situation

(0)Never (1) Rarely (2)Sometimes (3) Most of the Time (4)Always

8. I am a patient person. _____
9. I can express my thoughts openly and honestly with my spouse. _____
10. I can express my thoughts without getting angry. _____
11. I am willing to allocate the proper time to discuss issues with my spouse. _____
12. I am open to hear my spouse's opinion. _____
13. I value my spouse's opinion. _____

- 13a. I am usually right. _____
14. My view of life is shared by my spouse. _____
15. My spouse and I discuss the issue until we can reach an agreement. _____
16. I try to avoid the issue. _____
- 16a. I am more competitive in nature. _____
- 16b. I am more accommodating. _____
- 16c. I am more collaborative. _____
- 16d. I am more compromising. _____
17. I blame my spouse for the problem. _____
18. My spouse and I discuss issues when we are not tensed or frustrated. _____
19. I have discovered ways to lessen the tension in a difficult situation. _____
- 19a. I do not engage in name calling. _____
20. I try to end a tense situation without the tension continuing to loom. _____
21. I am usually pleased with the decision. _____
22. I am not normally pleased with the decision. _____

Appendix G
Handout for Marriage Seminar
"Love Outside Of The Sheets"



Subtopic: *Handling Our Differences*

Genesis 1:27 So...male and female He created them.

Object: To understand and appreciate our differences.

God's Man

1. Warriors by nature.
Fights the enemy!
2. Vision-Driven
Moved by what they see.
3. Linear Thinkers
One track mind.
One thing at a time.
Not detailed oriented.
4. Goal Oriented
Mechanical in nature.
Prefer objects and things
5. Fail to listen.
Insensitive to wife's emotional needs.
Offers unsolicited advice at the wrong time.
6. Prefer being alone.
Cave dwellers.
Hides his feelings.
Believes he can solve problem alone.
Creates a sense of neglect and unimportance in the woman.

Answer:_____

God's Woman

1. Warring by nature.
Sees the enemy!
2. Intuitive-Driven
Moved by what they sense or feel.
3. Circular Thinkers
Multi-directed mind.
Multi-task.
Detailed oriented.
4. Relational Oriented
Emotional in nature.
Prefer people and feelings
5. Over analyze a situation.
Asks questions and offer unsolicited advice.
6. Prefer the company of others.
Company keepers.
In touch with feelings.
Seeks the inclusion of others.
Can be interpreted as if the man is the cause.

Answer_____

7. Men want to feel needed.
Most happy when he is making her happy.

8. **Love Needs of Men**
- a. Trust (believe he is doing his best)*
 - b. Acceptance (favorably received)*
 - c. Appreciation (acknowledges his efforts)*
 - d. Admiration (amazed by him)*
 - e. Approval (expresses overall satisfaction)*
 - f. Encouragement (express confidence)*

7. Women want to feel cherished.
Wants to know she is worthy of love.

8. **Love Needs of Women**
- a. Caring (interest in her feelings)*
 - b. Understanding (empathy)*
 - c. Respect (prioritizes her wishes)*
 - d. Devotion (adored-made spec.)*
 - e. Validation (accepts&confirms)*
 - f. Reassurance (continually loved)*

Contributors:

Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps by Barbara and Allan Pease

Marriage Talk by Kim Walter Brown, D. Min.

Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus by John Gray, Ph.D.



Appendix H

Film Case Study

Eve's Bayou

Eve's Bayou is a film that gives more than a glimpse of a prominent Black Family living in the fifties in the bayou marred by swamps, marshy land and all types of living creatures. This place like none other has secrets and a mysterious atmosphere punctuated by the practice of "black magic" or better known as voodoo. The sunbeams radiate providing a brightness that is almost indescribable, but yet a heavy darkness looms.

The darkness saturates not only the unused spaces of this antebellum house, but even the most utilized areas. We find a family faced with a number of challenges to overcome. Most of the challenges stem from infidelity of the father, an outstanding doctor who gave his female patients more than an aspirin. Too further complicate the matter, he drank more than you would expect a doctor or any normal person. Let me introduce you to the major characters of this story.

Dr. Louis Batiste - Doctor

Mrs. Roz Batiste - Wife

Cicely, Eve and Poe - Children of Dr. & Mrs. Louis Batiste

Mozelle Batiste - Sister of Dr. Louis Batiste

I will begin with assessing this family and in doing so, you will gain a more definitive picture of the evil or challenges that lurk within the tender fabric of this family. I don't want to paint a picture as if this family is unordinary because if this film used today as a backdrop, they would appear normal. Today, their actions would be considered normal familial operatives-no pathologies per se.

Society does set the standards, but these standards do vary according to what area of society one co-exists. For example, familial standards differ amongst cultures, regions (South versus the North) and degree of religion (conservative versus liberal). This largely determines the family homeostasis. However, I am convinced there are some challenges this family needs to address. Therefore, it would be more effective if we utilized a comprehensive approach in analyzing their problems. As Mr. Olsen suggests in his book entitled, Integrative Family Therapy, the integrative assessment model would be most ideal approach. This enables us to better identify: who the client is; problem area; and the extent of the treatment. Lets insert these various assessments into the Batiste Family.

Presenting Problem Assessment

First, the problem or problems have to be presented. Here we attempt to identify the problems or challenges. In the family in question, I would request the presence of each family member. After hearing everyone's story, I would then determine for the subsequent meetings if I should meet with them individually or collectively. Here are some of the glowing issues shared in the initial mock meeting.

Roz who appears the most distressed begins to share. She reveals that her husband is seldom home. He spends an awful lot of time in his practice-many nights not arriving home until way beyond midnight. She goes on to say, that many of those nights Dr. Batiste comes in drunk. At this point, I ask the children to leave the room because it appears this is more of a martial problem than a family problem. Roz is beginning to become more upset, tells me their intimate periods are far and in-between. Dr. Batiste acknowledges that he comes home late, but tries to downplay the frequency of his

lateness and justify it based solely on medical reasons. The truth is that Dr. Batiste is having several extra-marital affairs and it is affecting his relationship with his wife. There is no affect.

I ask the children to join us. I discover that the children verify their mother's story. Dr. Batiste seldom comes home before they go to bed. They yearn to spend more time with their father. This is primarily expressed by the two older children, Cicely and Eve. The younger child, Poe is basically mute, letting his older sisters speak for him. I ask if there is anything else bothering them. They say no, but my sixth sense is informing me there is something else to reckon with. A subsequent meeting should bring it to the forefront. A subsequent meeting will be necessary with the children because I am sure their father's alcohol abuse is affecting them whether they know it or not.

Problem Solving Assessment

In this model, I look at the ability of the couple to solve their problem. This model is explored in our second meeting without the children. This is what we discover. As in most cases, it is the wife who initiates the counseling process. Our case is no different. Roz wants to salvage the marriage. I believe Dr. Batiste is of the same mind, but he needs a little more convincing. Roz has argued and cursed at him, all to no avail. Note, Dr. Batise has not been a meek and humble lamb. Their discussions become heated and no progress is made. I also know that these discussions, better described as arguments occur normally after Dr. Batiste comes home late at night liquored up. Therefore, Roz has to understand this is not the most opportune time to discuss her frustrations. She may vent her frustrations; but in actuality, she is only increasing her level of frustration.

Interactional Assessment

As somewhat alluded to in the previous section, they are at a standoff. Roz gets hysterical. Dr. Batiste is incoherent and unreasonable. He is never home for any extensive period for Roz to set down and talk to him. While she pursues him-he distances himself. When they have a party, she puts on a good front. She gives the appearance that the marriage is the one to be envied. She never discusses her husband's drinking problem with anyone outside of the family. In other words, Roz is very protective of her husband's drinking problem. This concludes our second meeting.

Structural Issues

Too some degree I have a sound understanding of the structural make-up of this family, but I decide to confirm my beliefs at the offset of our third meeting. Their executive subsystem typifies the traditional Southern family where the father is seen as the head and the mother as being the second in command. Roz pretty much manages the household while Dr. Batiste is basically a protector and provider. It has created some problems because Roz would love to see her husband get more involved in the day-to-day affairs of the family (i.e. children's homework and school, accompanying her to various places, etc.). This being the case, Dr. Batiste was not heavily involved in the disciplining of the children. We find out later, Dr. Batiste's drinking and external liaisons interfered with him on occasion losing respect of the children. As a result, in a few instances they assume the parental role.

Cognitive Assessment

Roz was deeply troubled and very much wanted to save her marriage. She wanted to have a long-term marriage like her mother. Her mother and father were

married for a long time before he passed. Dr. Batiste gave you the impression he did not care less, sort of a macho man attitude. He appears as the person who could do anything and his wife would never leave him. Underneath his wife's harsh facade, she was enjoying the status piece and amenities that came with being married to a doctor. Unfortunately, he did not know her frustration level was near the peak.

Family-Of-Origin

This allows me to look at their parents, the relationship they witnessed between their parents and the relationship they shared with their parents and siblings. Dr. Batiste's father was a strong willed individual. He was from that ole generation where the husband basically was the provider and protector, but lacked the proper passion. It was no different in Roz's family. Her father portrayed the familiar role. He loved his daughter, but did not spend enough time with her. Her husband was exemplifying similar traits.

Another remarkable discovery about Roz was that she had a very close relationship with Dr. Batiste's sister (Mozelle). Instead of only being a dyad (husband and wife), a triangle developed incorporating the sister-in-law. Roz and Mozelle were very close. I will admit this relationship may have been further strengthened by Mozelle being close to the children since she was barren. This led her to think she was cursed. This arose out of her first occupation of being a physic counselor. She could touch a person's hand and see visions. You may now ask why the Batiste's even sought counseling being that Mozelle may have been as equally effective. I said Mozelle had a first occupation, thus insinuating she had more than one occupation. Her second occupation was getting married. She had been married three times, each marriage ending as a result of her husband's death. This added to her thoughts of being cursed. The

bottom line is that it is important to inquire about the family-of-origin. Relatives of past and present generations do have an impact.

Individual Assessment

This final assessment enables me to look at how both parents have processed the information they learned as children from their families. It helps me to look at their individual problems-the cause(s) behind them. I should extensively analyze the doctor's drinking problem. Maybe, there is history of alcoholism. I would look at whether or not Roz was contributing to her husband's infidelities. Perhaps she is unresponsive to his advances. She may be frigid. Because they have three (3) children does not mean they are intimate creatures. Then I need to meet with the children alone and go through the same assessment. I think I would discover some interesting facts. They would probably need counseling or therapy from the scars left by their father's alcoholic abuse. I know there is some indication, the father may have made a sexual advance to the older daughter after returning home drunk.

Integrative Assessment Chart for the Batiste Family

Presenting Problem	<i>Marital Troubles Communication Problems Work alcoholism Alcoholism</i>
Problem Solving Assessment	<i>State underlying problem Construct the proper atmosphere for Problem solving</i>
Interactional Assessment	<i>Pursuer-Distance dance Emotional Dance</i>
Cognitive Assessment Family-Of-Origin	<i>Wife's Codependency Father's unavailability Husband's father inflexibility</i>

Individual Developmental Assessment

*Husband's Alcoholism
Wife's potential sexual
dysfunction*

There is a great deal of work or therapy that one would have to engage in order to help this family develop the proper homeostasis. To achieve normalcy in this family, the therapist would have to work with the father on his alcoholism, the husband and the wife on their marital difficulties and the children on their relationship with the father. This is not to omit the special psychoanalytical work with Cicely whom may have been sexually abused. I know they did have her to visit a psychologist who prescribed rest and relaxation from the family for a few weeks. Very little was expressed in the movie as to what transpired in her session with the psychologist.

This was an interesting case. Some of the scenes are missing key revelations in which you had to draw your own conclusions, but it just caused my imagination to go into overtime. The movie depicted Black Family life and its natural understandings especially in the area of the parental roles. It offered insights into the problems we are faced with and if they are not dealt with can lead to a tragic ending. Dr. Batiste was killed by a jealous husband.

Appendix I

Proposal for Marriage Counseling

Statement of Creation:

This ministry will be designed to meet the challenges of those who have entered into the sacred union of marriage. It will be centered around engaging and enhancing the intimacy level so gravely missing in today's marriages.

Goals:

- To assist couples in defining God's intent and expectations of marriages.
- To assist couples in gaining a better understanding of what intimacy entails.
- To help couples confront those issues that hinder the growth of the intimacy level.
- To help couples better define their roles in the Christian marriage.
- To collaborate with couples in cultivating a deep and passionate relationship.

Methods of Instruction:

1. Individual and/or Couples Therapy
2. Group Therapy
3. Seminars (Propose two within the next 30-45 days)
4. Role Playing
5. Acquiring and the reading of various marriage literature
6. Usage of DVDs
7. Letter Writing
8. Affirmation Exercises
9. Biblical Studies

Place of Instruction:

1. Local Church
2. Restaurant
3. Theatre
4. Other Places of Interest/Field Trips

Times of Instruction:

The time of instruction will be determined by the schedule and place of events. Primarily for those events to be occurring at the local church, it is anticipated Saturday morning may be most advantageous.

Instructors:

According to the event, will largely dictate the persons to be identified for facilitating the meeting. We will utilize the services of trained marriage counselors as well as persons whom have been married for an extended period.

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