

DIVORCE IN DEUTERONOMY 22:13-21 AND ITS CAUSES AMONG ECWA MEMBERS IN JOS METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

In Old Testament times, up to the time of Christ, one of the most contending issues was that of divorce. The Teachers of the law had to ask Jesus in Matthew 19:1-9 concerning the reasons for one to divorce his wife. The issue of divorce was not only contentious in Old Testament times, but also in ECWA, especially in Jos metropolis, to say the least, more complicated now than then. This paper, therefore, seeks to evaluate divorce in the light of Deuteronomy 22:13-21 by highlighting the grounds for divorce then and now as it affects ECWA members in Jos metropolis. Two approaches are utilized, viz, the historical-grammatical and theological approaches. The problem is why the prevalence of divorce in spite despite biblical teachings that teach otherwise. Findings from the text and interviews conducted show that sterility, physical abuse, marriage in falsehood and deceit, are among many reasons why divorce is prevalent. Suggestions for finding the solutions to the problem of divorce, which include the need for proper premarital counselling and so on, are given.

KEYWORDS: Divorce, evaluation, ECWA, adultery, and sterility.

INTRODUCTION

One of the issues which have challenged humanity in general and adherents of the Christian faith in particular is that of divorce. At the different phases of its history, right from its emergence as a religious movement, through the ages up to the present times, what has a direct impact on humanity is the relationship between man and woman, within the context of marriage. The issue in question is the instability that marriages in recent times have acquired, which cuts across the religious divide.

The reality as observed using casual spectacles is that the rate and incidences of divorce cases are evident among nearly all religious persuasions: Christians, Muslims, practitioners of the African Traditional Religion and other faith traditions alike as rightly observed by Anaana, Ahura & Tyoakaa that, "Divorce is one of the core vices

that have posed a lot of challenges to human kind in different dimensions. The problem of divorce is not just to Christians alone but people from all works of life” (24). The challenge divorce poses cuts across every religion, race, and people, irrespective of the status one is placed in society. While the reasons for its prevalence may differ, the marital union, which is supposed to reveal the depth of human relationship (man and woman), is best actualised within the knit family setting, and it is being called into question. As a matter of fact, the question of divorce, which has become the norm rather than the exception, poses a threat to the stability or otherwise of the marital state of human interpersonal relationships.

The home is the foundation of society, as Nwankwo and Peters agree to this fact, noting that “marriage is the foundation and the very cradle of society. However, recent events have proved that the sanctity, the expectations, and hopes of marriage have always hit a rock as a result of many factors, chief among which is divorce” (412). This is why, since the Old Testament times up to the time of Jesus Christ, the question of divorce was one of the issues facing society, which a section of the Jewish leaders of the day, namely the Pharisees, drew Jesus’ attention to it. They hurled this question at him: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” (Matthew 19:3 NIV). Prior to this historic time, especially glancing at the Old Testament, particularly reviewing the contents of the Pentateuchal corpus, the historical elements, and as one follows some of the prophetic pronouncements on the subject matter, it is clear that divorce had been a challenging societal issue among the ancient Israelites, whether viewed from its metaphoric rendering or from its literal sense.

Divorce threatens not just the existence of one of the greatest gifts of God to humanity, the family institution, but also the survival of this glorious institution, as “it is the greatest problem of human relationships” (Hagin 3). This brings to bare a lot of questions whether God was wrong when he made this profound statement in his early pronouncements to the first family (Adam and Eve), to the effect that the husband-wife, or man-woman relationship within the institution of marriage was not just a desirability but that of a necessity, when he said, ...“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18, NIV).

From the Biblical standpoint, marriage as the fulcrum of the family structure was instituted by God after the creation act was completed and inaugurated by God in the Garden of Eden, as contained in the creation narratives (Genesis 1-2). God’s intention for marriage was for it to be transformed not only into a durable, but more of a permanent inter-personal relationship, within the family setting. This means that marriage’s non-dissolvability was non-negotiable. It was designed to be lasting until death do the couples part, the company of each other. In both traditional and in the Old Testament times, except under exceptional conditions, marriage was also to serve as the platform within which families are blessed through the process of procreation. Under

this condition, the fortunes of families are enhanced by leaps and bounds, even as they are meant to strive in their social, cultural, and biblical standards and interactions.

This paper, therefore, seeks to understand the reasons for the recent clamour for divorce in marriages, a situation that has led to an increase in cases of the dissolution of marriages in contemporary society. In a personal interview on 18th May, 2025, on the rate of divorce in contemporary society, Alamba, a seasoned broadcaster with Highland FM 101.5, responds that in a recent visit to an Area Court in Jos, there were about eight divorces that were judged that day. The focus will be on the causes of divorce in Old Testament times, with its connection to the causes of divorce among ECWA members within Jos Metropolis. The study, however, is concerned not only with its preponderance and rise among ECWA churches in Jos Metropolis, but also among other churches within the metropolis. This is what makes this investigative study not only critical but timely. The historical-grammatical and theological approaches are utilized, whereby the text is evaluated in order to give a biblical perspective of the causes of divorce. These different methodological approaches are important as they are distinguished by their particular treatment of the text, which determines its meaning and the conclusions drawn from it (Yilpet 29). Causes and recommendations will be given that seek to suggest ways to end the trend of divorce that is ravaging the church and society quietly.

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF DEUTERONOMY 22:13-21

The book of Deuteronomy is the fifth book in the Holy Bible. It is the last book of the Pentateuch, or Torah, of the Hebrew Bible. Its Hebrew title, as given in the BHS, is אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים (283). McGee harangues that: “There are four Hebrew titles of Deuteronomy which includes אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים *elleh hadebarim*, meaning ‘These are the Words’ or ‘These be the Words,’ is derived from the opening expression, ‘These are the words which Moses spoke’, The *Kith*, or the Fifth of the Law, The Book of Reproofs, and The Iteration of the Law” (vii). Tetford Work calls it “the seal of the Pentateuch and the gateway from the patriarchs to the Former and Latter Prophets. Its narrative framework for the covenant’s rules and regulations set the Psalms and Proverbs and all other wisdom within Israel’s life of grace” (17).

According to Collins, the book of Deuteronomy takes its name from the Greek translation of a phrase in Deuteronomy 17:18, which prescribes that the king should have “a copy of the law” written for him by the Levitical priests. The Greek expression, *deuteros nomos*, means rather “a second law,” but this designation of the book is not inappropriate. Deuteronomy is, in fact, a second formulation of the law, after the one that was given in Exodus. The more usual Hebrew name for the book is taken, as is customary, from the opening phrase: “These are the words” (Collins 163).

This suggests that Deuteronomy takes its name from the LXX translation of the Bible from Hebrew to Greek, “*δευτο*” meaning “second” and “*νομος*” meaning “law”. Therefore, it means the “second law.” Wiersbe asserts to this that, “Deuteronomy means ‘second law’ or ‘repetition of the law.’” Moses reviews the law originally given at Sinai and applies it to Israel’s life in the land of Canaan. It also contains instructions and exhortations concerning the conquest of the land and Israel’s relationship to the inhabitants of the land (373). The text under study falls within these laws regulating excesses that may arise in the abuse of marriage and the protection of women’s dignity in the home and society, within which the Israelites will find themselves.

STUDY OF DEUTERONOMY 22:13-21 ON THE GROUND FOR DIVORCE

This text offers one of the laws and regulations regarding divorce. The Hebrew text is taken from Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, and it reads thus:

¹³ כִּי-יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וְבָא אֵלֶיהָ וְשָׂנְאָהּ: ¹⁴ וְשָׂם לָהּ עֲלִילֹת דְּבָרִים וְהוֹצִיא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע וְאָמַר אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת לָקַחְתִּי וְאָקְרַב אֵלַי וְלֹא-מִצְאָתִי לָהּ בְּתוּלִים: ¹⁵ וְלָקַח אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה וְאִמָּהּ וְהוֹצִיאוּ אֶת-בְּתוּלִי הַנַּעֲרָה אֶל-זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַשְּׂעֵרָה: ¹⁶ וְאָמַר אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה אֶל-הַזִּקְנִים אֶת-בְּתִי נָתַתִּי לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּשְׂנָאָהּ: ¹⁷ וְהִנֵּה-הוּא שָׂם עֲלִילֹת דְּבָרִים לֵאמֹר לֹא-מִצְאָתִי לְבְתָרָה בְּתוּלִים וְאֵלָה בְּתוּלִי בְּתִי וּפָרְשׁוּ הַשֹּׂמְלָה לִפְנֵי זִקְנֵי הָעִיר: ¹⁸ וְלָקְחוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר-הַהִוא אֶת-הָאִישׁ וַיִּסְרוּ אוֹתוֹ: ¹⁹ וְעָנְשׁוּ אוֹתוֹ מָאָה כֶּסֶף וְנָתְנוּ לְאָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה כִּי הוֹצִיא שֵׁם רָע עַל בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹוֹתֶיהָ לְאִשָּׁה לֹא-יִוָּכַל לְשַׁלְּחָה כָּל-יְמֵיוֹ: ²⁰ וְאִם-אָמַת הִי הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא-נִמְצְאוּ בְּתוּלִים לַנַּעֲרָה ²¹ וְהוֹצִיאוּ אֶת-הַנַּעֲרָה אֶל-פֶּתַח בֵּית-אָבִיהָ וְסָקְלוּהָ אֲנָשֵׁי עִירָהּ בָּאֲבָנִים וּמָתָה כִּי-עָשְׂתָה נִבְלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְזָנוֹת בֵּית אָבִיהָ וּבַעֲרַת הָרַע מִקִּרְבָּהּ:

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT

¹³When a man marries a woman and comes into her, and he hates her, ¹⁴And he lay down charges against her and he went out to give her a bad name and he says, this woman I took and when I came close to her, I did not find in her a token of virginity. ¹⁵The father of the young girl and her mother, shall take and bring forward the token of the young girl’s virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. ¹⁶And the father of the young girl says to the elders, I gave my daughter to this man to a wife and he hates her. ¹⁷And behold, he had brought charges against her saying, I did not find in your daughter the token of virginity, and this is my daughter’s token of virginity and he spread out the garment before the elders of the city; ¹⁸The elders of the city shall take the man and punish him. ¹⁹And they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver, and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he is not to put her away all his life. ²⁰But if the words are true, that the token of virginity are not found in the young girl, ²¹and they are to take out

the young girl to the door of her father's house, and the men of the city shall kill her with stones until she died, for she had done a detestable thing in Israel, by fornicating in her father's house, so shall you put away the evil from your midst (translation mine).

From the text, the issues raised are enormous. For this study, as it relates to divorce, the following are deduced. First and foremost, one of the notable issues raised in this passage is קִי־יִקַּח *ki-yiqqach*, literary translated to take a wife, and by extension to marry. Douglas and Tenney state that the common Hebrew term *laqah*, "to take in marriage", should be seen in association with the verb *ba'al*, "to be master, rule, or possess in marriage," as well as with the noun *ba'al*, "master, lord, husband" (624). They further stress that the comparative New Testament verb would be *γαμεω*, *gameo*, "to marry, take to wife," along with its cognate forms *γαμιζω* *gamizo* and *γαμισκω*, *gamisko*, both meaning to give in marriage" (624). This sets the tone of the passage. Marriage precedes divorce, as divorce cannot happen without one being married. The word in the text is in the *Qal* imperfect form, which is either translated to the simple present form or the future tense. In this case, the action is either ongoing and the action has not yet happened, or it is a condition that when in the future, anyone should marry. This also suggests that it is a rule or regulation that is being set in order to protect the sanctity of marriage or regulate the case of divorce when it happens.

Another issue raised in the passage is the consummation of the marriage, which is given in the passage as נָכַח. In ancient Israel, when one gets marriage, the consummation of the marriage is set in such a way that the bed is either spread with a white cloth, which is stained as a result of menstrual flow of the woman, indicating that she was not pregnant before the marriage or at penetration, the hymen of the girl is broken and blood normally stains the cloth. This cloth is now taken and given to the girl's parents as evidence and proof of the girl's virginity, which is considered the pride of the parents in bringing up the girl in a good manner.

There could be a case whereby the husband, after the first meeting, may hate the girl, expressed in the text as וִשְׂנָא, or he discovers that the girl was not a virgin when he first consummated the marriage, and can lay claim by accusing her on that ground. The problem with this choice of words is that where there is love between the couples that after the consummation, hatred sets in. This is important as the next phrase says וְשָׁמַר לָהּ, which is accusing her with the intention of giving her a bad name. accusing one of falsehood was a grievous offence in ancient Israel. This accusation, as claimed by the husband, aims at two things: to seek for divorce if the accusations are true, while the second is to tarnish the name of the accused. This is one of the findings that is not seen in the literature review, where the test of virginity is never mentioned as the ground for divorce elsewhere.

One of the issues seen in the passage is that of adultery. In ancient Israel, when a lady was betrothed to a man, she was seen as a legal wife. Any break from this

relationship, even at this stage, is considered a divorce. When a girl has been betrothed and is found to have slept with another man, it is considered adultery and is punishable with great consequences, since a pledged (betrothed or engaged) woman was considered a “wife” (Elwell n.p). The punishment was that of stoning. This was the case in Matthew 1:18-25, where Mary was found to be pregnant and Joseph’s plan to divorce her, until the interrupted by the angel. In this passage, we see a man laying an accusation that he *מִצָּאָתִי*, in the Hiphil, suggests that the man caused himself to find out on his own that the woman he married was not a virgin before the consummation of the marriage. According to Adeyemo, the Law makes it clear that pre- and extramarital sex have serious consequences for all parties. The law does not have a double standard (239). Therefore, this law entails that God is shaping His people to be holy in all of their dealings, including marriages in their social interactions.

The importance of the Elders at the city gate *זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַשְּׁעָרָה* was very prominent in Old Testament times. The city gate was a place where settlement of cases took place, carried out by elders who served as judges. The city gate is seen functioning prominently in the Old Testament, such as during the time of Boaz. This is where legal issues are treated and judged. McClintock and Strong states that “gates are often mentioned in Scripture as places at which were holden courts of justice, to administer the law and determine points in dispute: hence judges in the gate are spoken of in Deuteronomy 16:18; 17:8; 21:19; 25:6,7; Joshua 20:4; Ruth 4:1; 2 Samuel 15:2; 19:8; 1 Kings 22:10; Job 29:7; Proverbs 22:22; 24:7; Lamentation 5:14; Amos 5:12; Zechariah 8:16, among many. The reason for this custom is apparent; for the gates being places of great concourse and resort, the courts held at them were of easy access to all the people” (McClintock and Strong n.p).

Another issue raised in the text is the penalty for a lack of enough evidence proving the accusation of lack of virginity. The penalty is in two forms: for the man and for the woman. The passage then says there must be proof or evidence. If it is found to be false, the man is asked to pay a certain amount of money. The amount is a hundred shekels of silver, which suggests that it was a heavy fine that was paid to the girl’s father. In the Old Testament, it is only in this passage that such a fine of heavy magnitude is given. The text that a close mention fine is given is in Deuteronomy 22:29, where a man who rapes a girl is to pay fifty shekels of silver, and in both cases, the man is not allowed to divorce, dismiss, or send away the girl; he must continue to stay with her for the rest of his life. Another case of a heavy fine given is mentioned in Genesis 20:16, where Abimelech paid Abraham a thousand shekels of silver for taking Sarah to be his wife.

On the other hand, if it is found to be true, her offence is punishable by death. The punishment is that *אָנְשֵׁי עִירָהּ בְּאֲבָנִים וּמָתָהּ* the men of the city should stone her to death. This punishment is prominent in Old Testament times. For instance, in Exodus

21:28-29, 31, stoning to death was also applicable to animals and, to an extent, the owner of the bull when it gorges a person. In Leviticus 20:27, a medium or spiritist is put to death by stoning. Leviticus 24:16 also informs that anyone found to have blasphemed the name of the Lord must be put to death by stoning. This punishment was carried out during the time of King Ahab when Naboth was falsely accused of this offence without carrying out a thorough investigation (1 Kings 21:10-14). In Numbers 15:32-36, there was a case of a man who was found to be gathering wood on a Sabbath, where he was stoned to death outside the camp.

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 13:6-10 records that anyone who is found to entice anyone to turn away from the Lord God is punished by stoning to death. Deuteronomy 17:2-5 contain the command of stoning to death anyone who is found to have committed an evil thing by violating God's covenant such as worshipping other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, and when investigated thoroughly and found to be guilty, that person was taken to the city gate and stoned to death. In Deuteronomy 21:21, a rebellious or stubborn child who does not obey his parents but is a profligate and a drunkard is meted with the same punishment of stoning to death. Deuteronomy 22:24 records that if a man had sexual intercourse with a woman who is pledged to be married, and in the process, they were caught, both of them must be stoned to death since she did not scream for help. But if she cries for help, but no one comes to the rescue, only the man is to be killed. Roy Gane asserts that adultery violates an existing marriage and carries the death penalty (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). If pre-marital sex involves a betrothed woman, it is regarded as adultery, punishable by death (Deuteronomy 22:23-24), but if the woman is unbetrothed and seduced, the penalty is forced marriage (including payment of the bride price) at the discretion of the woman's father (Exodus 22:15-16). Concealed immorality by a woman living in her father's house, evidence of which is her lack of virginity discovered at the time of her marriage, is punishable by death (Deuteronomy 22:20-21) (36). This shows how grievous the sin of adultery or fornication was in Old Testament times.

Divorce, which is the key issue of the research work, is another issue the text raises. The text suggests that this is an excuse couples give as a ground for divorce: there is no evidence for the virginity of the girl they got married to. This can be real/true, while it can be mere speculation and false accusation, all trying to make a point on why divorce is needed. Divorce featured prominently in Old Testament times. Because of obvious reasons, priests were prohibited from marrying divorced women (Leviticus 21:7, 14). A divorced daughter of a priest is allowed to eat her father's food (Leviticus 22:13); a vow made by a divorced woman is binding on her. A woman can be divorced on the grounds of any indecency found in her, but with the command of giving her a certificate of divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1). In 1 Chronicles 8:8, Shaharaim, a Hebrew who lived in Moab, divorced his wives, and he later got children from those he

later married. This is the first mention of a clear case of divorce in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 50:1, divorce is spoken here figuratively, indicating the exile that the Jews experienced in Babylon. Malachi 2:16 records God's hatred of divorce.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ECWA

ECWA, an acronym for Evangelical Church Winning All, formally known as Evangelical Church of West Africa, is an indigenous name given to the churches established by SIM (Serving in Missions, known then as Sudan Interior Mission). It began when three young men, Thomas Kent (21 years), Walter Gowans (23 years), and Rowland Bingham (19), set foot on the shores of Lagos on 4th December 1893. The aim was to reach the hinterland of Nigeria, called the Sudan, with the gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus. Their first attempt was a disaster as Kent and Gowans died within a year of their coming due to malaria, which was not known to them. Bingham had to go back to America to strategize. Several attempts were made subsequently, yet there was little or no significant success (ECM 5-6).

Not until 1901 when the first church established in Pategi in present-day Niger State, Nigeria. Since then, the church has grown to become a force to be reckoned with for the propagation of the gospel in Nigeria and the world at large. At present, ECWA has 96 DCCs, many churches, over ten thousand pastors, and over five million members. ECWA owns many schools, including nursery, primary, secondary schools, Seminaries and other theological schools, Colleges of Nursing, Education, Computer Science Institute, and the famous Bingham University. It also owns hospitals such as Bingham University Teaching Hospital (BUTH) located in Jos, ECWA Hospital Egbe, ECWA Eye Hospital Kano, and a lot of other health institutions and so on (ECM 6-8; ECWA 28-29). There are two DCCs within Jos metropolis, viz, ECWA Jos DCC and ECWA Jos Central DCC, which is also home to the ECWA Headquarters and most of the institutions.

CAUSES OF DIVORCE AMONG ECWA MEMBERS IN JOS METROPOLIS

There are many causes of divorce, especially in Africa, and Nigeria in particular. The inability to bear children is one of the main reasons why divorce is practiced in contemporary society. In a personal interview with a divorced couple, both living in Jos, who pleaded for animosity, each at separate times, both see the problem stemming from the culmination of their divorce to the lack of bearing children since they got married. They got married in 1996, and they stayed for over twelve years without a child. There was pressure from family members. Despite the love they have for each other but due to the pressure, they decided to go their own separate ways. It was a tough decision, but

because of the tension, they had no option. This is one of the most challenging periods of their lives as they saw their once-happy home crumbling due to the pressure of having no children. Both remarried after the divorce, and today, he is married with a child, while she also has a child.

Another cause of divorce emanates when love dies, or when love was not the driving force of the marriage. This is the idea of a man hating or disliking his wife after the marriage, as seen in Deuteronomy 22:13. In a personal interview with a divorcee, living in Bidabidi, El-Cotex area of Jos, who pleaded anonymity, states that the problem started before they got married. There was pressure on her to get married as she had a child out of wedlock. She succumbed to pressure from her parents by agreeing to marry someone she didn't love to please her parents. The marriage was blessed with two kids, but lasted for about eight years. The divorce was a result of a lack of love and affection towards the husband, as the husband sometimes forces himself on her, and in each case, it resulted in pregnancy, hence the two children (it was actually three children, but one died as an infant). The divorce has grave consequences for her as she has to do menial jobs to keep herself going. She experiences a lot of setbacks as she got married as a second wife.

Furthermore, incompatibility is one of the causes of divorce. In an interview with another divorcee, who lives in the Rock Haven area in Jos, who pleaded anonymity, aged 47, who has experienced divorce twice, shares her experience as well. She intimated to the researcher that the problem with the first marriage was that there was no care from the husband, who left her without food, clothing, or care. On the second marriage, she states that there is a significant age gap between the two of them. The husband was unable to meet her sexual urge, as she is at her peak of sexual drive, while the husband hardly touches her, which sometimes takes months before he does so. The marriage did not last. She is now an independent woman living by herself with no plan of getting married again.

In a similar vein, a young divorcee, who lives in the Farin Gada area of Jos, who pleaded anonymity, also shares her experience that the reason for their divorce was the inadequacy of meeting the sexual satisfaction of the husband. He goes around with other women to fulfil his sexual urge and libido. All efforts to resolve this issue, either by family members or the church, proved abortive. The age gap and the incompatibility in relation to meeting the sexual needs of a couple can bring about divorce.

In another instance, in an interview with a divorced 47-year-old woman, living in the Ahwol area of Jos, who also pleaded anonymity, states that the reason for their divorce was incompatibility. This means the two of them were unable to be compatible with each other, such as not being able to relate well, arguing more than agreeing to themselves in almost all aspects of life. Abuse, molestation, and failure to cater to the needs of the home became the norm in the home, which led to the divorce. In response

to how the divorce has affected her life, she states that it has affected her in such a way that she is separated from her children, no suitor is coming for marriage, only for them to have their 'share of the cake' and leave. She has become more or less a sex-fulfilment tool. This has made her worse than before or during her marriage.

Another factor that causes divorce is when a marriage is done under pretence and falsehood. This will later turn to slander and give the woman a bad name, as seen in Deuteronomy 22:14. From the text, the man accuses his wife of not being a virgin on their first night. This suggests that the girl did not reveal the truth of her status as not being a virgin. In this sense, falsehood has to do with not telling each other the truth concerning one's health, sexual ability, and so on. Uroko and Enobong comment that falsehood in marriage is when an impotent man will not tell his wife of his impotence, the lady, on the other hand, may have removed her womb without telling the husband, or one of the partners may have hidden their health status, such as being HIV positive, from their partner (14). There is a case of a pastor who is impotent but went in pretence to marry. After the marriage, the wife discovered that he was impotent. That marriage was annulled and taken to be null and void.

Also, some marry for divorce, which can also be termed arranged marriages, where marriage can be arranged. This is viewed in two ways. Arranged marriages can occur when parents or relatives arrange marriages between their children or relations, with no love between the couple. The reasons for these arranged marriages are obvious reasons such as social, cultural, economic, political, or legal context explain the existence of planned marriages. Accordingly, the social status of the family that sees marriage as a social act can arrange marriages between their children to maintain their social union. Protection of young women, family honour, and complying with a religious precept controlling women's sexuality are some of the reasons for arranged marriages. Other reasons are socio-economic factors, guarantee against poverty, and dealing with the consequences of pregnancy out of wedlock (Department of Justice in Canada).

The activities of so-called pastors, prophets, or 'Men of God' are one of the causes of divorce. This is not only synonymous with ECWA members, but is also seen in every church. This is probably the most compelling grounds for the rise of the so-called faith-based Ministries and Prayer Houses, where most, if not all, of the clergy are in the forefront of instigating divorce using the "God told me or revealed to me that the husband/wife you are with is not meant to be your spouse." These further question the integrity of these men of God and acclaimed prophets who claim to have prophetic voices speaking on behalf of God. Often, the majority of such 'Men of God' lay claims to or hand on to some kind of divine ordering, directive, guidance, and revelation as the reasons for demanding that he divorce his wife.

Many of these “Men of God” are often heard saying: ‘God spoke to me that you are not the wife originally meant for me.’ Such ‘Men of God’ would proceed to accompany their pronouncements with claims that he has seen some further revelations and visions telling them that she wasn’t his wife. Uroko and Enobong agree that pastors and prophets have impacted negatively on most Christian homes. The pastor or prophet may tell the husband that the wife is a witch, obstructing the progress of the man. The man may return and begin to maltreat the woman, and it ends in a failed marriage (16). Some of these clergies at some other times would claim receiving visions from God, directing them to divorce their wives forthwith, if not their ministry would not bear fruit, and ultimately heaven would elude them. There could well be other occasions when they would be heard saying to their spouses, ‘you are a hindrance and the reason for the failure and lack of breakthrough in my ministry.’

SUGGESTIONS

Looking at how divorce is ravaging the church and society, the following are suggested to curb the tide of rising cases of divorce.

1. ECWA Pastors and marriage counsellors in Jos metropolis must be up and doing in premarital counselling. Premarital counselling should not be taken for granted or allow overfamiliarity to take advantage of the counselling process.
2. Intending couples should be open in disclosing their sexual status, such as impotency, sterility, or barrenness, when it is obvious that they are such. People marry primarily to build a family, and when one of the intending couples is impotent, sterile, or barren, and it is known to the other partner after marriage, divorce can pop its head.
3. In the case of the above, ECWA churches in Jos Metropolis should not be under any obligation to either annul or divorce the couple, as this will be considered marriage under falsehood, pretence, or deceit. In this case, the church should not hesitate to allow the innocent party to remarry.

CONCLUSION

This paper has evaluated divorce in Deuteronomy 22:13-21 and its causes within ECWA Churches in Jos Metropolis. The issue of divorce is delicate and timely, as this paper shows how it is ravaging homes and puts into question the durability of the home front in contemporary society. This paper discussed in brief an overview of ECWA as a denomination and the causes of divorce, which range from impotency, sterility, and barrenness, when love dies, inability to cater for the home, physical abuse, and incompatibility of spouse, hidden health status, and the like. Divorce is not something

that the church and society are to be proud of, as this brings a lot of effects to the home, church, and society. ECWA Pastors, marriage counsellors, church leaders, theologians, and Bible scholars must rise up to the task in salvaging the home front from divorce.

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