



What Causes Divorce among Christian Couples in Kinshasa City?

Pitshou Moleka

Affiliation: Managing Research African Network

sodecordc1@gmail.com

Abstract

Marriage is a great institution for all Christians but its value as a divine institution and the basic unit of any society is declining. The rate of divorce is growing every day. This is due to several causal factors which include sterility as the principal cause, and poverty. To avoid this, the State and the church are invited to sustain the married. This article has four parts namely: introduction, methodology, results and discussion, and conclusion.

Keywords: Bible, marriage, divorce, causes, couples, sterility, poverty, Kinshasa

I. Introduction

For the Bible which is the supreme book for Christian life and norms, marriage is indissoluble, until death. In Jesus' time, there were two main trends regarding divorce: that supported by Shammai described as strict, and the liberal current of Hillel. For Shammai, only adultery allows divorce, but for Hillel any reason or pretext that the husband can advance is valid for a divorce with his wife, for example a poorly prepared meal, finding another woman prettier than the one in the House...

The Romans too, who colonized the Jews, had a liberal conception of divorce. Roman law did not require a woman's consent for the divorce. It was enough for the man bitten by a mosquito and decides to divorce. This is how Jesus wanted to reframe things (Fréchet et al., 2011).

In Matthew 5, 31-32 Jesus introduces two innovations: the sentence of death in case adultery is abrogated, and then the reason for divorce according to Deuteronomy 24, 1-4 is more valid. The only ground for divorce is adultery "porneia" which can be translated by adultery, sexual impurity, fornication or fornication, incest, homosexuality, bestiality and any other sexual impurity. Infidelity or adultery is the only case where a man can repudiate his wife without share his 3 sins: that of illegal divorce, that of exposing his wife to adultery and that of being responsible for the adultery of the man who might marry this woman.

Matthew 19, 3-9: here despite the traps of the Pharisees, Jesus brings them back to beginning that no one separates what God has united, instead of seeking everything prices according to the mainstream to divorce. On the contrary he wants to consolidate the marriage institution. For the Jesus, he who repudiates his wife except in case of adultery is adultery himself, however, the husband is not obliged to repudiate his woman, and there is a possibility of forgiveness. For his part, Paul underlines in 1 Corinthians 7, 10- 15 that the ideal for couples is to stay united. Only death dissolves the bond of marriage (1 Corinthians 7, 39), and only the separation initiative taken by the unbelieving spouse is allowed (12-15). Widower or the widow is free to remarry or not. For the couple of Christian and pagan, if there is disagreement, for example on fundamental questions of faith, and it is the unbelieving spouse who wants a divorce, you must first seek to be reconciled, and in case of persistence, the Christian spouse is no longer bound and can therefore remarry.

In short, God does not like couples to separate like Prophet Malachi could say in chapter 2 verses 16 that God hates repudiation.

Why are there so many divorces among Christians today? How can we explain the divorce of Christians?

II. Method

I will use interviews, a method used to understand a social problem and the lived experiences of people as they occur (Maleba, 2004; Creswell, 1994). My research question is: How to Understand the Divorce among Christians in Kinshasa city? By this question, I want to enumerate some factors of so many divorces among Christians today. It is a qualitative research.

I had interviews with 20 Christians belonging to Protestant, Revival and Roman Catholic churches who are divorced, to better understand the question of divorce from March 2021 to May 2021.

The following are their demographic profiles:

Duration of marriage	Age of married	Christian affiliation	Educational level of the man	Educational level of the woman	Number of children	causes of divorce
10 years	50-60	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	Bachelor degree	No degree	0	Infertility (sterility)
1 year	30-40	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	Bachelor degree	No degree	1	Poor conflict management.
5 years	40-50	Revival church	No degree	No degree	0	Infertility (sterility)
2 years	30-40	Revival church	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	1	Poor conflict management.
10 years	40-50	Roman catholic	No degree	No degree	0	Infertility (sterility)
10 years	30-40	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	Bachelor degree	No degree	0	Infertility (sterility) and false prophecy accusing the woman of witchcraft
18 years	50-60	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	2	False prophecy accusing the man of occultism
3 years	30-40	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	No degree	No degree	0	Infertility (sterility)
20 years	50-60	Protestant, Pentecost or	Bachelor degree	No degree	0	Infertility (sterility) and false prophecy

		evangelical				accusing the woman of witchcraft
2 years	30-40	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	0	Infertility (sterility)
20 years	50-60	Roman catholic	No degree	No degree	4	Infidelity (adultery)
10 years	40-50	Roman catholic	Bachelor degree	No degree	3	Infidelity (adultery) of the woman
10 years	40-50	Roman catholic	Doctorate degree	No degree	3	Infidelity (adultery) of the man
1 year	20-30	Roman catholic	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	0	Infidelity (adultery) of the man and domestic violence (verbal and physical)
5 years	30-40	Protestant, Pentecost or evangelical	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	2	Poverty of the man and infidelity of the woman
5 years	30-40	Revival church	Bachelor degree	No degree	2	Poverty(financial difficulty)
5 years	30-40	Roman catholic	Bachelor degree	No degree	2	Poverty(financial difficulty)
5 years	30-40	Roman catholic	No degree	No degree	2	Poverty(financial difficulty)
5 years	30-40	Roman catholic	Bachelor degree	No degree	1	Poverty(financial difficulty)
5 years	30-40	Roman catholic	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	1	Poverty(financial difficulty)

III. Results and discussion

Among the persons concerned in this sample, the duration of marriage is 7 years; their average age is 30-40. 9/20 (45%) are from Roman Catholic Church, 7/20 (35%) are protestants or evangelicals and 4/20(20%) are from Revival church. 1/20 (5%) of men holds a doctoral degree and 0/20 (0%) of women holds a doctoral degree. 14/20 (70%) men hold a bachelor degree, 6/20 (30%) women hold a bachelor degree,5/20 (25%) men hold no degree and 14/20 (70%) women have no degree.

Causes of the divorce among these Christians are:

-Cause number one: infertility. It concerns 7/20 (35%) of the divorced.

African cultures are very natalist, marriage is a kind of continuity of community (clan, tribe). And for various reasons related in particular to the history of different peoples, couples like to have many children to defend the tribe in the event of an enemy attack or enemy intrusion. Children are also seen as the wealth and workforce for the family because the more there are many the more they have a great yield for example in the rural area where there are no motorized vehicles. Missing children for a couple is frowned upon even in churches. These couples are mocked, labeled as wizards if they are poor, occultists who sacrifice their own children for money or a good job if they have a comfortable life.

For Africans, the husband is first the father and the wife mother, the father-mother aspect prevailing over husband-wife.

-Cause number two: the poverty or financial difficulties leading to the inability to meet the physical needs of his wife and children. It concerns 6/20 (30%) of couples.

Due in particular to unemployment, poverty, lack of payment of salary by employers in an increasingly impoverished, especially if the woman also does nothing and expects everything from the man, many women cannot stand this long term suffering.

Some stay at home while loving other men who have means thus committing adultery while being in the marital home, others simply slam the door and go about their lives without husbands.

The lack of communication over financial issues is the real problem and not money per se. Research has shown that financial stress has a direct impact on financial wellbeing. When couples are unable to manage their finances because of inadequate resources or poor money-management decisions, they are constrained from achieving financial wellbeing and relationship satisfaction (Bezuidenhout, 2017). Financial stress tends to lower overall relationship or marital quality as marriage is also seen as a market (Chiappori, 2020).

-Cause number three: infidelity. 4/20 (20%) couples are concerned. According to Vincent (2009), betrayal, adultery and cheating in marriage have become some of the most common reasons for divorce among young couples, and that infidelity in marriage can ruin the best of

relationships. In other words, whether it is a cheating wife or husband, the repercussions are devastating for all. Today women see divorce as a means of regaining their freedom (Mohlatlole, Sithole., & Shirindi, 2018).

-cause number four: 3/20 false prophecy accusing the woman or man of witchcraft or occultism. 3/20 (15%) couples are concerned.

-Cause number five: poor conflict management 2/20 (10%) couples and physical and verbal violence concern 2/20 (10%) couples.

The way the couples deal with conflicts will make them constructive or destructive. The management of a conflict (non-violent approach, negotiation, mediation, facilitation, conciliation, arbitration, and judgment which intervenes as an *ultima ratio* when all means are exhausted and there is no longer an agreement between the two partners). The frequency, intensity and manner of reconciling during arguments are also important point in a conflict. If the dispute has not been settled properly, the conflict remains latent and can erupt at any time. In many couples also, there is psychological damage and violence or verbal assaults between spouses through insults, demeaning words, contemptuous or demeaning threats...

Women are more often victims of physical or sexual violence.

Violence manifests itself through certain words addressed to others, as well as through behaviors aimed at controlling others: verbal attacks, threats, blackmail, devaluation, judgments and criticisms, accusations and reproaches.

IV. Conclusion

Infertility is not a fatality. Christian's couples are called to fight it and believe in the power of God instead of divorcing. Poverty is an enemy of the stability of marriage, man and woman must stand up to defeat it while waiting not only for salaries, but by creating small production units. The State is called upon to protect this divine institution through laws and policies.

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