

# The Effects of Divorce on the Development of Children's Lives

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**Abstract**— Divorce is a heart-breaking experience that changes the lives of parents and children. In God's plan, marriage is to be a strong union, the mystery of the two becoming one, and which once entered into, no one should break (Mark 10:6-9). Divorce is a devastating event which affects parents' emotional, psychological, and economic stability. It also impacts parents' relationship with their offspring. The objective of this study is to find what the root causes and solutions of conflicts that result to early divorce in Christian families are and the ensuing consequences as it pertains particularly to the development of the lives of the children.

To find the causes and solution to the problem of divorce, relevant literature by authorities and scholars in the area of Divorce and Marriage was reviewed. Views on factors that affect both parents and their children were taken to be used and compared to results of data critically and synthetically analyzed and interpreted in chapter.

In the process to collect data, Qualitative Descriptive research design was used where questionnaire, study guide, and interviews were used to collect data. Basing on the research objectives, the data collected was coded, analyzed and tabulated. The data was then interpreted, being answers from 85 respondents involved in the study.

The findings showed that among the major causes of divorce are: infidelity, sexuality difficulties among couples, drug abuse, incompatibility, economic status of the family, poor communication, and work-holism. The couple should always remember forgiveness and respect to each other will go a long way towards fighting the spirit of divorce. It is recommended that the couple always work towards establishing and maintaining good, marital relationship. They should be extra careful how they behave before their children if divorce has actualized. Lastly, they should also be aware of the help that is always available through Counseling.

**Index Terms**— Development, Divorce, Effects.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, many marriages are experiencing divorce, yet in Christian family the word of God says in Malachi 2.16 that God the Almighty hates divorce. Each couple has a different way of going about divorce while one couple may be able to have a relatively amicable divorce, another may spend years, sorting out legal issues that might have led to divorce. Whatever the situation, divorces can be brutal and causes depression to children and parents. Therefore, divorce is a phenomenon which has attracted global attention since its effects are traumatizing to both the parents and children.

The effects of divorce on parents and their children are

experienced differently for decades and strong evidence indicates that children whose parents divorce experience significant psychological and social difficulties. Sociological indicators point out a variety of long term economic, mental health, physical and social consequences of divorce.

The effects of divorce on children and families are rough although the full extent of such effects remain hotly debated. All divorces that couples experience come as a result of unhappy families. Therefore, parental divorce during early childhood or adolescence can have lasting effects on children. Such a child may make premature transitions to adulthood such as leave home or parent their own child early. Also children of divorced parents are reported to have a higher chance of behavioral problems such as fighting and taking drugs and alcohol.

More than likely, children are not part of the decision making when it comes to divorce. They are the innocent bystanders of divorce that have no choice but to become an integral part of an adult issue. There are no rules with specific directions to depend on when it comes to children understanding the separation of their parents. Children of divorced couples need resources, guidance, and more than ever, commitment and consistency from significant people in their lives. Divorce has no boundaries and carries no prejudice. Divorce affects all ages, ethnicities, races, gender, and socio-economic levels.

Most couples especially women marry with the idea of getting their expectations realized and having a happy marriage but because of lack of understanding and constant quarrels they start to think of a way of ending the relationship. Divorces affect everyone differently, and many women see change in their psychological state. This may be exacerbated by the extra stress of caring for her children while dealing with a divorce. In many cases, emotional and financial stress are the two biggest problems for women going through a divorce.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Divorce is a common phenomenon, which has attracted global attention. Government and non-governmental organizations have played vital roles in the elimination of this menace because of the psychological and social problems, which make the adolescents, exhibit strange and unguided behaviors.

For obvious reasons children see divorce as very traumatic experience. It affects them in all ramifications. Divorce impacts the youngster's behavior in the school environment, peer group and even in the society at large. The family structure is altered and thus affected. Many divorces are

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emotional and can even draw the children into the conflict between the parents. Adolescents facing problems of family dissolution have more difficult time with academic and social expectations at schools, among peers and the society than children from conflict free families. The emotional aspect of divorce, which affects adolescents, includes the feelings of anxiety, depression, inferiority complex, guilt and sometimes aggression. Parental interaction has a better effect on adolescents than the divorce. In other words, the negative outcome of divorce may increase pre-existing differences in the family unit prior to the divorce itself.

This causes very serious problems in the development of the life of children of divorced parents at all stages of their lives as much emotional, psychological, social it can even lead to trauma. The problem is that if these consequences are not remediated, it is passed on from generation to generation. Here are some major consequences: Poor performance in academics, loss of interest in social activity, difficulty in adapting to change, emotionally sensitive, anger or irritability, feelings of guilt, introduction of destructive behavior, increase in health problems, loss of faith in marriage and family unit.

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To find the root causes of conflicts that result in early parents' divorce and their effects on children' development.

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Three areas are covered in the article: Parental Conflict and Children's Adjustment, Parental Stability and its Effects, and Supporting Children in their Adjustment.
- **Parental Conflict and Children's Adjustment to Divorce**

Over the years, the number of divorce families has augmented drastically in the United States. In the twenty-first century, this country has been identified as having the highest divorce rates in its history (Wolfinger, 2005). According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2003), the number of children living with one parent (divorce or never married) at some point in childhood is 1 out of 21 (Berns, 2007, p. 91). This number is alarming, not only because of the multiple repercussions that divorce may have on the stability and development of children, but also because of the impact that divorce may have in society (US Bureau of the Census, 2003).

On multiple occasions, parents of divorce disregard the impact that their marital conflicts could have in their children psychological well-being. They assume their problems only concern and affect the adult couple. However, studies have shown that parental conflict before, during, and after separation, not only impacts parents' relationships but also the family's functioning. Parental conflict generates stress and depression in parents. These emotions have been found to be reflected in parents' coping and parenting abilities as well as on the parent-child interactions. In a study done in Pennsylvania, Amato & Booth (1996), analyzed the relation among parental discord, parent-child relations, divorce, and the after divorce parent-child affective relationship. They

used a national group of 857 married individuals studied through a series of interviews. After their 12 years' investigation, these authors concluded that there was a correlation among parent conflict and parent-child relationships. The examiners found that compared with the emotional relations mother- children, the relations father-children deteriorated to a higher degree after divorce. They also corroborated a positive correlation among the amount of time and the quality of the fathers-children relationships, and the behaviors displayed by children after divorce. Additionally, these researchers found that some of the deficient parental marriage characteristics and problems observed in the parent-child relationships after separation were already in existence prior to marital disruption (Amato & Booth, 1991).

Difficulties among adults may lead to children's limited contact with parents, lack of parental involvement, and to economic problems. Madden-Derdich & Leonard (2002) studied the relationship among post-divorce circumstances, parenting and custody issues, and parental conflict after divorce. Their study was done in Arizona with a group of 56 divorced couples (predominantly White). The data was collected through surveys, interviews, and comparisons made through different psychological scales (J. Richard, Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 17 [1992]:68-78).

In this study, the researchers found more frequent conflict among couples where mothers were not satisfied with fathers' parenting abilities. Most of the time, the custodial parents were concerned about children's safety and well-being while they were with the noncustodial parent. In their investigation, parental conflict was also associated with father's disagreement on mothers' lack of flexibility in making visitation arrangements. Fathers felt they were losing control over their children and that they were being pushed away from them (Eccles, Journal of Marriage and Family 66[2004]:55).

Custody satisfaction was also associated with conflict. Parents' frustration and stress levels augment because their custody preferences and concerns were not being understood. These parental emotional stressors affected the co-parental relationship and consequently had a negative impact on children adjustment to divorce. These findings are relevant in promoting support groups and interventions that could enhance positive co-parental relationships, where fathers and mothers agree on a positive parenting plan, validate each other's commitment to their children, and where both parents meet the established expectations of their respective parental roles after divorce (Eccles, 2004).

Reaching an effective legal settlement that benefits children and that would be fair for both parents is challenging and hard to obtain. Nonetheless, parents should have an open attitude to negotiate and agree on a win-win situation that would make their life and their children's existence after divorce easier and less painful. In a study done in Connecticut, Pruett, Williams, Isabella, & Little (2003), examined the relationship among family relations, attorney involvement, and the adjustment of children (ages 0-6) to divorce. These researchers used a group 102 fathers and 110 mothers

(majority Caucasian) whom on average had approximately 8 years on their relationship before they divorced (Larson, National Institute for Healthcare Research, [1995], 131).

After multiple questionnaires and interviews, the examiners found that families with higher parental conflict had less father involvement and more negative parent-child relationships. Besides, they observed that these adverse conditions were

conducive to more behavior problems and higher adjustment difficulty in children. The results suggested an urge for parents to strive for the reduction of parental conflict and for the preservation of positive co-parenting connections after divorce. Portnoy (2008) suggests the need for lawyers to work with a holistic approach, where they can help parents in developing an effective legal settlement where the priority is children's well-being. He recommends the creation of productive divorces where parents agree in sustaining a positive behavior and in meeting the established arrangements. For instance, a favorable solution where in the financial settlement one parent gets the reasonable economic support to provide quality living conditions for his children, and the other maintains a reasonable financial stability that allow him to continue visiting his children (Giles, *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 100[2002]37-45).

After divorce children may feel persistently angry, hurt, frightened, and confused due to the multiple changes surrounding their life. They do not feel safe and secure anymore (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2008; Hughes, 2009). Some, particularly young children with limited understanding, may interpret divorce as a sign of rejection in an intensely personal way. In search of attention and as a response to their anxiety and frustration levels, these children begin to show more behavior problems, lower self-esteem, and higher difficulty in their social interactions. Erath & Bierman (2006) studied the influence of parental conflict on the aggressive behavior of children at home and at school. They investigated a group of 360 kindergarten children and their mothers from different regions in the United States. They used interviews and several developmental scales that were completed by children's mothers and teachers (Giles, 2002).

From this work, the authors concluded that children who were exposed to maternal harsh punishment and marital conflict were more aggressive and disruptive at home and at school. Besides, they observed that parents who were overwhelmed by their marital conflict had a higher propensity to react coercively to children's misbehavior. Children in those situations had higher sensitiveness to conflict, low emotion regulation, and poor social competence. At home more than at school, these children were inclined to express their emotions and resolve their problems through aggressive behavior.

Parental conflict generates behavior problems in children. These adverse behaviors aggravate parents' frustration and end up affecting the parent-child relationships. The quality of the family relations and the commitment of parents to mitigate the risks from divorce are essential in helping children cope and adapt to their new life. Avoiding children's exposure to parental conflicts and maintaining an effective

parental bond with their offspring ease children's adjustment to divorce. Fabricius & Luecken (2007) engaged in a study of 266 young adults who had experienced their parents' divorce before they were 16. The study was done through surveys and questionnaires to investigate the impact that the father-child relationship and the distress experienced after parental separation had on parental conflict and the time spent with the noncustodial parent after divorce. The findings in this study show that the higher the frequency of father involvement after divorce the better the father-child relationship and the physical health that children displayed. However, they noticed that even when the time the father spent with the child was elevated, the higher the parental conflict the worse that the father-child relation became. This poor relationship adversely impacted the physical health of children (Teitler, *Journal of Family Issues*, 15[1994] 173-190).

Poor father-child relationships and more distress in turn predicted poorer health status. Preserving a positive parental role is essential in setting the foundation for future family and parenting styles (Ahrons, 2004). Parents are children's first and most important role models. From them, children learn values, traditions, and behaviors.

Children set their expectations about the world based on their parents' performance and on the sense of security they feel in their environment. After divorce, children's understanding of the world is damaged. Their favorable ideas about family and life are adversely impacted. They are shocked when they realize that their family model and all what is around them is not stable, secure and surrounded by love as they believed (Bowlby, 1988).

A set of confused and combined emotions emerge and children begin to display behaviors that impact their growth and development. Parents need to promote the preservation of trust and positive feelings about family and love. Although after parental divorce maintaining these concepts is complicated, parents should dedicate time to save and develop these schemas on their offspring. Good divorces are those in which the divorce does not destroy meaningful family relationships. There is need for parents need to maintain a sufficiently cooperative and supportive relationship with their children, after divorce (White, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 46[1984]:85-94).

#### • **Parents' Stability and its Effects on Children of Divorce**

Divorce can alter the life of parents and children in different ways. Along with their emotional adversity, parents of divorce have to suffer the burden of residential relocation, change of employment, and economic hardship. This transitional process drastically affects their life and their ability to ensure their children's well-being. Being proactive and having the courage to overcome this difficult situation may help parents and children in building a resilient attitude essential in their adjustment process (Booth, 1997).

Clarke-Steward, Vandell, McCartney, Owen, & Booth (2000) studied the effects of divorce in children younger than 3 years of age using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care. In their study, they investigated 340 mothers: never-married, separated-divorced, and a comparison of intact-married (the

majority White) through observations, questionnaires, and interviews. They also used some professional assessment scales such as the Bayley Scale of Mental Development (Bayley, 1969); and the Expressive Behavior Scale of the Adaptive Social Behavior Inventory (ASBI; Hogan, Scott, & Bauer, 1992). In their investigation, these researchers found that children's psychological development was not affected by parental separation per se; it was related to mothers' income, education, ethnicity, child-rearing beliefs, depressive symptoms, and behavior (Thornton and Camburn, *Demography*, 24[1987]:323-340).

Parental instability may diminish the quality of the parenting skills. After divorce, parents' ability to discipline, control, nurture, be emotional responsive, and provide a predictable routine are negatively affected (Teyber, 2001; Emery, 1999). Pett, Wampold, Turner, & Vaughan-Cole (1999) studied 198 married and divorce- low to middle income families (mostly White) to examine the influence that maternal tension, mother-child interactions, and family socio-economic stability after divorce have in the psychosocial adjustment of preschool children. In their study, the results showed that mothers who were overwhelmed by their family's economic condition, and by their own depression, anxiety, and fear had the propensity to disengage from reality. They disconnect from their maternal and caretaker role, disregarding the effects that their behavior and decisions could have in their children's well-being. This inattention led to ineffective mother- child interactions and negative behavior patterns in children (Cox, *Journal of American Academy*, 24[1985]:518-530).

Teyber (2001); and Emery (1999) recommend parents to be strong and sustain a resilient attitude in order to be able to support and guide their children through life after divorce. They also suggest the authoritative parenting style for those families trying to rebuild their sense of togetherness, respect, and security. They maintain that these children need love and care but that they also need boundaries and responsibilities. Child-rearing practices are essential in setting the basis for children's adjustment to divorce. When they are not in place, children feel lost and their post-divorce experience is miserable and unsuccessful (Kiernan, *Population Studies* 46[213-234]).

After divorce, some parents may fall into a preoccupation trap that impedes their critical thinking and resilient attitude. These parents may get overwhelmed by their negative family conditions and expose their children to their emotional and economic concerns. This experience makes children feel stressed and anxious about solving their family problems. Some children even blame themselves as being the cause of their parents' divorce. The lack of parental competence may generate overburdened children specifically when parents make their own offspring be their therapists and confidants. In such cases, children begin to take care of their parents. They take the parental and caregiver role and they disengaged from reality leaving aside their right to live their childhood (Thornton, *Demography*, 33[1996]:66-81).

Extended family and professional support can assist parents and children in overcoming the emotional problems after divorce. This assistance can help parents re-establish

their well-being and be able to become a positive source of support for their children. This intervention can also help children cope, understand, and assimilate the changes that come with divorce. Parents do not have all the answers, neither the power to eliminate all the negative experiences their children would have after their divorce. However, they have the control to reduce the sources of harm in behalf of their children's development and well-being. With care and attention, however, a family's strengths can be mobilized during a divorce, and children can be helped to deal constructively with the resolution of parental conflict (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2008). Children need a friendly hand to guide them through the confusing path of their life after divorce (Thornton, *Demography* 33[1996]:66-81).

### • Supporting Children in their Adjustment to Divorce

Nowadays, more and more children have to confront a divorce in their family. Parents who are educated on the subject of divorce and on the effect that it may have on children are better prepared to cope and overcome this stressful experience. Their understanding of this matter helps them improve their well-being and be able to assist their children in their adjustment to their new life style. Children, like adults, worry about their current living conditions and about their future. After divorce, children are trying to make sense of all what is new around them. They are re-building their concept of a family and they are trying to understand where they fit in the world. These children are slowly planning what they are going to do with their life. Consequently, parents must search for strategies that could help them make this transition more manageable and successful (Kiernan, *Population Studies*, [1986]: 35).

Certainly, after parental separation, the family's economic hardship cannot be hidden. However, parents in this condition need to prevent the exposure of children to their economic and emotional concerns. When this cannot be avoided, then parents need to explain their situation to their offspring according to children's level of understanding. Giving children, a sense of security in these areas will ease their anxiety levels and will help them in their coping process (Samenow, 2002).

Informing children of the parental decision to divorce is hard. Nonetheless, this step is unavoidable and should be done as soon as the parents have an established date for their separation. Before notifying children, it is imperative for parents to plan how and when they are going to introduce the news of their separation to their offspring. They must agree to do it together in a relaxed, simple, and sincere conversation atmosphere. This distinct family meeting should be an opportunity for parents to assure their children that their divorce is not their children's fault. This time should be used to explain to their children that this experience would be sad and hard for everyone. Parents need to reassure their offspring that they would always love them, and that they would never stop being their parents. Furthermore, they should guarantee them that as their parents, they would do all what is necessary to make the process of divorce less hurtful (Goldscheider, *Journal of Marriage and Family* [1998]:751).

Parents must ensure that the information about their

separation is presented according to children's age and maturity level. Wallerstein & Blakeslee (2003), consider that gender and age determine children's capacity to comprehend and assimilate the implications of divorce. This alertness may help them in judging what and how to answer and comfort their children in their concerns about the multiple issues related to divorce (Jeynes, *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 35[2001]:125).

Pettit, & Bates (2006) engaged in a study to examine the relationship among the age of children at the time of divorce and their academic and behavioral performance after the event. Their study was done with a sample of 194 students 6 to 11 years of age. Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, checklists, and the analysis of academic school records. In this study, the researchers found differences on how divorce impacts the offspring at different ages. The results showed that early parental divorce was related to more negative behavior problems in children, and that later parental separation was correlated to more adverse academic performance.

Parents have a vital role and responsibility with their children before, during, and after divorce. The quality of parenting that children receive after the divorce is probably the single most important aid to their adjustment (Clarke-Steward & Bentrano, 2006, p. 159). Wolchik, Clorinda, Schenck, & Sandler (2009) sustain that positive parenting practices can reduce children's exposure to stressful situations and can be helpful in promoting a sense of control that can help children build a resilient attitude vital in their adaptation to divorce. These researchers believe that the development of positive mother-child relationships helps children build a sense of security and coping abilities. These relationships augment children self-esteem and help them gain confidence in their abilities to overcome the difficult situations that will emerge after their parents' divorce. Teyber (2001) considers that consistency and effective discipline are crucial elements in helping children of divorce build a sense of predictability and control over the new environment that surrounds them. Children need warm but firm discipline. They need to know that they are loved and protected. They need reassurance that in their new families, their parents are in charge. Children need to be aware that they are being raised in a safe environment where they are respected but also where they would have to meet realistic rules and expectations. Children of divorce need structure and organization in their life. They need predictable daily routines, effective communication, and the continuous demonstration of

affection and attention. These are crucial in giving structure and organization to children's life after divorce.

Parents of divorce should strive to remain as positive role models for their children. They should avoid parental conflict (after their separation), respect the official court settlement they were established, even when they are not in agreement with this decision. Having children as priority in these setting cases would make the living of families of divorce easier and more productive. Parents should assent to never disagree or criticize each other in front of their children. They should have a set time and place away from children where they can discuss their disagreements or concerns. They should find

ways to maintain positive co-parenting relationships to benefit their children social, emotional, physical, and cognitive well-being. These factors are important in helping children assimilate their transfer from home to home, and the sudden distance that separate them from one of their parents (Wilson and Daly, *Biosocial Dimensions* [1987]215-232).

In regards to the living and visitation arrangements, parents should also communicate and agree in arranging a consistent transfer from home to home. They should establish similar rules and routines. They should try to have stable standards that are specific, reasonable, and consistent. These strategies would help children in their assimilation process, it would ease the transition for parent to parents and it would assist in creating predictable and secure environments where children can begin to rebuild their sense of trust and belonging (Kenny, 2000). Parents should be willing to work in an agreement that will benefit their children's needs. This plan should be based in the in-depth analysis of their parental relationship and their willingness to work in collaboration. They should build trust among each other and create a parenting plan where they put aside their own emotions and adult issues and they concentrate in promoting an environment that helps their children in their positive adjustment to divorce (Wilson and Daly, *Biosocial*, 1987).

An additional aspect in which children of divorce need significant amount of support to adjust is on parental remarriage. The idea of having a stranger joining the family is overwhelming for children. When their parents remarry, children feel that they have to share their parent and they begin to compete for attention. Although sometime after divorce most parents feel that they are ready for a new relationship, it is ideal to wait at least 2-3 years before engaging in a new romantic relation. This time period is necessary for children to assimilate and adjust to their new life style.

Parents should be sensitive to their children's insecurity. Besides, before engaging in a new relation, parents need to consider the damage they will cause if their new relationship ends in a future breakup. They also need to think on the possibility of acquiring an abusive step-parent. If a new romance is in plan, parent must be discrete and should avoid cohabiting. They must introduce their new romantic partner cautiously. They should not force their children to like the person and they should assure the children that the dating person will not replace the other parent. To ease this transition parents should spend increasing quality time with their children and constantly evaluate and improve their parent-child relationship (Samenow, 2002).

Children's adjustment to divorce is possible. However, it is a long process that involves suffering and that demands an open attitude and dedication. How quickly and completely children recover depends on how well the custodial parent adjusts, whether the noncustodial parent remains involved in their lives, whether the two parents get along, and whether there are other resources the child can draw upon (Clarke-Steward & Bentrano, 2006, p. 157). During this adaptation process, schools can become a source of comfort where children can find a consistent, safe, familiar, and welcoming environment surrounded by support,

understanding, and guidance. Kenny (2000); Wallerstein & Blakeslee (2003); and McGibney (2010) believe that parents should maintain a close connection with their children's teachers to monitor their children's behavior, friendships, and academic performance. Besides, these authors consider that schools could be a center where divorce parents and their children can still come together to enjoy those special moments that are meaningful and unforgettable for children (Doherty, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 52[1990]:162es 23[1993]:535-557).

Besides having the support from relatives and the school system, children and parents of divorce need professional assistance to ease their adjustment to their new life situation after divorce. Psychotherapy can help children cope with their emotions of loss, grief, abandonment, separation, trust, anger, and betrayal (Kenny, 2000, p. 228). They need treatment that would help them reduce their depression, calm their anxiety and rebuild their self-concept and self-esteem (DeLucia-Waack & Gellman (2007). These researchers examine the impact of music as an educational alternative to support children of divorce. They studied a group of 134 elementary school children (mean age 8 years old) by assigning children to two groups-one with music support and the other utilizing general psycho educational techniques. After 3 months of treatment the children were assessed using specific scales and inventory tools to evaluate their level of anxiety, depression, and illogical beliefs about divorce (Brown, "Is Marriage a Panacea?" *Social problems* 50[2003]:60-86)

The researchers in this study found a correlation among children's beliefs about divorce and their levels of depression. However, they also noticed that there was no significant difference in the levels of anxiety, depression and beliefs shown by children receiving music intervention.

Lowenstein (2009) proposes play therapy as a strategy to help children adjust to their life after parental divorce. These professional-creative activities (presented through play) can help children express their thoughts and feelings at their individual developmental level. Through these activities children of divorce can develop coping skills, express their emotions, clarify their misconceptions, disengage from their parents conflicting situations, eliminate self-blame and rebuild their self-concept and self-esteem. These age appropriate activities can help children understand their current living experiences, and think in alternative solutions to their concerns about their parents' divorce. Blackstone-Ford et al., (2006), support that the engagement of children in multiple active-positive-fulfilling activities can lead to an increase in the self-worth of children. They believe that parents should acknowledge their offspring achievements and they must set time aside to join their children in their special events (Brown, "Is Marriage a Panacea?" *Social problems* 50[2003]:60-86)

### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study presents the methods that the researcher used in carrying out the research; it points out the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques and data collection techniques. The chapter further presents the

sources of data, administration of questionnaires, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, data analysis and interpretation.

**Research design:** A detailed outline of how an investigation took place. A research design was typically including how data was collected, what instruments were employed, how the instruments were used and the means for analyzing data collected. It specified such things as how to collect and analyze the data (Kara, 2012). A descriptive and analytical research design was used with a purpose of describing and analyzing the views collected from respondents.

**Population:** A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query (Creswell, 2012). It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done. However, due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques. The population of this research was the 244 Christians of the six parishes of ADEPR and the sample was: Kacyiru 16 christians, Gatore 13 christians, Nyarubande 19 christians, Mukarangu 15 christians, Kagomba 12 christians, Byumba 10 Christians.

**Instruments:** This included the methods that the researcher used to collect data from various sources and they included questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. The researcher ensured that the research instruments used are reliable, consistent and free from any bias. Questionnaires and interview guide contained clear and accurate questions.

**Questionnaires:** The researcher formulated questions related to determinants of employee commitment on organizational performance. The questions were both open-ended and closed so as to provide respondents with opportunity to freely give their views. Questionnaires had questions covering all study objectives.

**Documentation:** This included the methods that the researcher used to collect data from various sources and they included questionnaires, interviews and

- documentary review. The researcher ensured that the research instruments used are reliable, consistent and free from any bias. Questionnaires and interview guide contained clear and accurate questions.
- *Data collection procedure:* Data collection instruments were administered by the researcher who approached respondents at their time of convenience. The researcher introduced himself to respondents and told them the exact purpose of the research before requesting them to express their views on issues raised in the questionnaire.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the effects of divorce in the family, children, church and community ?

Divers opinions	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Divorce creates hatred between the families of the divorced couples.	60	71	25	29	85	100
Divorce is a handicap to the intellectual development of children of divorced families.	50	59	35	41	85	100
Divorced families are morally, socially, economically, disoriented.	40	47	45	53	85	100
Divorce creates permanent depression amongst the divorced couples.	65	76	20	24	85	100
Children from divorced couples lack education.	70	82	15	18	85	100
Divorced couples lack integrity in the society.	35	41	50	59	85	100
Divorced couples may end up losing employment.	35	41	50	59	85	100

Sources: |Results of our research at the six selected parishes of ADEPR Church in October 2017

Different opinions were asked to the people of different churches of the six selected churches of ADEPR Church to determine effects of divorce in the churches at large. One of the opinions was the one concerning the effect of hatred of families of divorced couples, 60 men out 85 agreed that divorce of married couples creates hatred amongst families of the divorced couples and on the other hand, 25 women are the ones who accepted the idea.

The opinion of divorce married couples as a handicap to the intellectual development was also raised and only 50 men supported the opinion whereas 35 women supported the idea.

Also divorce creating a permanent depression amongst the divorced couples were forwarded to the Christians in the church, 65 men supported the opinion and 20 women accepted it.

The issue of divorced couples being disoriented morally, socially and economically was also raised, 40 men out of 85 equivalent to 47% accepted the idea and 45 women equivalent to 53% supported it also.

Again, the issue of children from divorced families lacking education because of school fees and other related school requirements was also raised out of 85 people interviewed, 70 men equivalent to 82% agreed the opinion while 15 women supported it also.

The issue of lack of integrity and unemployment of divorced couples was raised and 35 men out of 85 interviewed equivalent to 41% accepted the idea and 45 women equivalent to 53% also agreed with the opinion.

VII. CONCLUSION

Divorce is a threat to Christian families at the six selected parishes of ADEPR church and in the community at large. Its consequences are harsh to both the divorced couple and their offsprings. Divorced families have created large surface area to human trafficking and also have made children end up on

the street as street children. This is because people involved in divorce and their offsprings usually become desperate and human traffickers exploit this situation.

The church and the government should wake up and put a special program to educate the population about the danger of divorce and the consequences that follow it. The church in its teachings to the youth in the church and adults in the church should be informed about the way the devil fights the families and therefore be cautioned about the major causes of family conflict that lead to divorce. These people should be informed of the bad consequences of divorce that usually make children of the divorce families miserable as they usually lack food, medicine, education and lastly become vulnerable to poverty, diseases and many end up as street children.

It should be noted that the effects of divorce on children are very disastrous to the community and the country at large. Children from divorced families have increased likelihood to get a divorce in their own marriage simply because they do not have where they can get proper guilders in their marriage. Their parents who would have taught them how to keep their marriage safe are no longer living together.

There are without a doubt several negative implications for children of divorced families. Pryor and Rodgers (2001) utilized a quote from a 1998 newspaper stating, "Only fanatics can continue to deny that divorce has harmful effects on children if this was a medical disease, it would prompt demands for a national campaign of eradication." Since the 1970' s when divorce rates were at their highest, researchers have been working to diligently to understand its effects on our most precious commodity; our children. The results are grim. Not only are statistics of divorce increasing in this country, but the effects on our children are both disturbing andDivorce and its Effects on Childhood Development is repetitive. Children of divorce have higher rates of emotional instability, academic problems, social conflicts, and cognitive

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disadvantages compared to those children from continuously married parents (Amato, 2005). The rates of divorce for children who grow up to marry are higher than those children who come from continuously married couples (Amato & Booth, 2001). Adults who report that their parents were unhappily married tend to report a high number of problems and issues in their own marriages (Amato & Booth, 2001). Recent studies have focused on attachment issues in children. One does not have to look far to understand the correlations between attachment and children of divorce. Without the emotional bonding that is so important during the first years of a child's life, endless years of attachment issues may prevail into adulthood maladjustment. Some researchers have attempted to find positive interventions for couples considering divorce (Amato & Maynard, 2007). Some professionals propose policy changes including mandatory counselling for couples filing for divorce while others hypothesize school prevention classes where abstinence and the promotion of marriage are key components (Amato & Maynard, 2007). Although some of these preventative measures are already being utilized today, it seems too early to warrant any positive outcomes. In the meantime, the statistics of divorce continue to rise, and the children involved continue to suffer its ill effects.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Whenever the couples have misunderstanding among themselves, they should look for a pastor to counsel them bearing in mind that marriage is the best environment for children's growth and development.

Parents must watch over the education of their children through their way of life. Avoid arguments and quarrels in front of the children because it creates bad intention in the children and it risks being perpetuated in their future lives. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says that He hates putting away: for one covers violence with his garment, says the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit that you deal not treacherously (Mal.2.16).

The church must take responsibility for teaching about the family. The table in the section above: Results and Discussions shows the various consequences that arise especially in the development of children in all aspects of their lives.

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