

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN PRAYER ASSEMBLIES AND MARRIAGE
STABILITY IN IKORODU LAGOS STATE**

BY

**OMOTOLA, OLUWATOYIN REBECCA
B.SC. (HONS) ILD (BABCOCK), M.A. PCS (Ibadan)
Matriculation Number: 153089**

A Thesis Submitted to the Institute of African Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

SEPTEMBER 2021

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research was carried out by under my supervision at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan Nigeria

Supervisor

Prof. O.B. Lawuyi

Ph.D. (Urbana-Champaign)

Department of Archeology and Anthropology,

University of Ibadan

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God Almighty, my late father, Pastor J.O.G Alabi, my husband Engr. Omogoriola Omotola and all my support system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My father Pasto J.O.G Alabi always believed that the best legacy you can leave behind is a well brought up children, who has all it takes to stand on his or her own, hence the push and support from him for his children to be attain any height in life. For that support from birth, I am immensely grateful. I cannot but appreciate my beautiful mother, whose tenacity and cooperation made my PhD journey easier. My gratitude goes to my husband, thank you for always having my back. Of special mention is my mother and mother in-law for being a critical factor in my support system. I appreciate you two ma. I have to specially recognize Dr. Yomi Ogunsanya, who started the PhD supervisory journey with me and who introduced me to Professor Lawuyi who took over the supervision of my thesis, as life had bigger plans for him. I particularly honour my supervisor Professor Lawuyi, who I regard as my academic daddy, thank you sir for being a father, for correcting in love and for stirring me in the right path in my academic journey and for teaching me that academic requires a whole lot of humility. I am truly grateful sir. My appreciation goes to the leadership of the church and women prayer assemblies of the Christ Apostolic Church, Joy Cometh Ministries, We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries, Reamed Christian Church of God, New Covenant Gospel Church, all in Ikorodu, without your help and cooperation, this research may have not been possible. I must not forget to mention my pastor, pastor Timilehin Omotumbi who served as a spiritual encouragement in my academic journey, God bless you sir. Time will fail me to mention everyone who has being of immerse help to me during this journey, but do know that I cherish you all.

ABSTRACT

Although marriage between men and women is a universal phenomenon, women usually play a central role in relationship maintenance which often-times places a strain on them. Existing studies have dealt with different aspects of women's lives and their spirituality, there is however a dearth of scholarship in linking women's spiritual engagement in a Christian women's prayer assembly and the stability of marriages. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the relationship between Christian women prayer assemblies and the stability of marriages, by exploring the influence of the assemblies on marriage stability, the benefits, challenges, and the combination of marriage and church attendance in Ikorodu, Lagos State.

Needs and Gender Role theories provided the framework. Convenience sampling and mixed-methods design were used. Primary data was collected from 346 respondents and 40 informants in the Redeemed Christian Church of God (126 respondents and 12 informants), Joy Cometh Ministries (72 respondents and nine informants), Christ Apostolic Church (59 respondents and seven informants), New Covenant Gospel Church (48 respondents and seven informants), and We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministry (41 respondents and five informants) using convenience and purposive sampling techniques. The frequency and benefits of their attendance, spousal support, and the timing of the programme with their family roles were among the questions answered. Participant observation was used to collect data on activities within the assemblies. Books, online articles, and journals were used as secondary data sources. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, while thematic and narrative analyses were adopted for qualitative data.

Respondents age range from 18 to 55 and above, with 53.0% having a bachelor's degrees. Marriage length ranged from a few months to more than ten years. Majority Women (74.8%) believed the prayer assemblies had an impact on their marriage stability. While a few women, however, believed that individual attitude and spousal communication were most important for marriage stability. They also perceived (25.2%) that a woman could leave the marriage to preserve her life should prayers and interventions fail. Majority (96.7%) of women believed that attending prayer assemblies was beneficial in terms of peace of mind and child training. Most in-laws of women (87%) did not object to their attendance at the assemblies. However, (13%) had in-laws who objected. The in-laws who objected were of a different religion. Furthermore, spousal awareness (64%) and support (87%) were high among the participants. Participants had opposing views on how to balance routine housework and attend assembly meetings. The liturgy of the women prayer assemblies investigated was similar, and the wife of the presiding pastor was head of the assemblies. The participation of male pastors in offering prayers, as well as the institution and nature of the annual women's conference, are significant differences among the assemblies studied.

Women attending prayer assemblies perceived that the meetings contributed to the stability of their marriage. Further research should explore men prayer assemblies towards understanding how they are similar or different from women assemblies.

Keywords: Spousal communication, Women prayer assemblies, Marriage stability

Word count: 498

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
Title page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
List of Plates	x
List of Figures	xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 Research Questions	6
1.4 Aim and Objectives of Research	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Scope of the Study	7
1.7 Definition of Terms	8

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature	10
2.1.1 The coming of Christian in Ikorodu	10
2.1.2 The independent African churches	12
2.1.3 The church in Ikorodu	15
2.1.4 The Nature of Prayers in Nigerian Churches	15
2.1.5 Gender Participation in Churches	17
2.1.6 Marriage and Family Stability	21
2.2 Concepts of Family and Marriage	33
2.2.1 Family and Psychosocial benefits	35

2.2.2	Troubling Trends in Contemporary Marriage Institution	36
2.2.3	Religious Affiliation of Married Couples and Psychosocial well-Being	40
2.3	Theoretical Framework	40
2.3.1	Theory of Needs	40
2.3.2	Theory of Gender Roles	45

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Research Design	49
3.2	Data Gathering and Collection Technique	50
3.2.1	Participant Observation	50
3.2.2	In-depth and Key Informant Interviewing	50
3.2.3	Questionnaire	50
3.3	Sampling Technique/ Sample Size	51
3.4	Sample Population	51
3.5	Instrumentation	51
3.5.1	Tape Recorder	51
3.5.2	Camera	52
3.5.3	Notepads	52
3.5.4	Interview Guide	52
3.6	Method of Data Analysis	52

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.1	Church Membership and Women Prayer Assembly	53
4.1.2	Nature of Women Prayer Assemblies in Ikorodu	58
4.1.3	Rubrics of everyday life in Ikorodu	59
4.1.4	Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Revival Center 1	64
4.1.5	Joy cometh Ministry	69
4.1.6	The Redeemed Christian Church of God	73
4.1.7	We Are Alive In Him Overcomers Ministries	76
4.1.8	New Covenant Gospel Church	80
4.2	Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics	81
4.3	Influence of Women Prayer Assemblies on Marriage Stability	89
4.4	Benefits of Women's Prayer Assemblies	106
4.5	Family issues raised in women prayer assemblies	115

4.6	Spousal Support and Consent for Women Prayer Meetings	125
4.7	Women Prayer Assemblies Participation and Marriage	138
4.8	Unpacking the Issues: Women Prayer Assemblies and Marriage Stability in Ikorodu	142

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Summary	163
5.2	Conclusion	165
5.3	Contribution to Knowledge	166
5.4	Recommendations for Further Studies	167
	References	168
	Appendix	182

LIST OF TABLES

	Pages
Table 4.1: Church Membership of Respondents	55
Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents	82
Table 4.3: Educational Qualification of the Respondents	84
Table 4.4: Ethnicity of the Respondents	86
Table 4.5: Length of Marriage of Respondents	88
Table 4.6: Impact of women prayer assemblies on stability of marriage	94
Table 4.7: Choice of a women living her marriage	100
Table 4.8: Benefits of women's prayer assemblies	107
Table 4.9: Benefits of wellbeing from women prayer group	109
Table 4.10: In-law perceptions of women prayer meetings	120
Table 4.11: Spousal Awareness of Women Prayer Meetings	126
Table 4.12: Willingness to attend meeting inspite of husband's disapproval	128
Table 4.13: Spousal Support for Women Prayer Meetings	130
Table 4.14: Withdrawal of spousal consent for women prayer meeting	132
Table 4.15: Women –prayer meetings and business activities	139
Table 4.16: Women –prayer meetings and Household activities	141

LIST OF PLATES

	Pages
Plate 4.1: A sign showing Ikorodu, which is placed at Ikorodu garage, often referred to as the city's center. Personal fieldwork 2019	59
Plate 4.2: A picture showing street hawking and the busy nature of Ikorodu town (Personal fieldwork 2019)	62
Plate 4.3: A signboard of CAC Revival Center, with the covenant women prayer highlighted. (Personal Fieldwork 25 November 2018)	68
Plate 4.4: A section of the Joyful women during the women's annual convention of (Personal Fieldwork August 3, 2019.)	72
Plate 4.5: A group in the empowerment skill acquisition of the Good women assembly of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Personal fieldwork 2019	75
Plate 4.6: A signboard highlighting women vigil in the church (Personal Fieldwork June 2019)	79
Plate 4.7: The researcher and interviewing one of the leaders of women prayer assembly	122
Plate 4.8: Women of the Christ apostolic Church, Covenant good women prayer assembly during one of their meetings. Personal fieldwork 2019	135
Plate 4.9: Showing one of the defined prayer spaces in Ikorodu	143
Plate 4.10: A cluster of women interacting during the women prayer assembly Personal fieldwork 2019.	150

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1:	Maslow Hierarchical Need Pyramid	42
Figure 4.1:	Map showing the location of Ikorodu	57
Figure 4.2:	Influence of women prayer assemblies on marriage stability (Personal Fieldwork 2019)	90
Figure 4.3:	Influence of women prayer assemblies on marriage stability (Personal Fieldwork 2019)	92
Figure 4.4:	Specific benefits of women prayer assemblies (Personal Fieldwork 2019)	111
Figure 4.5:	Family issues raised in women prayer assemblies (Fieldwork 2019)	116

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Marriage is a universal phenomenon, found in virtually all cultures and among various ethnic groups or religious groups in the world (Vincent-Osaghae 2007). From a very basic sociological premise, it is the coming together or the union of man and woman and it is both voluntary and legal. In a marriage contract, there is an exchange of estates, properties, rights, privileges, roles, and statuses between the parties involved. Beyond the legal contract, marriage is a covenant entered into by agreement and vows made by the parties (Omaga 2013). Gove (1986: 45) describes marriage as

the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife; the mutual relation of the husband and wife; the institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for founding and maintaining a family; an act of marrying or rite by which the married status is effected. (Gove 1986:45)

Every culture of the world recognizes some form or the other of the institution of marriage. In most cultures (societies) and religions, neither man nor woman is considered complete, after reaching maturity, without a spouse. From a societal level of analysis, the institution of marriage represents all the behaviours, norms, roles, expectations, and values that are associated with the legal union of a man and woman (Animasahun and Fatile, 2011).

Marriage is sacred in Africa and beyond as it is seen as the blending of two lives to become one. It is an intensely private affair, yet also public well because it solidifies relationship that enriches communities and nations by bringing forth new life and new hope. It is that decision taken by strangers to live together, to create webs of relationships, the in-laws such as, aunty, uncles, cousins, nephews, and nieces that help protection of property right of generations to come. Thereby forming a community of people.

Marriage takes many forms in Africa. Throughout the continent, the diversity of marriage systems reflect local traditions, religions, and economic circumstances of a wide variety of cultures. Some marriage systems do share some characteristics; they involve the transfer of bride wealth from the groom's family to the bride's family. The exchange is both real and symbolic, as it marks a woman's passage from one social group to the other. Fadipe wrote in the 1930s, " no person remained unmarried by choice after passing say the age of thirty for men and twenty-five for women" (the exception among women were those who became religious priestesses or prophetesses). Although the pattern varies, freeborn people were supposed to marry only with the consent of their parents and often the wider family group.

Marriage was a matter of concern for the whole lineage segment because a woman that was brought into it will affect the health and capacities of its future members and the peace of the social unit (Mann 1983). It has sometimes been suggested that the conjugal understanding of marriage is based only on religious beliefs.

This however is false. Although the world's major religious traditions have historically understood marriage as a union of man and woman that is by nature apt for procreation and childrearing (Finnis 2008), this suggests merely that no one religion invented marriage. Instead, the demands of our common human nature have shaped (however imperfectly) all of our religious traditions to recognize this natural institution. As such, marriage is the type of social practice whose basic contours can be discerned by our common human reason, whatever the religious leaning.

There are various types of marriage in Africa, but all marriages are designed to promote kinship types, though certain cultures forbid certain types of marriages. Monogamy which is a direct influence of western culture on Africa is common, so also Polygyny. We also have a marriage between close relatives, marriage between in-laws, the levirate marriage and the sororate marriage and also the woman to woman marriage also known as the female husbands. (Murray and Roscoe 2012). Homosexual marriages also exist but in most African societies it has remained a taboo (Nwoko 2012)

Marriage, however, is a delicate relationship since it usually involves the living together of, or a partnership between, two or more persons who are, relatively speaking, strangers to each other. It is a continuous and intimate association between persons differing in temperament and other individual characteristics.

Consequently, in all societies, there is, at least, some measure of marital instability. The degree, of course, varies from one society to another and depends, among

other factors, on the type of family system; that is, on the customary rules governing mate selection, the wife's integration within her new family, and the behaviour within marriage (Olusanya 1970).

Instability in this regard refers to moments of crisis, volatility, flux, and the delicate balance between choices. It has also been viewed as a function of the comparison between one's best available marital alternative and one's marital outcome (Lenthal, 2009). It refers to the stability of the marital relationship, rather than to the condition of individual spouses. Stable marriages are those in which there is no plan to divorce. In contrast, marital instability is defined as the propensity to divorce, which is determined by the presence of thoughts or actions which may lead to marital separation (such as, consulting a divorce attorney). Marital stability, therefore, refers to the relationship, and not to the spouses as individuals.

One of the factors associated with marital instability (but which is frequently ignored) is overt religiosity. Many of the studies on marital stability and religion have almost always tended to blame instability in the home on three interrelated factors, namely (a) declining religious commitment (b) changes like the religious belief system of individuals and (c) a convergence of denominational differences (Akinboye, 1997).

Very little attention has been paid to the relationship between (in) stability in marriages and a positively high level of religious commitment and affiliation of the woman. One area of women's religious commitment that has often been glossed over is the frequent attendance or participation in religious programmes and religious gatherings designed exclusively for women, herein referred to as 'Women prayer assemblies.'

In the specific context of this study, these prayer assemblies and programmes are those associated with Christianity or Christians. In other words, our concern is with 'Women prayer assemblies' among Christian denominations, with a specific focus on the Pentecostal stocks.

African women tend to seek help in spiritual houses for various reasons, such as structural injustice, personal problems, illnesses, and professional struggles (Mattis 2002; Jones 2003). This should not pose a surprise to those familiar with the African terrain and the belief in spirits, ancestors, and the supernatural, the patriarchal culture among Africans, and the relegation of women to the background (that is, one who should only be seen and not heard).

Some of the roles of spiritual houses are in the area of counseling, help giving, and serving as alternative means to stress management (Balogun and Oladipo 2009).

According to Balogun and Oladipo (2009), foremost among the problems that women seek spiritual help for are family issues, followed by health, career, finance, and persecutory issues, respectively. Also, the role of culture and societal expectation, as these pertain to motherhood, is an aspect of family issues that women would seek spiritual help for.

These bring pressure on women who are yet to attain the motherhood role, pushing them to seek spiritual help to fulfill the roles expected of them by society. It is no longer a secret that the Nigerian woman considers herself a real woman only when she has proved herself to be fertile, and the 'halo of maternity' shines over her. In many societies, bearing children is valued as the main purpose in life. In these cases, fosterage and adoption do not substitute for real motherhood and are only seen as temporary solutions to childlessness (Gerrits, 2002). Some studies have related causes of infertility in many parts of Africa to mainly nonmedical and associated with supernatural or evil powers, and the treatment involves traditional healers and spiritualists (Deribeet *al.*, 2007; Gerrits, 1997; Pearce, 1999; Rungangaet *al.*, 2001).

In addition to the above, family matters are not usually expected to be discussed with an 'outsider' who is not a member of the family. Bottling up such issues could of course lead to serious emotional and psychological disturbances. Hence, women have come to see consulting the spiritual help-givers as a way of relieving themselves of emotional tension and letting out the 'steam' by seeking spiritual help from spiritual help-givers who are expected to keep whatever was discussed with them with the utmost confidentiality.

The proliferation, in recent times, of women's prayer assemblies and programmes and the commitment of many women to these assemblies/programmes in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches cannot be denied in the light of the foregoing. These women's prayer assemblies and programmes are seen as defined religious spaces and contexts where women come together in prayer and counseling.

These spaces are public and private; public in the sense that it is accessible to anyone and private because these assemblies are gendered and the nature of the prayer and activities in these gatherings pertain to women and marriage concerns. The perpetual attendance of these programs and assemblies could serve to explain some of the cracks observable in many marriages and families. A woman is seen as a critical actor in the balancing and maintenance of the home and relationships between and among in-laws.

The absence of the woman from home, the type that she spends a considerable amount of time away from home, could portend a challenge. However, it seems inevitable that many women would of necessity indulge in seeking solutions to sundry problems of their marriages through prayer. Because of the perceived potency or efficacy of prayer in the crisis attaining human affairs.

The growth in the numbers of prayer centres and church programmes dedicated to prayers, particularly those designed with women as the targeted audience (as women have been observed to constitute a majority of the membership of the church), could be linked to a larger development within the Christian fold, namely, the growth in Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria (Alademo 2009). And as Anderson (2009) puts it, this proliferation of Pentecostalism is a complex variety and bewildering. The bewilderment is inspired by the New Religious Movement in Nigeria.

The revival movement is hinged primarily on prayer as a solution to major life's challenges. It is synonymous with the Pentecostal assemblies which, in part, have been responsible for the present proliferation and growth of Pentecostalism and its inherent character. A character to be linked to the efforts and vision of the pioneers, and adoption of some Pentecostal creeds and practices by orthodox Christian denominations: like the adoption of different names for Pentecostalism. For instance, in the Catholic Church, it is called the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria. It operates as Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion. In Methodist Church, it is called Methodist Evangelical Movement.

This phenomenon has led to the establishment of various church programmes designed exclusively for different categories of women in these assemblies. These changes and proliferation of churches have been occasioned by the economic structure of society, especially with regards to growing inequality, poverty, unemployment, and political instability in which women are at the receiving end due to their nature of dependency. This has led to their resorting to spiritual help in times of hardship.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is clear from the foregoing that, in recent times, women have been subjected to several challenges in their daily lives. These challenges cut across all strata of living, from seeking to bear children to taken care of children. These make them seek solutions in spiritual homes.

Although many scholars have examined different aspects of women's lives and their spirituality (Ojo, 1997; Bartkowski, 2001; Agadjanian and Yabiku, 2015), very little has been done in the area of the link between their spiritual engagement in a women context and the stability of their marriages as occasioned in the observable trends in Nigerian society, in regards marital tensions. Some of which are sociological (e.g. social incompatibility, the strains of modern life, political and vocational pressures, etc.) in nature; while others are economic and cultural.

Very little had been done to link the tensions in most marriages to religious commitment, especially of the sort whereby the woman is frequently away from home as a result of her religious commitment and affiliation. Numerous studies have shown that valuing religion and regularly promoting it are associated with greater marriage stability and higher levels of marital satisfaction (Faban 2008).

A common notion is that women are more attracted or convert more easily to Pentecostalism. However, what is largely unknown is the specific ways in which Christian women's prayer assemblies, so popular in southwest Nigeria, affect marriage stability. This is what this study has set out to investigate.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What influence do Christian women's prayer assemblies have on the stability of marriages?
2. What self benefits do women attendees of women prayer assemblies receive of their activities in the prayer assemblies?
3. How do issues raised in these assemblies out connected with the family welfare?
4. How do women combine their churchgoing with their marital roles?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of Research

This study aims to examine the relationship between Christian women prayer assemblies and the stability of marriages by exploring the influence of the assemblies on marriage stability, the benefits, challenges and the combination of marriage and church attendance in Ikorodu, Lagos State. The study will then attempt to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To examine the influence of 'women prayer assemblies' and programmes have on marriage stability

2. To investigate the benefits of women's participation in Christian women's prayer assemblies and programmes get from themselves and the assemblies.
3. To examine how issues raised in 'women prayer assemblies' and programmes are linked with stability and affect marriage.
4. To examine how women combine their church-going with their marital roles, at home.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant for several reasons. Apart from the fact that it will make an original contribution to the growing body of literature on the impact of Pentecostal Christianity on specific domains of domestic life, it also offers a fresh perspective on the importance of women's church assemblies to our understanding of marriage stability.

In addition, the data that would be unearthed will be useful for scholars in a wide range of areas including Guidance and Counselling, Peace and Conflict Studies, Gender Studies, Religious Studies, and other allied disciplines. Nominal and church counsellors, as well as scholars in Gender studies, would derive insight on the possible connections between women's involvement in regular prayer programmes and the stability of their family and marriage, while peace and conflict scholars will be able to formulate crisis management frameworks that can be used to address domestic conflicts arising from the problematic of this work.

The various issues relating to religion that will be teased out in the study should interest religious studies scholars particularly regarding the possible negative impact of religious commitment on the stability of families and marriages.

1.6 Scope of the Study

In terms of physical coverage, the study considered 'women prayer assemblies' located primarily in Ikorodu, Lagos state. Ikorodu is situated approximately 36 km north of Lagos, Ikorodu is bounded to the south by the Lagos lagoon, to the north by a boundary with Ogun State, and to the east by a boundary with Agbowo-Ikosi, a town in Epe Division of Lagos State. The town has grown significantly in the past 40 years and is divided into sixteen or seventeen "Ituns" or minor areas. The main industries in the town are trading, farming, and manufacturing.

Nearby major towns include Imota, Isiu, Liadi, Ijede, Igbogbo, and Bayeku, all of which constitute their own Local Council Development Area with their traditional rulers (Obas). Together these areas make up Ikorodu Division. Ikorodu is the fastest-growing part exurb of Lagos metropolis, owing in part to the increasing influx of people from Ikorodu's surrounding towns and villages attracted by the town's proximity to Lagos. In 2003, the existing Ikorodu LGAs were split for administrative purposes into Local Council Development Areas. These lower-tier administrative units now number 6: Imota, Igbogbo/Bayeku, Ijede, Ikorodu North, Ikorodu West, Ikorodu.

The proliferation of prayer assemblies in recent times has been linked to the Pentecostal revivals that have swept across many cities and their suburbs. These prayer assemblies are famous for being places of hope and respite to the everyday hassle and challenges of life in general. These prayer assemblies have special focus on women, as they form the bulk of the membership of the church. The special focus has led to the creation of programmes targeting women, herein referred to as women prayer assemblies. This study examined women- prayer assemblies held in selected churches within Ikorodu. The churches visited are five churches that are; Joy Cometh Ministries, We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries, Christ Apostolic Church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, and New Covenant Gospel Church.

In terms of issues examined, the study focused largely on establishing a relationship between the attendance of 'women prayer assemblies' which are within the Pentecostal circle, married women, and marriage (in)stability.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Religion: This refers to people's beliefs and opinions concerning the existence, nature, and worship of a deity or deities, and divine involvement in the universe and human life.

Family: The family forms the basic unit of social organization and it is difficult to imagine how human society could function without it. The family has been seen as a universal social institution an inevitable part of human society. It is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household interacting with each other in their respective social role of husband and wife, mother and father, brother and sister and creating a common culture.

Marriage: In this study, marriage is defined as the legal union between a man and a woman, for procreation and the continuity of a family. It is a religious duty and is consequently a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity. Marriage serves as a moral

safeguard because it acts as an outlet for sexual needs and regulates man's sexual desire/expression so that man does not become a slave to it. The assumption for its social necessity is rested on the premise that through it, families are established and the family is the fundamental unit of human society.

Marriage Stability: This is defined as remaining legally married and living in harmony within a shared household over time. Conversely, marriage instability would suggest that a couple may no longer be living together due to conflicts and differences or may be living under conditions of disharmony and friction.

Prayer: Prayer is communication with a superior being, in this case, God. It is a solemn request for help or intervention by an individual usually expressed to God.

Women Prayer Assemblies: In this study, the term refers to places of worship and programmes designed exclusively for women and where sundry matters are addressed in prayer and counselling. They also include exclusive or secluded places of prayer and counseling programmes targeting women only by different churches. These programmes are, in contents and design, addressed to various issues affecting women and the family, including marriage instability.

Household activities: This refers to tasks carried out within the house where a family resides, which are done regularly. It could also be referred to as chores, which include such tasks as cooking, cleaning, taking care of young children, to mention a few.

Family Issues: This refers to issues that may cause tension or are the primary cause of disagreement or concern in a family. This is not limited to a particular thing; it could range from emotional to economic to health issues among others.

Spousal support: In this study, it refers to the level of support a partner gets from her spouse in relation to her church attendance, career, and household chores.

Church: A church is a distinct and recognises public place of worship, where a regular congregation and service take place which is synonymous with the Christians.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature

2.1.1 The Coming of Christianity in Ikorodu

The introduction of Christianity in Ikorodu is inextricably linked to the history of Christianity in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos and Southern Nigeria. This history may be split broadly into two. The first is the coming of Christianity into Nigeria, which started in the 15th and 16th centuries, which was followed by period of denominationalism and missionary activity in the nineteenth century. The second being time of evolution of Independent African churches, which birthed emergence of charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Nigeria.

The coming of Christianity: Christianity in Nigeria dates back to the 14th century. During the period of contact with Europeans, Portuguese Catholics crossed the Atlantic Ocean and landed on the coast of the region in an attempt to Christianize the residents of Benin and Warri. The Portuguese brought Christianity, but due to their involvement in the tin trade and trade, they were unable to establish it, and their enthusiasm for the trade exceeded their desire for missionary work. According to AdeAjayi (1965), due to the indifferent attitude of Oba of Benin, most of this effort failed; Warri Axis also showed no hope, despite the Olu of Warri's excitement to meet the missionaries, their meeting was limited to the palace, and the palace could be considered to be made up of solely professing Christians.

The pattern of commerce in the sixteenth century changed from wood and related products to slaves. While the locals enjoyed trade, their area was protected from Christianity (Ayandele 1966). In the seventeenth century, Roman Catholic missionaries who were also traders, like the Portuguese, tried to rebuild Christianity (Olulana 2015). They traveled through the interior to Benin and Wari, where the king was not interested in the faith. Characteristics of this period include the affirmation of missions, as trade flourished, intermittent and long intervals of missionary positions, insufficient number of missionaries available at any one time, and a lack of understanding of their work because they never did. they had experienced. Training, lack of material support and language barriers, the concentration of attention in so many places, the base is too far from the

scene. Furthermore, the impact of the weather has led to a high mortality rate among missionaries (Adamolekun 2012).

The Period of Denominationalism and Mission Activities: The non-porous nature of the Niger Delta in Christianity in the 16th century lasted for a long time until 1842, when missionaries used the other end of the Nigerian coast, namely Badagri in the southwest and Calabar in the south, in 1842 and 1846 respectively. This time it was a great success because the missions changed the political and social development of Nigeria. (Ayandele 1966). This period coincided with the abolition of the slave trade. Ayandele called it a "tool of life". In 1807 Britain passed a bill called "Abolition of the Slave Trade Act" and other countries followed suit. To fit in. This sparked new religious enthusiasm among Europeans and Americans.

Freed slaves were taken to Sierra Leone, while those of Nigerian origin entered Nigeria, most of whom lived in Abeokuta. This period was a period of different denominations wanting a presence in Nigeria, and many churches sent missionaries to the coast and into the interior of Nigeria. As a result of the revival of evangelicalism in the 18th century, this new missionary movement emerged. This time, the missionaries are mission-oriented because they are aware of the failure of past attempts to Christianise Nigeria. The Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) made history in Nigeria when James Ferguson, who had converted to the Wesleyan Church, requested a missionary from the Wesleyan Missionary and sent the pastor Thomas Burch Freeman.

The second missionary association was the Church Missionaries Association (CMS), which arrived on December 17, 1842. Although the association had an expedition to Niger in 1841, it failed. The association sent Henry Townsend. (Oduyoye 1969). The third missionary society in Nigeria is the Scottish Mission, known as Presbyterian Church. It began work in Nigeria in 1846. The first missionary was under the leadership of Pastor Hope Masterdom Waddel and his wife, the missionary was sent to Calabar, and another Scottish couple in 1846 (Fatokun 2005). His work was a success, and the Biafra Presbyterian Church was founded in 1858 as a Presbyterian Church.

It is worth noting that the missionary work of the Baptist Church dates back to the missionary journey of Thomas T. Bowen. Bowen began missionary work with two other couples and his wife, but due to the scourge of malaria, one of them, Lacys, returned to the United States, and the other, Dennard, died. The Bowens came to Ijaye and built a chapel in 1854. They consolidated their mission in Ijaye by handing over the

church to Mr. Clarice. They moved to Ogbomoso, but Bowen's work on Ogbomoso was very successful (Oduyoye 1969). The work of the Baptist Mission, dating back to the missionary journey of Thomas T. Bowen, is worth mentioning. Bowen and his wife began missionary work with two other couples, but due to the scourge of malaria, one of them, the Lazis, returned to the United States and the other, the Dennards, died. The Bowens family came to Ijaye in 1854 and established a small church. They consolidated their mission in Ijaye by handing over the church to Mr. Clarice. They moved to Ogbomoso, but Bowen's work on Ogbomoso was very successful (Oduyoye 1969). In 1862, Roman Catholics arrived through their African missions. Former slave organizations and stations were established in Lagos and Abeokuta. When Italian priest Broghero visited Lagos in 1863, there was a Catholic church in Yoruba. Pope Gauss began working among the Igbo people in eastern Nigeria in 1885 through Father Joseph Lutz who worked in Onisha Chapter. Samuel A. Bill founded the Qua Iboe Church, an independent evangelical and interdenominational institution.

Missions in northern Nigeria began in 1893 through Roland Bingham, Walter Gones, and Thomas Kent. In 1904, the Sudan United Mission Ministry (SUM) joined the northern missions of the Sudan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Missions (SIM), mainly in the Adamawa, Benue, and Bornu regions. Missionary activities during this period were characterized by sects and were limited to the southern part of the country. The missionaries came to receive training and prepare for the work, although many people were devoured by the weather. Using interpreters and missionaries to learn the language themselves reduces language barriers. Well-trained Nigerian priests began to appear, churches and schools were built, and baptism was used as a sign of the new faith they accepted and the old way they abandoned (Adamolekun 2012).

In 1862, Roman Catholics arrived through their African mission. Former slave organizations and stations were established in Lagos and Abeokuta. When Italian priest Broghero visited Lagos in 1863, there was a Catholic church in Yoruba. Pope Gauss began working among the Igbo people in eastern Nigeria in 1885 through Father Joseph Lutz who worked in Onisha.

2.1.2 The Independent African Churches

This period of evolution of the African Independent Church (AIC) began at the end of the nineteenth century as a "protest movement against the marginalisation of indigenous peoples in foreign missions." (Ajay 1998). In September 1889, the United

Church of Africa (UNA) was established in Lagos, which was the culmination of an unprecedented protest. This is the first indigenous church in Nigeria. Although the Indigenous Baptist Church was established in 1888, one year earlier than the previous one, it has only African leaders and everything else is American. In 1901, some members of the St. Paul's Breadfruit Church incorporated the American Bethel Church at Ebute Meta (Omoyajowo 1973) in Lagos. Those who were dissatisfied with the management of the church by the White Leaders.

Although African churches were founded as a result of protests against African leadership in the church and condemnation of certain cultural practices, they remained consistent with the parental bodies' practice, liturgy, and pastoral order. This period of Independent African Churches triggered the phenomenon known as the Aladura movement from the 1920s to the 1940s. This movement is essentially a 20th-century phenomenon, representing a strong opposition to Europeans and Western-oriented churches, who had a completely fabricated view of theology from the perspective of worship. (Omoyajowo 1973).

This movement began immediately after World War I. According to Gaiya (2002), the 1918 influenza pandemic caused and expanded the outbreak of revival within the Missionary Church and the Aladura Church. The Anglican Church of St.Saviour in Ijebu-Ode and Isonyin, J.B Shadare, and young school teacher Sophia Odunlami from nearby towns respectively received visions on how to cure the epidemic. This ultimately led to the establishment of the Tabernacle of Faith in 1923. Due to similar experiences, the late Moses Orimolade and Christiana Abiodun Akinsowoa and founded in 1925, the Cherubim and Seraphim society, while the Church of the Lord (Aladura) was founded in 1930. In 1918, the Anglicans formed a prayer group known as the "Precious Stone Society" which appeared to cure influenza patients. The group left the Anglican Church in the early 1920s and joined the Tabernacle Church in Philadelphia. Additionally, the revival led by Joseph Babalola of Faith Tabernacle converted thousands of people.

The movement established a connection with the Pentecostal Apostolic Church in Great Britain in 1932, but this connection was dissolved by the use of modern medicine (Olayiwola 1989; Fatokun 2011). Although prayer assemblies in various Christian denominations in Nigeria have always been part of these movements, this phenomenon became common after the Pentecostal revival and the rise of the Aladura movement in the 1970s. The Aladura movement is considered part of the Pentecostal movement because; just as the African Independent Church (AIC) emphasized the power

and gifts of the Holy Spirit, so did they. Peel (1968) referred to the following churches as Aladura in Yoruba Land: Church of Christ Apostles (CAC), Church of the Lord (Aladura) (CLA), Cherubim, and Seraphim Movement (C&S), and Celestial Church of Christ. (CCC). According to Olayiwola (1989), the word "Aladura" literally means "a person who prays," and "Adura" (prayer) forms the core of the church's doctrine and practice. It can be seen that prayer "adura" not only constitutes the basis of their practice and doctrine, but the church of Aladura regards prayer as the mother of all blessings and gifts.

Prayer is an internal factor that attracts people to itself. The extraordinary thing here is that it relies entirely on prayer. Interestingly, the meaning given to prayer by Aladura is consistent with the traditional Yoruba religion, where there is a large amount of prayer practice. At both the congregation and personal level, the power and authority of absolute trust and use of prayer depends on two matrices. The first is the use of "agbara" and "ase-adura" (the power and authority of prayer) as practical proofs of empirical tests to solve existing problems. The prophets and leaders of Aladura succeeded in persuading their followers with their charisma that prayer, power, and authority can solve the problem. The belief that you are forced to pray to God gives a general impression of forcing God to agree to your requirements.

Aladura helps his or her prayer power and authority through fasting, holiness, love, and charity. There are also performances of ceremonious ascension to sacred mountains. Such mountains are considered very sacred and are guarded carefully. The practice of visiting the sacred mountain tends to create a stress-relieving and psychological atmosphere. The main characteristic of this period is that the founders were at point members of the missionary church and they believed in the efficacy of prayer (Durojaiye 1994). They came from the great city of Yorubaland and then spread to other parts of the country. In these churches, polygamy was not discouraged, but Yoruba paganism was also displeased. There is no missionary element in this movement.

The Charismatic Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches: The 1930 revival influenced the African church. Until 1935, the growth of the Christian populace altered the church's hierarchy. Due to the orthodox churches' lukewarm approach toward evangelism and revival, the young, as a result of their education at home and abroad, strained their connection with the existing churches, resulting in the formation of new churches in the 1970s and beyond. The 1970s saw an influx of American Christian literature into the country. So many churches developed as a result of the revival and the

Crusades that the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) was established in the early 1990s. The association unites all Christian churches without discrimination. The association is divided into different groups, namely; 1) Roman Catholic Church (RCM); 2) Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN); 3) Organization of the African Indigenous Churches (OAIC); Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), and Tekas.

2.1.3 The Church in Ikorodu

The Church Missionary Society brought Christianity to the Ikorodu area of Lagos state in 1892 as part of their mission to evangelise Nigeria. The late Chief Aina Odukanmade, an Iwarefa and one of the most popular and rich leaders, welcomed the early missionaries and flew the British flag on the soil of Ikorodu, with the backing of the Oloja of Ikorodu, Aina Odubote, Balogun Jaiyesimi, and Odukanmade, the Lisa of Ikorodu. The CMS church, Obun- Ala, was the first church in Ikorodu. When the structure was ultimately demolished to make way for the evening market, it revived in its current site in Ijomu.

2.1.4 The Nature of Prayers in Nigerian Churches

Prayer is described as a phenomenon found in all religions in some form or another. It is a mental or verbal manifestation of one's object of adoration (Ekpunobi and Ezeaku, 1990). Spinks (1963) argued that human prayer is used to convey not only monetary demands but also the bodily yearning for a higher way of life. Prayer, according to Ekwunife (2007), is a spiritual means for religious people to connect inwardly and externally with God and all the extremely sensitive animals in their unseen realm. It may be defined as the secular-religious spiritual approach to transcendence and its agents. Religious people not only acknowledged the validity of the transcendent realm in prayer, but they also proclaimed their opinion that the world of time without transcendence is worthless. As a result, prayer is a spiritual breath that may inspire, nourish, energise, and guide mankind on its brief journey into eternity.

Life is viewed as a whole rather than as a collection of fragments in the African worldview. People will be at peace when they have a good relationship with God, the spirit, other people, and other animals (Mbiti 1969). Anyone interested in learning more about the nature of a certain spiritual experience. Anyone interested in learning about the essence of a specific spiritual tradition should look into how that tradition views prayer because prayer is at the heart of all religious activities and beliefs. Here you will find the

most genuine manifestations of ideas, religious activities, theological views, and even sophisticated theological thoughts (Mbiti 1969). Various ethnic groups in traditional Africa pray to the Supreme God directly or through mediators. Mbiti argues that traditional African prayers contain praise, thankfulness, and the proclamation of prayer status and demands. Such prayers always have particular goals, and individuals do not "circle the wagons" when they pray.

They want safety, security, wealth, the preservation of life, tranquility, and a variety of personal interests such as physical health, healing, protection from danger, travel, or other endeavours. Rain, peace, the end of diseases and threats to the country, the success of battles or attacks, the acceptance of sacrifices and gifts, and the fertility of the people, animals, and crops can all be prayed for by the entire community (Mbiti, 1969). Prayer was a well-developed practise in pre-Christian African civilization. The priests of the gods are frequently consulted and prayed to the gods based on the needs of individuals, families, or communities. These inquiries may include spiritual probes into unexplained happenings such as unexpected or frequent deaths, or even seemingly little matters such as rain delays to usher in the planting season. Such inquiries might lead to sacrifices to please the gods and restore their goodwill, which is carried out in the framework of prayer.

In contemporary Africa, people recognize the need to constantly grapple with the insecurities of everyday life. These insecurities have promoted several uneven areas of life: the collapse of the national economy and the rise of informal markets, the rapid spread of new religious movements such as the Pentecostals, a resurgence of violent conflicts, such as broader religious and ethnic conflicts. The existence of the oil economy and the social chaos caused by the rise of rapid capitalism (Assamoah, 2006). Every African community has mechanisms to deal with anti-life forces such as disease, droughts, floods, desolation, curses, and witchcraft. These diseases do not occur by accident but are caused by certain forces, including human agents through magic and witchcraft. Furthermore, such misfortunes are considered religious experiences and require religious methods to deal with them; This insecurity is economic, social, and spiritual. This uncertainty and instability of life are why people turn to prayer.

Adelowo (2014) admits that prayer is one of the most important aspects of the liturgy. Basler (2008) pointed out that the difficult part of defining a sentence is that the sentence itself is both a simple and very complex concept. At a basic level, everyone can understand what prayer is through personal experience, whether as a practitioner or as an

observer. Therefore, most people can define prayer as a dialogue with God. When analyzing the concept of a sentence, the complexity of the concept becomes obvious. Prayer is as diverse as the speaker, but it exists in countless contexts, forms, and practices. If you ignore these, it will confuse and lead to erroneous academic analysis and conclusions.

Prayer has always been the cornerstone of the Christian faith, and the synonym for Christianity is prayer. "The church has a balance of power in world affairs... Even now it uses its prayer power to reach its use level; the praying church is determining the cause of world events" (Bilheimer 1982, Jacobs 2009). Although the concept of prayer is the foundation of the long-term apostolic tradition, charismatic Christianity has taken it from the fringe of contemporary Christian orthodoxy to mainstream Christian practice. Prayer is the weapon of war and the foundation of the practice of salvation (Marshall 2009).

2.1.5 Gender Participation in Churches

Gender involvement in the Nigerian church can be traced back to the involvement of men and women in missionary work in Nigeria. Gender participation refers to the participation of men and women in the emergence and development of Nigerian churches, but more emphasis will be placed on women's participation. Religion as a social phenomenon occurs in the gender order of a specific society. Religion often helps define and legitimise the power relationship between the sexes (Kupari 2016). African women use prayer as a way of expressing their spirituality, as a source of direction and goals in their lives and careers. In most cases, the official religious structure and discourse believe that women are inferior to men.

The religion that an individual believes in does not necessarily conform to the prescribed gender classification. However, the religious lives of women and men are intertwined with the roles, desires, and life trajectories formed by their social culture. Women's religious activities have traditionally paralleled women's interpersonal interactions in the family context (Conzad 1999), emphasizing their responsibilities as wives, mothers, and family caregivers, even though there has been a gender revolution in the past few decades. Women have been able to get rid of traditional gender roles (Beck and Beck Gernsheim 2002). The male-dominated church leadership politics is cultivated through the gender division between the social, cultural, and religious roles of men and

women. Men are in charge of the public sphere and are the family's leaders. And women are the leaders of the home (Anwar 2013). Some people say that women's religious activities constitute their family and personal relationships, which leads to gender habits in religion.

In Africa, male and female missionaries dealt with the modern missionary movement. The preachers took the initiative to open substations, and the indigenous women of the Bible brought the gospel to many pastoral areas. Although this has been recognized, although women are the most fervent believers, more attention has been paid to the role of men in spreading the gospel and Christianity (Isichei 1989). Some social researchers believe that in all societies, cultures, and beliefs, women are generally more religious than men. More controversially, some people believe that the gender gap in religion is biological and stems from higher testosterone levels in men or other physical genetic differences between the sexes (Daniel 2010, Togarasci 2013, Marshal and Taylor 2006)

Many scholars point out the advantages of women in African churches. In the pioneering stage of missionary work and today, people have raised questions about women's conversion tendency. Adrian Hastings puts forward some factors. First, Christianity advocates the basic message of equality for all; "The feeling of freedom, a cooperative effort in which men and women actively participate, are communicated to converts." (Hastings 1989) Women are taught that they are equal, free, and able to assume independent responsibilities.

Secondly, the morality of Christian missionaries often particularly affects various specific aspects of women's existence. African women see Christianity as empowering. They were given a place to stand; from which they could challenge the sacred world and male-dominated traditions. Such traditions are the murder of twins, the persecution of so-called witches, and polygamy. The missionary's attention to disadvantaged women attracted the attention of the victims.

Third, missionaries exaggerated the marginalization of women in indigenous patriarchal communities. The attraction of African women to Christianity is not limited to the pioneering period. Today, women still dominate in major churches, founding African churches, charismatic movements, and Pentecostal churches. However, they are not in the church power structure dominated by men. His contribution to the development of the African church is undeniable. Isichei (1989) and Sundkler (2000)

emphasized that women are often the first converts and the most enthusiastic local preachers.

They even sacrificed their resources to spread the gospel. Sundkler and Steed (2000) pointed out that although women seem to be invisible, they have always been the pillars of the church and care about the local church and its worship. The church provides them with a system of support and unity. Women are the promoters of the church and society not only in times of crisis but even in times of stability. Regardless of whether women are educated or not, they will continue to dedicate themselves to the church.

Sundkler and Steed point out the church's ambiguous position as a catalyst for women's freedom as well as her participation in their subjugation. They point out that the church has provided new chances for women through girls' education and leadership positions. On the other hand, "discriminatory practices supported by divine power functioned in and through the churches." People regarded as authorities inside the church, such as Reverends, Priests, and Pastors, are referred to as having divine authority. They ascribe this to the fact that "the nineteenth-century missions, whether Catholic or Protestant, were primarily manifestations of a patriarchal culture, and these views seemed to fit with an African society in its patriarchal and matriarchal form." (1995, King)

Phiri (1997) laments women's invisibility. She claims: "Religion studies in Africa have mostly focused on the role of men, both expatriate and indigenous, and have largely ignored women's involvement. Nonetheless, it has long been acknowledged that the bulk of church members are women." She gives two explanations for this: first, there have been more male scholars than females, and second, scholars have favoured male experience over female experience. Feminist church historians, for example, have lamented the absence of female missionaries from mission histories. There is little evidence in African Christian history by African male and female researchers of the roles women have played, not only in presenting themselves for conversion but also in performing evangelistic activity among their people.

According to Murray (1996), "it is widely acknowledged that women were of vital importance in defining, developing, and determining the trajectory of the modern missionary movement." Older missionary stories, on the other hand, did not take into consideration the role of women. Classical works on mission history have likewise failed to capture anything meaningful on women, despite passages linking mission to social

service, education, and the formation of a bourgeoisie, all of which were areas in which women played an important part.

Although there is a wealth of literature on women in New Religious Movements such as African Instituted Churches, Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, it has primarily been written by Africanist scholars. It has also looked at gender roles and the role of women in ritual as participants, healers, and charismatic leaders. There hasn't been much discussion about their role in the expansion of the church in Africa through outreach.

Daneel (2012), opined that a "thorough examination of AIC women missionaries-their mission tactics, theologies, interpretation, and dissemination of the Good News in the African setting" is required. African Christian history has also been written from a male perspective, with women portrayed as either helpers or absentees in the formation of African Christianity. Women's "attitudes, behaviour, and so on are too frequently scrutinised or rejected as peripheral, invisible, and non-interactive in the face of pervasive male control," Hackett (1995). Gender is an important organising component in African religious communities. It is necessary for any informed understanding and study of African New Religious Movements and their worldview.

Gender disparities in leadership study contrasted men and women in diverse leadership roles. Some compared them in experimental settings, while others investigated their leadership behaviours in organisational contexts. However, there is some debate regarding how to interpret the findings of such research (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Yukl, 2001). In their meta-analysis of male-female differences in leadership styles, Bass, Eagly, and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) discussed this disparity in interpretation, noting that even though some laboratory conditions showed no discernible differences. According to several studies, women are less cohesive, less authoritarian, and less capable of dealing with interpersonal disputes than males, whereas men are more helpful and empathetic, open-minded, and tolerant of responsibility (Lipman-Blumen, 1992; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Ridgeway, 2001; Rigg and Sparrow, 1994).

Women were observed to be more consideration-oriented in most research that found differences, whereas males were more task-oriented (Bass, 1990). However, Bass stated that, while disparities in the road to leadership are to be expected, once men and women are in such positions, those distinctions tend to merge, implying that both utilise the same male methods. This appears to be a general finding from many prior research,

implying that for women to be successful, they needed to lead like males. Because of the shifting scenario for women and leadership roles, Bass recognised that previous studies may need to be disregarded. The potential exists that disparities between men and women exist at times, emerging and vanishing with changing social situations (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Pounder and Coleman 2002P). However, there remained a need to research how women-led in administrative and executive roles.

Christianity is growing at an incredible rate today. Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, autonomous African churches (Aladura), and the emerging Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are thriving. Because women make up the majority of the membership in many Christian groups, gender problems have been a source of contention. Even though male leadership continues to predominate, women have devised novel strategies for combating marginalisation. Women meet and, at times, challenge male chauvinism and the church power structure, causing ripples and generating headlines in Nigerian Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere media. Some accounts have made it into the annals of Nigerian church history.

We'd want to focus on two specific situations. In the first example, Mama Abiodun Emmanuel assisted in the establishment of the Cherubim and Seraphim church when she was a little girl. Throughout much of her life, she was recognised as a church leader, but she battled against the hierarchy, which pitted her against Yoruba Oba (kings) and rulers, who attempted to persuade her to relinquish her authority to lead the church. She was eventually named the Olori (leader) of the greatest Aladura independent church in West Africa and beyond. Abiodun Emmanuel is recognised today in African church history as the spiritual lady who fought and triumphed. In the second instance, the Nigerian Anglican church opposed the ordination of females (However, in the Diocese of Ilorin, the "rebel" Bishop Haruna (retired) has ordained three women. The Anglican Church disrobed them a few years later after Haruna retired.) The unresolved pain and dissatisfaction caused by this tragedy have yet to be explored.

As Olajubu (2003) points out, many Pentecostal churches were started and run by women. Her thesis is made all the more poignant by the fact that several Pentecostal churches are now making appearances in Europe, America, and Asia. Some Christian churches, both mainstream and Aladura, devised unique female titles and rituals to invest women in positions of leadership. Titleholders (also referred to as Iya Ijo, mother or matron of the congregation) and their associates monitor Women's activities and advise

the minister to help the church run smoothly. Even though her range of influence was very small, a woman with a religious title earned authority.

2.1.6 Marriage and Family Stability

This review was based on pertinent concepts, ideas, and research. Several types of research on the prediction were included. These researches are extremely old but are regarded as landmark studies (e.g., Adams, 1946; Terman& Oden, 1947) in the review since they are considered landmark studies. For this study, marital quality was defined as a subjective assessment of a couple's relationship. The state of marriage as intact or not intact was defined as marital stability (i.e., separated or divorced). Family academics and researchers have long been interested in predicting marital quality and stability in the setting of religion.

Radcliffe-Brown (1950, p. 43) asserted that marriage is a rearrangement of social structure. He had in mind that new links between families and kin groups are formed with each new marriage. However, the French anthropologist Levi-Strauss (1969) held the antithetical view. In an examination of cultures with cross-cousin marriage, he held that those groups use marriage to stabilize social structure rather than allowing a marriage to change it. By having people marry the same type of cross-cousin generation after generation; new marriages do not always create new ties among kin groups but may perpetuate existing alliances.

This review was created using relevant thoughts, ideas, and research. We included in the study some works on the prediction that are exceedingly old but are considered landmark studies (e.g., Adams, 1946; Terman& Oden, 1947) since they are considered landmark studies. Marital quality was defined as a subjective assessment of a couple's relationship for this study. The condition of a marriage, whether intact or not, was defined as marital stability (i.e., separated or divorced). Academics and researchers in family studies have long been interested in predicting marital quality and stability in the context of religion.

He accepted cross-cultural diversity within each set of rights in this definition, while underlining that marriage is a cultural invention since it consists of rights and duties rather than action. Murdock (1949) proposed that marriage consisted of a sexual connection plus numerous other characteristics, which is also a suitable functional definition. These characteristics include: "a socially acceptable sexual connection, socially authorised childbearing, economic cooperation and sharing co-residence of

spouses, predicted length for several years, at least a ritual or transaction marking the entrance to marriage." People in certain civilizations go through numerous weddings and divorces throughout their lives, so durability is questionable.

Marriage is sanctioned in all societies as a bond between individuals of the opposite sex, although some cultures add that certain marriages can be between people of the same sex (Cadigan, 1998; Fulton & Anderson, 1992). The heterosexual component will be highlighted in this article. Marriages can include one or more men and one or more women. As a result, there are four logical choices.

These kinds, as well as their prevalence as ideal forms of marriage in preindustrial civilizations, are as follows (derived from Murdock 1949, 1967): Monogamy refers to one wife and one husband; polygyny refers to two or more wives with one husband; polyandry refers to two or more husbands with one wife, and group marriage refers to two or more husbands with two or more wives.

In the early years of family studies, the majority of the premier marriage research included a prediction component based on premarital predictors (e.g., Adams, 1946; Burgess & Cottrell, 1939; Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Terman & Oden, 1947). There have also been other reviews examining premarital determinants of marital outcomes. The initial evaluations, reflecting the nature of the study, were theoretical (e.g., Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Kirkpatrick, 1955).

This, however, began to alter in the 1960s. Bowerman (1964) examined the key studies in the first edition of the Handbook of Marriage and the Family and advocated for the development of a unique theory of marital prediction. He also emphasised the need of using generic theoretical frameworks while developing marriage prediction theories. Following Bowerman's proposal, the following major evaluations of the pre-marital prediction literature were conducted. Burr (1973) summarised the key findings and structured them into higher-order propositions using theoretical frameworks such as role theory, symbolic interactionism, and balancing theory. Lewis and Spanier (1979) developed their theory of marital quality and stability using the same inductive method. They chose conceptual labels to describe the premarital predictors based on a social exchange perspective.

They proposed that the premarital predictors were particular indications of premarital resources brought to the marital context by people. Burr and his colleagues (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979) criticised Lewis and Spanier's review and recommended that the same material be arranged more parsimoniously and clearly under

a symbolic interactionist framework. They saw premarital predictors as particular indications of the quality of (marital) role enactment, relative deprivation (i.e., “a person's condition compared to or in contrast with that of other persons who constitute reference points” [Burr et al., 1979], and degree of consensus. Beginning in the 1960s, theoretical breakthroughs and methodological advances resulted in a distinct type and quality of prediction research by the 1980s and 1990s. The field was theoretically evolving toward an ecosystemic, dynamic, interdisciplinary way of thinking (Ballard-Reisch, 2002). Scholars were able to evaluate sophisticated multivariate models of marital prediction methodologically (Doherty, Boss, LaRossa, Schumm, & Steinmetz, 1993).

As a result, most of the current premarital prediction research has focused on the interactional dynamics of couples rather than the static, sociocultural, or family-of-origin background variables that were highlighted in earlier research and reviews. Using multiple regression analysis, researchers were able to assess the relative strength of numerous predictor variables at the same time. Structural equation modelling and other developing approaches should provide a framework for increasingly better predictive and change-over-time testing (Teach-man & Neustadt, 1993). Two evaluations of the literature undertaken in the 1980s and early 1990s deserve special notice. Wamboldt and Reiss (1989) conducted a meta-analysis of 12 longitudinal studies on marital success. They classified their findings into three categories: background variables, personality traits, and interactional processes. Although they do not specify how they came up with these three categories, it is apparent that they are operating from a process-oriented, constructivist approach.

In their recent book on courting, Cate and Lloyd (1992) evaluated the premarital characteristics predicting marriage success. They see a trend in prediction research away from individual traits and toward dyadic dynamics. They also classified the literature into three groups: background variables, personality factors, and dyadic features. Although they do not link these elements to a broader framework, they appear to be operating based on what they refer to as an interpersonal process model (Cate & Lloyd, 1992). This paradigm appears to have evolved as a result of ecological and systemic thinking.

Early reviewers frequently went from empirical generalisations to the application (e.g., Burgess and Wallin, 1953) or from empirical generalisation to theory (e.g., Burr, 1973; Lewis and Spanier, 1979), but did not contain all three aspects of research, theory, and application. Recent reviews of premarital determinants of marital outcomes have

likewise been scarce. Cate and Lloyd (1992) present empirical generalisations in the absence of a well-stated, overarching theoretical strategy and application. Wamboldt and Reiss (1989) propose an overall theoretical framework and therapeutic applications, although their review is restricted to 12 longitudinal research. Bubolz and Sontag's (1993) ecological, or ecosystemic, viewpoint provided us with an overall theoretical framework for organising the data of premarital predictors of marital outcomes.

This theory helps us view a couple in the mate selection stage of life as a growing system that can and does respond to stimuli from inside and outside the system. Individual, couple, and environmental levels all contribute to the development of the relationship. At all levels, the connection is dynamic rather than linear, changing and evolving rather than being static. Since 1979, research has supported Lewis and Spanier's (1979) hypothesis that the greater the marital quality in the parents' marriage, the higher the marital quality in the adult children's marriages (e.g., Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Greenberg & Nay, 1982; McLanahan, 1988; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988). Although the amount of variance accounted for in adult children's marital stability as a function of parents' marital quality is small, Glenn and Kramer (2003) emphasise that there is an "undeniably important relationship" (405) between parental marital quality and adult children's marital quality, particularly when looking at certain groups of adult children. McLanahan and Bumpass (2002) and Glenn and Kramer (2001), for example, both found that Caucasian women who spent part of their childhoods in single-parent households are more likely to divorce.

They investigated seven alternative reasons for the impact of parental divorce on children's marriages and discovered support for a weaker commitment to marriage and a tendency for divorced children to marry at an abnormally young age. Greenberg and Nay (2002) discovered that, as compared to young adults from intact homes, individuals from separated/divorced households had a much more favourable view of divorce. Processes and relationships in the family of origin may be more significant than a single event, such as parental divorce, in predicting adult children's marriage quality or stability. The most recent longitudinal study is extremely beneficial in understanding the short and long-term impacts of family and home environment on adult children's marriages.

Holman, Larson, and Harmer (2004) discovered that a premarital family/home environment composite measure (i.e., quality of parents' marriage, quality of parent-child interactions, and quality of family environment) predicted early marital stability and satisfaction. There was a strong positive association between husbands' home

environment and (a) husbands' marital contentment, (b) husbands' marital stability (i.e., thoughts of divorce), and (c) wives' marital satisfaction, but not with her thoughts of divorce after one year of marriage. Wives' family/home environment was not significantly related to any of her or his marital outcome variables. Vaillant's (2000) and Kelly and Conley's (2001) research on long-term marriages from cohorts married in the 1930s showed that family-of-origin factors such as parents' mental illness and family environment play a part in marital stability and happiness for adult children. For example, Vaillant found that poorly adjusted and divorced men were significantly more likely than adjusted and married men to report premaritally to have had a mentally ill parent.

Kelly and Conley discovered that women who divorced "early" (1 to 20 years into marriage) were more likely to come from tense, less close, and unstable families than women who did not divorce; and men who divorced "late" (after 20 to 50 years of marriage) were emotionally closer to their mothers than those who stayed married. When combined with Vaillant's discovery that males who divorced were more likely to be dependent on their moms as young adults, Kelly and Conley's findings on emotional intimacy may have been tapping into an entangled mother-son connection. In short-term longitudinal research, Wamboldt and Reiss (2004) discovered that parents' divorce had a minimal predictive effect, as did Whyte (2000) in a retrospective analysis of women married from 1 to 60 years.

However, in both research, family-of-origin conflict predicted poorer marital quality, but in Wamboldt and Reiss' study, expressiveness in the family of origin predicted greater relationship quality. According to Vaillant (2000), the family of origin is more than just a background element; the continuous contact with parents after marriage is a present context that can impact the quality and stability of the children's marriages. There may also be gender disparities. Kelly and Conley's (2002) and Wamboldt and Reiss's (2003) study, for example, show that family-of-origin variables impact marriage differently for husbands and wives. Wamboldt and Reiss (2007) discovered that expressiveness in both partners' families of origin was connected to women's relationship satisfaction but not men's and that the wife's family-of-origin conflict predicted lower relationship satisfaction for men but not women. Another component from the same family of origin has some predictive potential. Premarital parental and in-law support of the marriage improves marital quality and stability, according to research (Booth & Johnson, 1988; Cate, Huston, & Nessel-roade, 1986;

Kurdek, 1991; Whyte, 1990). Whyte (1990), for example, discovered that parental resistance was positively associated with marital difficulties and the likelihood of divorce.

As part of the socio-cultural framework for a growing relationship, we have considered demographic characteristics such as age at marriage, education, income, occupation, class, race, and gender. These characteristics are primarily defined by birth, family, or cultural configuration, and they are carried into a connection with the individual. One of the strongest and most frequently documented in the research literature is the relationship between young age at marriage and marital instability (Booth & Edwards, 2005; Glenn & Supacic, 2004; Martin & Bumpass, 2001; Sweet & Bumpass, 2002). This link continues even after adjusting for education and pre-marital childbearing, and it is not restricted to early marital stability (Bahr & Galligan, 2004; Martin & Bumpass, 2001).

Individuals who married as adolescents are more likely to divorce or split; the dissolution rate is almost double that of older individuals (Martin & Bumpass, 2007). Recent research does not show that late marriage is related to marital instability if couple heterogeneity is accounted for, nor that instability is caused by partners who are too set in their ways (rigid) (e.g., Bitter, 2006; Martin & Bumpass, 2001; Sweet & Bumpass, 2004). Only Vaillant's (2001) longitudinal research found that fewer successful marriages occurred after the age of 29. Premarital education, income, and employment remain socioeconomic markers with some predictive capacity (Martin & Bumpass, 2001; Glick, 2004; Kurdek, 1991, 1993).

Bahr and Galligan (2004) discovered that individuals with greater pre-marital education and who had not experienced unemployment were the most likely to still be married after 9 years in longitudinal research using a nationwide random sample of young males. In longitudinal investigations, Mott and Moore (2003) and Kurdek (1993) found virtually comparable results. Whyte (2000) discovered that the wife's education had no bearing on marriage stability, marital quality, or marital difficulties. Well-educated husbands, on the other hand, had more stable marriages and somewhat higher quality marriages than less educated husbands. To summarise, age, education, money, and employment all have an impact on a person's subsequent capacity to execute marital duties. Cumulative stressful changes are more likely in marriages of people who are young, illiterate, jobless, or underpaid (Kurdek, 1993).

Race is a poor predictor of marital results (Bahr & Galligan, 2004), even though Glenn and Supancic (2004) and Whyte (2000) discovered that African Americans had considerably less stable and low marital outcomes than Caucasians, even when controlling for age at marriage, premarital pregnancy, and income. A recent study (Oggins, Veroff, & Leber, 2003) shows that African-American marriages may have more effective intensity than Caucasian marriages, which might lead to more open, direct connection and, as a result, is more likely to result in marital issues. While markers of SES, class, and race are occasionally significant predictors, the impact sizes are typically minor (Whyte, 2000).

Gender is commonly employed as a control variable in prediction research, but researchers are just now beginning to comprehend gender differences in forecasting marital outcomes or assisting people in their marriage preparation. Although numerous early research found that distinct personality or background variables predicted marriage quality for men and women, Lewis and Spanier's (1999) study mostly overlooked gender differences (Adams, 1946; Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Terman & Oden, 1947). Bentler and Newcomb (2007) and Wamboldt and Reiss (2008) recently published longitudinal evidence showing wives' premarital personality qualities, such as stability and ambition, were usually more predictive of marital stability than husbands' personality traits or family-of-origin attributes.

According to Wamboldt and Reiss, this places an unfair burden on women because they are portrayed in the roles of "relationship specialists" and "relationship builders," and so the success of the relationship is primarily dependent on them. Markman, Duncan, Straasli, and Howe (2007), on the other hand, find that males' premarital psychological adjustment has a higher influence on relationship satisfaction than females' adjustment. Holman et al. (2004) discovered that the higher the quality of the male's home environment, the higher the male's subsequent marital quality, but the female's family environment did not affect the female's marriage quality.

According to Kurdek (1993), both man and woman pre-marital variables distinguish between stable and unstable relationships. It should be emphasised, however, that only two of the research we looked at looked for variations in men's and women's bivariate correlations between premarital predictors and marital quality (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Holman et al., 2004). Holman et al. discovered just one meaningful comparison between men's and women's correlations out of ten comparisons (10 percent). Bentler and Newcomb discovered that just two of the 28 (7%) relationships

were substantially different. The significance of gender in the formation and dissolution of marriage relationships is significant, although it is not entirely understood.

Other ecosystems surrounding the individual or couple, as well as the events surrounding the courting, may have an impact on the quality or stability of the marriage later on. Friends are an essential source for locating a partner (Whyte, 2000), and acceptance and favourable impressions from friends predict positive marriage results (Booth & Johnson, 2008; Cate et al., 2006; Kurdek, 1999). Other factors, such as job/career circumstances, the available pool of suitable partners, political events such as war, or economic situations such as economic depression or boom, may have a long-term influence on marriage.

These can be grouped under the heading of external pressures (Lewis & Spanier, 2002). The more freedom from such influences in the decision to marry, the greater the future marital quality, according to Burr (2003) and Lewis and Spanier (2002). Data from the United States Census demonstrate that the increase and decrease of divorce rates correspond simultaneously with political and economic developments, lending empirical credence to this theory (National Center for Health Statistics, 1999). Internal pressures, according to Lewis and Spanier, can harm a marriage. Internal pressures arise from inside the founding family. The impacts of parental over-involvement or intimidation on dating and mate selection, for example, have just lately been examined (Benson, Larson, Wilson, & Demo, 2003), but show promise of being predictive of later marital quality and stability.

Individual Characteristics and Behaviours

Individual characteristic research has mostly focused on physical, personality, and mental health variables, with the majority of the study focusing on personality and mental health. Physical sickness (particularly chronic illness) strains relationships, making them less pleasant and stable (Booth, Johnson, White, & Edwards, 2006; Doherty & Campbell, 2007; Ell & Northen, 2000). This is particularly true when it comes to a couple's sexual relationship. Personality traits have long been seen to be important predictors of marital success (Adams, 1946; Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Terman & Oden, 1947), and their popularity has persisted in recent studies. Personality traits may cause a spouse to misread or overreact to difficult relationship conditions. Certain qualities may cause the spouse to become a difficult person to live with (Kurdek, 1993).

Based on our evaluation of the literature, four findings appear to be valid. To begin, certain reasonably consistent personality qualities and mental health variables impact marriage stability and quality. In their review of early research, Lewis and

Spanier (2006) emphasised one mental health factor, neurotic behaviour; two personality factors, psychological maturity and low self-esteem; and two individual behaviour factors, poor social skill functioning and unconventionality as related to marital dissatisfaction and instability. Factors found to be predictive in recent research tend to corroborate their propositions. A factor variously called neuroticism, emotional health, or mental illness is seen as predictive of marital stability (Kelly & Conley, 2007; Vaillant, 2008). One aspect of mental health, depression, has received recent attention and is negatively related to marital quality (Beach & O'Leary, 2003; Markman et al., 2007). Impulsivity is negatively related to marital stability (Kelly & Conley, 2007). Sociability (extroversion) has also been found to be positively related to marital stability and quality (Bentler & Newcomb, 2003).

Larson, Holman, Klein, Busby, and Stahmann (2002) found that their composite personality strengths test (which comprised emotional wellness, impulsive control, and self-esteem) was associated with marital quality and marital stability in early marriage. The importance of dysfunctional beliefs in the development of marital unhappiness and instability has also been stressed (Baucom & Epstein, 2000; Eidelson & Epstein, 2002; Larson, 2002). Kurdek (2003) discovered a strong link between dysfunctional attitudes about relationships (e.g., conflict is harmful to relationships and partners cannot change) and divorce in recent longitudinal research spanning the first 5 years of marriage. "Dysfunctional beliefs... can be viewed as relatively long-lasting predispositions that prejudice a person toward filtering, processing, and evaluating marital events in a dysfunctional manner" (Kurdek, 2003:238).

Little is known about traditional views and behaviours, as well as marriage quality. Bentler and Newcomb (2005), Kelly and Conley (2001), and Whyte (2000) discovered some support for traditional beliefs and behaviour is associated with higher marital stability. DeMaris and MacDonald (2003) investigated the impact of eight unconventional attitudes on marital stability and discovered that only the husbands' conventional views about working women and unconventional attitudes toward commitment were associated with marital instability. As previously stated, a second conclusion is that there are minimal discernible sex differences in personality impacts on subsequent marital outcomes (Bentler & Newcomb, 2001; Holman et al., 2004; Kelly & Conley, 2006). In other words, there is no significant evidence that distinct personality traits as a function of sex regularly impact marital outcomes. However, none of the investigations were designed particularly to examine sex differences.

More direct testing is needed to conclude gender differences in personality and marriage outcome prediction. The final finding is that in multivariate studies, personality characteristics account for greater variance than background factors (Bentler & Newcomb, 2001; Kelly & Conley, 2003). According to Bentler and Newcomb (2006), "self-report personality factors provided the majority of the longitudinal predictability of marital success, with background variables being barely represented in the multiple regression". Thus, understanding personality traits help us predict subsequent marriage quality and stability better than knowing structural determinants from one's family of origin (e.g., intact vs. non-intact families). We hypothesise that in a multivariate path model, family-of-origin characteristics may not have a large direct influence on marriage quality and stability, but may have an indirect effect on marital outcomes via effects on personality and interactional processes.

Our fourth finding is that personality characteristics and couple interpersonal processes are both significant and interconnected determinants. Indeed, the most contentious debate in the field of forecasting marital outcomes revolves around the relative relevance of personality traits versus interactional processes. According to Kelly and Conley (2007), "A personality viewpoint has lately been overlooked," and "personality traits must be considered in a full examination of marital interaction." Many of the disrupted patterns of communication and behaviour exchange seen in troubled relationships by contemporary studies may be viewed as outgrowths of the partners' personality traits ". This problem is closely related to our third category of predictors-couple interactional processes.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of prediction research focused on the capacity of couple interactional processes to predict subsequent marital happiness and stability. Furthermore, several indicators discovered to be predictive in early studies, such as premarital pregnancy and similarity/agreement (Lewis & Spanier, 2001), are better seen as pair traits rather than individual characteristics. Interactional research was classified into three categories: homogamy, inter-personal resemblance, and interactional history and processes. Homogamy. Homogamy is the inclination to pick a partner who is similar to oneself (Burr, 2003). Lewis and Spanier (2004) discovered some conflicting evidence for each of their six particular homogamy hypotheses, but no research papers indicating an adverse connection between homogamy and marital quality. The similarity in attitudes, values, and beliefs is also associated with marital stability and quality. According to Fowers and Olson (2006) and Larsen and Olson (2005), pair agreement on

numerous attitude and belief scales was strongly predictive of marital stability and, to a lesser extent, marital quality 2 to 3 years after marriage.

According to Holman et al. (2004), premarital value consensus predicts the early marital quality of husbands but not wives in the first year of marriage. Bentler and Newcomb (2005) discovered that couples who remained married after four years were considerably more comparable on numerous personality characteristics such as art interest, attractiveness, and extroversion than separated or divorced couples. Kurdek (1993) observed that couples with significant differences in attitudes, values, and beliefs may experience marital difficulties because they evaluate relationship events from incompatible perspectives. The similarity of gender roles appears to have an impact on marriage quality and stability. Fifteen years of study on gender roles, marital interaction, and marital happiness show that traditionally complimentary couples (i.e., traditionally masculine males and traditionally feminine women) are far from ideal (Ickes, 2003).

Some research (e.g., Antill, 2003; Davidson & Sollie, 2007; Lamke, 2003) regularly stress that marital happiness is higher in couples when both husband and wife have androgynous or feminine gender roles. Nurturing, caring, compassion, devoting oneself to others, sympathy, gentleness, and kindness appears to be very essential (Ickes, 2003). Interactional history includes encounters, cohabitation, premarital sex, and premarital pregnancy; interactional processes include communication, dispute resolution, and consensus-building. The more acquainted a couple's spouses are before marriage, the greater the marital quality (Birtchnell & Ken-nard, 2004; Grover, Russell, Schumm, & Paff-Bergen, 2005; Kurdek, 1993). Shorter dating durations may not allow people to screen out unsuitable mates or give them much of an opportunity to encounter certain difficult differences before marriage.

As a result, for those who are unfamiliar, when problems emerge after marriage, they aggravate the relationship (Grover et al.). According to conventional thinking, cohabitation serves as a filter for those who are incompatible and as a test of the relationship for those who stay together. However, there is substantial evidence that cohabitators' subsequent marriages are less satisfying and more unstable than those who did not cohabit before marriage (e.g., Balakrishnan, Rao, Lapierre-Adamcyk, & Krotki, 2001; Bennett, Blac, & Bloom, 2003; DeMaris & Leslie, 2004; Janus & Janus, 2003). According to Balakrishnan et al. (2001), cohabitators have a 50% greater chance of divorce than non-cohabitators. Several studies (Thomson & Collela, 2002; White, 2000) show that cohabitators are less devoted to the institution of marriage, are more unorthodox,

and have a lower opinion of the stigma of divorce. Booth and Johnson (2001) found evidence that cohabitators make poor marriage partners.

What couples can do to preserve and improve their marriages is a question that family practitioners and educators are regularly asked. Although the popular literature is rife with "how-to" advice, research focused on better understanding how couples sustain healthy, happy relationships is essential. A plethora of relationship behaviours and factors have been presented as crucial in forming healthy, stable marriages over the years. Self-disclosure, closeness, togetherness, communication, sexual intimacy, and equality, for example, have all been cited as important in improving relationship quality (Dindia, 1994; Lewis & Spanier, 1979; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). However, in a previous study, the marital relationship was frequently investigated from the perspective of either the woman or the husband. For example, a woman may be questioned about her impressions of the marriage, and researchers may make broad judgments about the nature of the marital relationship based on her replies.

As Kenny (1996) noted that relationships are two-sided. Perceptions and behaviours are not independent of one's partner, but rather interconnected. Researchers must examine the marriage from the interconnected views of both women and husbands to generate a more realistic picture of the marriage. The benefit of gathering pair data is that personal and cross-spouse impacts on behaviour may be investigated. Researchers, for example, can establish not just the impacts of a husband's beliefs on what he does to maintain his marriage, but also the effects of his wives' perceptions on his usage of maintenance activities. This option creates a far more compelling and full picture of how couples keep their relationships together. In this study, we evaluate the effect of self and cross-spouse factors on the usage of maintenance activities using data from married couples. Such data can help academics better understand marriage dynamics and practitioners work with couples to develop healthier, more vibrant marriages.

2.2 Concepts of Family and Marriage

Marriage is a social institution, it is however also a highly contested domain. Policy leaders have tried to create a solution to the concept of marriage, just as they have done to poverty and other social phenomenon. The religious leaders have also seen marriage as divinely inspired. Public discourse on marriages echoes themes of same-sex marriage, single parenting, divorce, cohabitation. To many marriages is all about children, to some, it is about adults, and to others, it is about the future of society

(Walker 2004). Family arrangements around the world are changing and evolving. There has also been an overall constructed view of marriage. The significant increase in the number of marriage breakdowns is a unique aspect of modern family structures. This has brought about an increase in the number of children living in single-parent families often run by women. While divorce and marriage breakdown is not new in most societies, they are nonetheless concerning

Cherlin (2004) opined that marriage has been de-institutionalized and its real meaning has diminished, but its symbolic importance is still very high, and may even have grown. Marriage is no longer synonymous with intimacy. On the contrary, is a status achievement, a sign of success, and is a price. Bradbury and Carney (2004) noted based on his longitudinal study of couples. They reviewed a research project that showed how the vertical process of marriage reflected the interaction process, personal strengths and weaknesses, and difficult situations. They also show that the knowledge of individual marriages and how they change over time may not be sufficient to develop interventions to improve marital function, especially among vulnerable people. Kurdek (2012) was asked to clarify whether the longstanding homosexual relationship resembled a straight marriage. He believes the prevailing discourse of focuses on the "appropriateness" of gay relationships as the backdrop for parenting. He compared gay couples to heterosexual couples in five areas that are theoretically and empirically the health of the relationship. He concluded that the relationship process of couples of all three types is similar, and homosexual couples work just as well in some ways better than heterosexual parent couples.

Seltzer and Le Bourdais (2004) describes non-marital cohabitation and its ratio to marriage. They do this by, examining the models mainly in the United States, Great Britain and, Canada, and hypothesize that cohabitation is replacing marriage, or if it serves as a stage in the formalisation of the relationship that at the end leads to marriage. Seltzer shows that cohabitation in the United States isn't going away. This pattern was seen among different demographic groups, although it is more common among those with less economic resources. Recent trends suggest increasing variations in the meaning of cohabitation, with less cohabitation leading to marriage. Which results in more people living with different cohabiting partners as a form of serial monogamy. Le Bourdais and colleagues detailed differences in cohabitation through the Canadian provinces. In Quebec, it is accepted as a family form. In other provinces, it is a prelude to marriage. Smock (1994) noted the disagreement among studies that noted whether social change is

the cause of consequences of the state of contemporary marriages. She points out evidence that financial barriers to marriages are not solely associated with the poor or near-poor. Coontz (2004) concludes that there have been different variations of marriages, which have been around for centuries, however, Coontz noted that the simultaneous existences of the variations are new.

Sweeney and Cancian (2004) questioned if women's position in the labour market changed their position in the marriage market. They conclude that, over time, as women's earnings increase, it has exercised a greater influence on their marriage perspectives. Press (2004) rejects this economic model of coupling behaviour, claiming that contemporary social inequality and the changing gender and family relation require a more complex model to explain the selection criteria of women and men. Sweeney and Cancian proposed a plausible alternative hypothesis to explain why the correlation between spouses' profits is increasing. They acknowledge some of Press concerns but provide more support for their argument.

2.2.1 Family and Psychosocial Benefits

In marriages, families benefit more when people within families specialise, which results in the increase in production of the parents, especially on the mother's side (Becker 2001). Apart from the specialisation, the exchange of economic and social resources is the result of marriage in economies of scale and protection of risks against unforeseen disasters (Waite 1995, Oppenheimer 2000). Since many costs of raising a family are fixed, there are economies of scale (such as accommodation, warming up the house, a means of transport). Compared with the situation where two parents and children live in the same family, the economic welfare of couples staying in different houses could become inevitably lower. This scenario may also apply to married individuals who do not have children, however, having children may exacerbate the decline in economic well-being because they usually require a lot of expenses and generate not very much to the net income in the process.

The more the people in a home that can work, the more the economic resources of the family improves, provided that the other adults make enough to cover the highest expenses of other members. The salaries of each parent, as well as support payments for children, may influence the real levels of economic benefit in parental houses. The declared objective of the rules used to determine the payments of support for minors is to

assign parental income so that custody parents have some of the additional resources required in raising a child. These can provide more advantages for previously married families and beyond what would happen if people have been single and lived alone.

When comparing married partners to those that coexist and individual parents living with others, complications could occur. Because being married is the safest arrangement of life than cohabiting or single parent with other adults is not safe if the mechanisms of specialisation or risk work effectively. Couples with greater stability can plan and invest their income to yield money, in the long term, more easily. They can save and invest more, accumulating money at a faster rate. Married couples can get more financial transfers from their children's grandparents than with single pairs of parents. In comparison with partners of cohabiting, married couples are more likely to respond to their partner's need for adjustments, for instance, the need to take up additional responsibility at work.

Many factors can contribute to the favourable effect of marriage on economic well-being. Due to the most regular personal routines and better emotional spouse support, men can be more dedicated to work and less prone to leave work, because of family obligations, spouses may consider work as a particularly urgent priority. A spouse could assist in investing in acquiring skills needed to improve future profits. The obvious benefit of mental health of men and women (Waite and Gallagher 2000) can be transferred to professions and profit skills. For these reasons, married workers, especially men, can be paid more than the individual male workers equally competent. The higher spouses' income can be partly countered through a reduction in the pressure of profits on spouses. Women who have children often face a disadvantage of payment with more children. The penalty of profits children, on the other hand, remained the same for either single or married women. Even the precise path to marriage or otherwise can also play a role. The advantages of a continuous marriage outweighs that of a second marriage especially in the first year of a continuous marriage as against the first year of single parenting. Second and subsequent marriages involving the stepparents can be less advantageous than the first marriages among parents.

When mothers are divorced, they most time get a real estate agreement and a constant flow of money to care for the children. Women with children who have never been married are greatly less likely to get that type of support. Men who become non-custodian parents are subject to the responsibilities of supporting minors, which can be related to the amount they earn, which therefore add to tax on their income. These

marital impacts can be possible in smaller or larger amounts among people with poor education and earning power. If potential spouses have little or no productivity at the start of their relationship, the possibility of developing these qualities, even after marriage, the advantages may be modest (Edin 2000).

There is evidence that deficient in men's work transitions make weddings ceremonies postponed (Oppenheimer 2000). Because the US social security system has a distorted history of low-income families returning to marriage by giving precedence to singles for public assistance, government actions can undercut the benefits of marriage for low-income families. Marriage, on the other hand, maybe more appealing to the poor since it is more vital for them to enhance their income in any manner, avoid economic insecurity, participate in long-term planning, and increase the dedication of both parents at home.

2.2.2 Troubling Trends in Contemporary Marriage Institution

In the past, the marital institution was seen as respectable, respected, dignified, highly esteemed, and everlasting. However, recent events and occurrences involving the constant disputes that plague and afflict most marriages have thrown the honour, dignity, and respectability linked to it to the breeze. Most married households have devolved into what Close (2001) refers to as a "field of tension." Today's society is rife with anecdotes of confirmed cases of marital discord. What is taking place in what is known as a divorce explosion. At the solemnization of most weddings, the traditional and popular proclamation 'for better or worse has been replaced with what Mbacham (2001) refers to as 'for better for stay, for worse for go'.

As the Bible cautions, there is even a Biblical mandate to the marital stalemate. Do not claim you are lucky until you are happily married: The Bible tells us that one of the primary causes of David's, Solomon's, and Sampson's downfalls was the problem of marriage, Bamire (2005). A married home that is always in dispute is comparable to a house constructed on sand rather than rock, which only requires a small push to send it crashing down. Customary courts, social welfare units, and other official institutions established to manage and address marital difficulties and problems are bombarded daily by angry, dissatisfied, argumentative, and disillusioned couples seeking separations and divorce and making up fanciful explanations and excuses to obtain what they desire Allegations of sexual deprivation, waywardness, promiscuity, nagging, extramarital

affairs, and so on are among their justifications (Mbacham, 2001). All of this may have prompted Uzoka (1995) to proclaim categorically that marriage no longer exists.

This tendency, however, is not unique or limited to Nigeria, since the United States of America (USA), as we have demonstrated previously in the study, may legitimately be termed the divorce capital of the world. According to Aremu (1995), the yearly divorce rate in the United States is over 1.1 million, which is over half the number of weddings. This equates to two divorces every minute of every day. These number leads to a divorce explosion. According to Uzoka (1995), domestic strife frequently leads to divorce. He also identified frequent quarrels between the two spouses or between the spouses' relations; failure to live up to expected roles at home – a husband who cannot provide for the needs of the family or a wife who fails her marital responsibilities; incompatibility between husband and wife, which may manifest in gaps or differences in their intellect, reasoning, perception abilities, and capacity; and incompatibility between husband and wife, which may manifest in gaps or differences in their intellect, reasoning, perception abilities, and capacity which frequently leads to miscommunication, misunderstanding, argument, controversies, and communication redundancy between them, resulting in disharmony, disaffection, disagreement, hostility, distrust, tension, mistrust, contact quarrels, physical fighting, and other negative consequences.

All of these relationships result in divorce and separation in the end. He arrived to the conclusion that, for the reasons stated above, one cannot help but be worried about the growing rate of divorce and separation among couples who marry too young. According to Fakunle (1996), the majority of couples met in such strange locations as disco parties, night clubs, hotels, places of dancing, drinking joints, and so on, and then translated their interactions into marriages that were soon unstable and collapsed. As a result, it's critical to take the psychological, physical, and biological maturation of would-be partners into account while making wedding plans.

Mate selection is a shared concern of couples and their parents in a traditional African context, with the boy's father initiating contact with the girl's parents. Following that, the guy may be asked to perform some domestic chores for the girl's parents as part of the customary request, or the girl may be expected to assist the boy's parents in some domestic labour, during which time she will be evaluated for her domestic talents and manners. In their different research, scholars like as Akinboye (1982), Ezeilo (1995), and Oke (1995) have highlighted significant elements and considerations that are taken into account before two possible mates engage into a marital relationship. The cultural

element is one of these aspects. Even though people in urban centre regions have substantial freedom of choice in mate (which is fast influencing rural areas due to the fusion of rural and urban areas), some cultural variables still play a role in determining who an individual's partner should be after a trial time of dating.

In certain communities in modern Nigeria, the tendency is toward early weddings since most women believe that by their early twenties, they should have a clear possibility of marriage. In their study, Otite, et al (1978) claimed that in per-literate Nigerian civilizations, there was a type of conflict between two cultures – the culture of traditional African religion and the culture of Christianity – which resulted in religious animosity and mate selection issues. At the period, the majority of parents refused to give their daughters to Christians or vice versa. A similar scenario prevailed among the Muslim community, mostly in the country's northern regions. According to Osuji (2001), Nigeria's social connections or systems are marked by coercion, division, antagonism, discord, and conflict.

Bakare (1996) investigates personality differences as a cause of marital conflict in the context of marital conflict. According to him, two people in a conjugal relationship may have values, needs, interests, attitudes, and behaviours that are neither compatible nor complementary. Bakare said, "In a situation where there is no tolerance or mutual understanding, issues may arise since the husband and wife are two distinct individuals." Nweke and Nenna (1989) confirmed this by identifying core personality characteristics in terms of cultural differences. According to them, when a guy marries a woman from a different cultural background and she refuses to conform to her husband's culture - language, religion, beliefs, or values – there will be misunderstandings, arguing, and quarrels.

Nweke, et al (1981) looked at marital disputes from a different perspective and found that the age of the spouse is a factor in marital problems. Teenage females, who are too young to marry, struggle to cope with family life, according to these experts. Because of their immaturity, they are square pegs in round holes, and love is foreign to them. Furthermore, young people frequently begin to look for flaws in their partners, which can lead to a complete hatred of them, thereby leading to quarrels, fighting, and finally divorce. Childlessness, according to Ezeilo (1995), is another important source of marital strife. He believes that when a couple's relationship fails to produce offspring, marital discord occurs. This circumstance allows family and friends to put pressure on the guy to divorce the childless wife and marry another woman.

Nonetheless, Nweke et al (1989) considered the inability to reproduce at all, or the reproduction of exclusively female children, to be a concern. The biggest temptation that husbands and spouses confront, according to them, is infertility in either the husband or the woman, or both. Scholars have highlighted mid-life crises such as menopause, unemployment, retirement, physical ill-health, children's impairments or malformations such as cognitive retardation, physical deformities, and so on as examples of accusations and counter-accusations. Limited financial means also deprive children from divorced households of physical and physiological requirements such as appropriate food, housing, clothes, health care, recreation, and good education, according to Mbacham (2001), especially when the mother is the child's custodian and does not work. When the father is the caretaker and has remarried, the children are sometimes subjected to cruel treatment such as nagging, hunger, and beatings from stepmothers. As a result, such youngsters adopt anti-social behaviours like stealing and lying to avoid being punished. According to Osuji (1998), numerous anti-social behaviours found in juveniles may be linked back to parental divorce. Most broken homes have less control and supervision over their children's behaviour, and as a result, they are typically unprepared to deal properly with stress, anxieties, and other life difficulties.

2.2.3 Religious Affiliation of Married Couples and Psychosocial well-Being

According to Nweke, et al (1989), marriages are mostly sustained by the ability to endure each other's flaws and deficiencies. Marriage necessitates a great deal of compromise from both partners. These concessions take the shape of tolerance for one another's flaws. Another aspect of tolerance is the ability to accept and overlook differences between people depending on their religious membership. According to Bambo (2007), some agreements are formed between the parties (i.e., husband and wife) depending on their religious affiliation, which results in either of them being asked to give up a strict perspective that they hold in high regard for the relationship to remain peaceful.

As each party in the dispute is convinced to sacrifice some objectives in order to gain others, social workers can use approaches like accommodation, collaboration, integrative/problem solving, discussion/interaction, and counselling as they relate to religious affiliation of couples in resolving marital conflicts. Conflicting parties are unlikely to be dissatisfied by decisions made through compromise. This method might help you find solutions to your never-ending marriage problems. The goal is to win some

and lose some. Experts use all of these tactics and procedures to handle marital problems and any other type of social conflict.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The following theories were thought to be pertinent to this study.

A theoretical foundation is required for a study to be labeled as empirical. This paradigm is used to explain associations/actions that appear to be common in a big amount of data. The theoretical framework in research is the fundamental foundation upon which a study is formed in this regard. It's a set of assumptions, hypotheses, and suggestions that help with the study's primary data ordering, interpretation, and discussion.

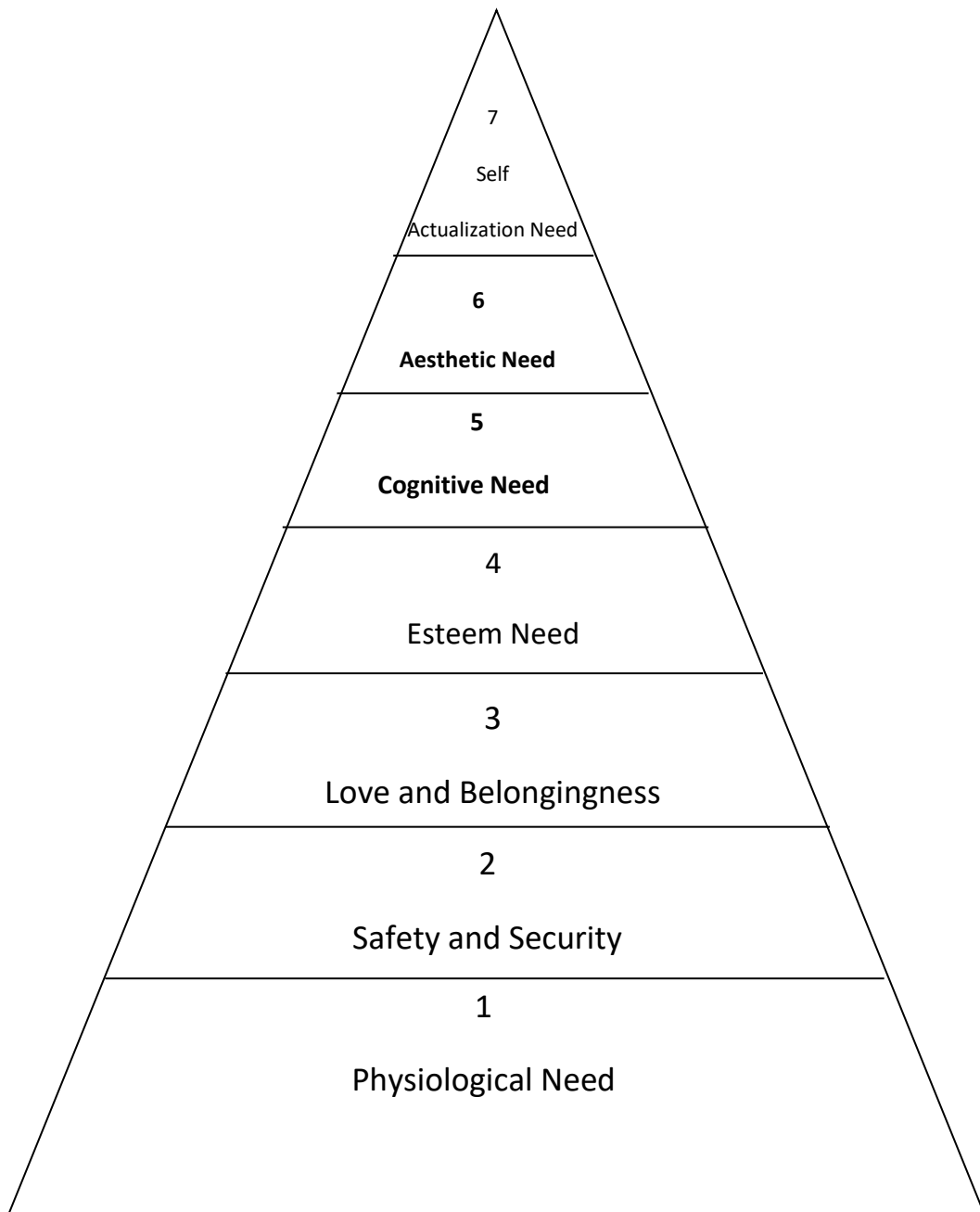
2.3.1 Theory of Needs

Koontz and O'Donnell (1996) found that human wants are engaged in the reasons of people's behaviours or activities. In a seven-segment pyramidal structure, Maslow (1954) provides one method to the study of needs and the actions that follow. Some needs, according to Maslow (1943), are essential for human growth and survival. They include physiological, safety/security, love, and affection, self-esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization needs. Abraham Maslow proposed Maslow's hierarchy of needs in his 1943 work *A Theory of Human Motivation* (Maslow, 1943), which he subsequently expanded to incorporate his observations of humans' natural curiosity.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is sometimes represented as a five-level pyramid, with the four lower levels representing physiological requirements and the highest level representing psychological needs. Deficiencies must be addressed first and foremost. Once these are satisfied, the desire to meet one's own personal growth requirements fuels the pursuit of personal growth. Only when the lowest requirements in the pyramid have been fulfilled do the higher needs in the hierarchy become visible. Once a person has moved to the next level, their lower-level needs are no longer emphasised.

If a lower set of requirements is no longer satisfied, the person will temporarily re-prioritize those needs by focusing on them, but not permanently. If a businessman with high esteem is diagnosed with cancer, for example, he will devote a considerable amount of time to his health (physiological needs), but he will continue to value his job performance (esteem needs) and will most likely return to work during remission. Figure 2 depicts Maslow's hierarchy of needs for humans.

Fig. 2.1 Maslow Hierarchical Need Pyramid



Source: Hilgard, E.R. Atkinson, R.L. and Atkinson, R.C. 1979. *Revising Maslow: A Book of Reading*. London: McGrawHill

From figure 2.1 above, it could be seen that human needs consist of the following:

Physiological needs

These are the fundamental human requirements for sex, warmth, drink, and other body functions. The organism's physiological demands (those that enable equilibrium) take precedence. Breathing, drinking, eating, excretion, sleep, and sex are the key ones (in order of significance). When other requirements are not met, a person's physiological needs take precedence. Physiological requirements may influence people's ideas and behaviours, as well as causing disease, suffering, and discomfort.

Safety and Security Needs

When a person's bodily requirements are satisfied, their safety needs take over and control their actions. People want a predictable, ordered society where injustice and inconsistency are under control, the familiar is common, and the unknown is unusual. These safety requirements are manifested in the workplace through preferences for job stability, grievance processes to safeguard individuals against unilateral power, savings accounts, and insurance plans, among other things

- Personal security from crime is one of the most important safety and security requirements.
- Financial stability
- Health and happiness
- Safety net against accidents/illness and their consequences.

Belongingness and love Need

The third layer of human needs is social, which comes after physiological and safety needs are met. Maslow's psychological hierarchy is concerned with emotional-based interactions in general, such as:

- Friendship
- Intimacy
- having a supportive and communicative family

Esteem Need

Everyone wants to be respected, to have self-esteem, to have self-respect, and to be respected by others. People must engage to gain recognition and to have an activity or

activities that provide them with a sense of contribution, acceptance, and self-worth, whether it be a career or a hobby. Unbalances at this level may contribute to feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem. People with low self-esteem require affirmation from others.

They may aspire to fame or glory based on the acts of others. It should be noted, however, that many people with low self-esteem will not be able to improve their self-esteem just by acquiring outward fame, respect, and glory, but rather by gaining inside renown, respect, and glory., but must first accept themselves. Psychological imbalances such as depression can also prevent one from obtaining self-esteem on both levels.

Cognitive Need- This is the need to know, understand and explore.

Aesthetic Needs

According to Maslow's beliefs, humans require beautiful imagery or something new and aesthetically pleasing to progress toward Self-Actualization. Humans must refresh themselves in the presence and beauty of nature, carefully absorbing and observing their surroundings to extract the beauty that the world has to offer.

Self-Actualization Need- According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this is the most important need. It is the desire for self-actualization or the realization of one's full potential.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory can be used to provide social support to married couples in the following ways.

- i. It can be used to determine which needs each partner in a marriage has.
- ii. It can be used to determine the best time to meet the need of each partner.
- iii. It can be used to encourage impoverished couples to investigate various methods of improving their social standing.
- iv. It can be used in a sequential order to meet the needs of couples. For example, feeding comes before clothing.

Individual psychological, economic, and physical needs within the family must all be satisfied, according to Maslow's hierarchy of requirements. Failure to satisfy this demand and need would have a detrimental impact on married couples' well-being. According to Johns et al. (1975), who was quoted by Mojinyinola (1998), one creates a satisfying connection with their environment when they progress gradually toward achieving their requirements. According to them, satisfying such requirements leads to a

healthy and productive life, and when these wants are not met, the individual functions ineffectively and unsatisfactorily, frequently to the point of suicide, become uncomfortable and mentally disturbed.

When married couples' physiological, psychological, and social needs are met, they respond positively by adjusting or adapting well to the stress of training and preparing themselves for the challenges that lie ahead. Unmet needs, on the other hand, can cause issues for married couples. For example, if they do not have adequate security, care, attention, and financial support, they become anxious and emotionally depressed. Furthermore, if couples' esteem needs are not met in their social environment, they feel inferior, weak, and helpless, rendering them unable to contribute meaningfully to their social obligations. Unmet needs generally make married couples feel rejected, dejected, helpless, depressed, and confused.

Physiological, safety and security needs (which ensure well-being) are important in marriage. They are a collection of needs (CN). CN is highest at birth and gradually decreases until it reaches a relatively constant level in middle age. In developed countries, it begins to decline after the age of 60. (Catherwood, 1997). However, in Nigeria, CN rises with age (Kayode, 2004). This trend can be attributed in part to a lack of social security, grossly insufficient social services, and a high risk to life and property. Any increase in a couple's composite needs, for whatever reason, will have an impact on their well-being, leading them to seek spiritual solutions in prayer meetings.

2.3.2 Theory of Gender Roles

Gendered socialisation processes, according to gender role theory, encourage women to value and identify with the role of wife and mother, as well as to place a high value on the emotional component of personal relationships (Bernard, 1972; Gilligan, 1982). Gender roles are “socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about men's and women's behaviour and emotions” (Anselmi and Law 1998). Many theorists believe that perceived gender roles serve as the foundation for the formation of gender identity. Evolutionary theory (Buss 1995; Shields 1975), object-relations theory (Chodorow 1989), and gerontology theory are all popular psychological theories about the development of gender roles and identities. Bem (1981, 1993) proposed gender schema theory, as well as social role theory (Eagly 1987).

Evolutionary theories of gender development are based on genetic bases for male and female differences. Men and women have evolved differently to fulfill their different

and complementary functions, which are necessary for survival, according to functionalists (e.g., Shields 1975). Similarly, sociobiologists (e.g., Buss 1995) argue that behavioural differences between men and women are the result of different sexual and reproductive strategies that have evolved to ensure that men and women can be as effective as possible can reproduce and pass on their genes in a timely and efficient manner. The essentialist and maximalist perspectives discussed previously are similar to these evolutionary-based theories.

Object-relations theorists, on the other hand, are interested in the effects of socialisation on gender development. In the development of sex differences, Chodorow (1989) emphasises the role of women as primary caregivers. According to Chodorow, the early relationship between mother and child has distinct effects on boys and girls. Girls do not have to be separated from their mothers to define their identities as females, whereas boys must be separated from their mothers to define their identities as males. She further explains that the devalued role of women is the product of the painful process men undergo to separate themselves from the female role.

Gender schema theory (Bem 1981) focuses on the role of the cognitive organization in addition to socialization. This theory postulates that children learn how their cultures and/or societies define the roles of men and women and then internalize this knowledge as a gender schema, or unchallenged core belief. The gender schema is then used to organize subsequent experiences (Bem 1993). Children's perceptions of men and women are thus an interaction between their gender schemas and their experiences. Children's self-concepts will eventually be incorporated into their gender schema, and they will adopt the features and behaviours that they feel appropriate for their gender.

Another socialization-based explanation for gender development is offered by Eagly (1987). According to Eagly's social role theory, gender roles are created by the sexual division of labour and society expectations based on stereotypes. She distinguishes between gender-stereotyped traits' communal and agentic aspects. Nurturance and emotional expressiveness are qualities usually associated with domestic tasks, and hence with women, in the community role. Assertiveness and independence, which are usually linked with public actions and therefore with males, characterise the agentic role. When societies embrace gender stereotypes and develop solid expectations based on those assumptions, gender roles have a tremendous impact on behaviour (Eagly 1987).

Gender roles and gender stereotypes are inextricably connected, as Eagly points out. "Overgeneralized ideas about persons based on their membership in one of several social groups" are stereotypes (Anselmi and Law 1998). Stereotypes are the collective knowledge of a society's traditions, myths, philosophies, religions, and sciences. An individual's stereotype or belief about a certain group is formed as a result of this knowledge. Traits, role behaviours, physical attributes, and vocations are all examples of gender stereotypes (Deaux and Lewis 1983). Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be regarded as docile and cooperative, whilst men are more likely to be perceived as aggressive and competitive. Men have traditionally been seen as financial providers, whilst women have traditionally been seen as caregivers. Physical traits and vocations have also been categorised as consistent or inconsistent or inconsistent with masculine or feminine roles.

The dominant culture is best represented by traditional gender stereotypes. Although ethnicity and socioeconomic class may not be stated when discussing gender stereotypes, most individuals will make assumptions about these categories, according to Landrine (1999). When ethnicity and socioeconomic class are defined, various gender preconceptions arise, according to her research. Couple and family interactions are influenced by gender norms and stereotypes. The distribution of family labour, for example, is frequently dependent on gender. Women in heterosexual marriages used to stay at home and undertake the majority of the domestic work, while their male partners worked outside the home to support the family. Even though women have been progressively entering employment in recent years, they continue to perform the majority of household chores. When men and women become parents, gender roles frequently become more distinct.

Overall, women spend more time with children and offer more direct care for them (Walzer 2001). Taking responsibility for the mental labour of obtaining and processing information regarding baby care, assigning infant care chores, and caring about infant health and well-being are all part of this care. In conclusion, it is considered that the unequal distribution of home labour and childcare, with women undertaking the majority of the work, contributes to women's reported poorer marital satisfaction (Walzer 2001). Men and women are affected differently by gender norms and stereotypes. Men and women, in particular, may be assessed on how well they fit to stereotypes. Pleck (1975) claimed that boys and men feel pressed to meet a standard of masculinity in his

notion of masculine gender role strain. Boys and men who do not meet the criteria, for example, have poor self-esteem (Pleck; Sonnenstein; and Ku1993).

Men's and women's performance can both be influenced by gender stereotypes. The threat of being judged by or self-fulfilling negative stereotypes about one's gender or ethnic group is described as "an individual's knowledge that he or she may be judged by or self-fulfill negative preconceptions about one's gender or ethnic group" (Lips 2001). According to research, stereotype threats might have a detrimental impact on performance by raising anxiety. For example, Steven Spencer, Steele, and Quinn (1999) discovered that when participants were made to assume that the test would almost certainly produce gender disparities, women fared considerably lower than males on a math test.

In contrast, women and men performed equally well when the participants were led to believe that the test did not produce gender differences. These findings suggest that negative stereotypes can and do negatively affect performance even when the stereotype has not been internalized or incorporated into the view of the self

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

This chapter is concerned with the description of the steps that were taken in researching this work, also known as the methodology. This study is based on fieldwork that was carried out within Ikorodu in Lagos state. The study employed a micro-ethnographic technique, that is, an ethnography that looked at certain areas of cultural practices rather than the entire culture. The research is, therefore, ethnographic in content and style and relied on descriptions and contextual accounts constructed through in-depth interviews, field observations, and simple surveys.

In this regard, attention was paid to the activities of women who attend prayer forums specially made for women and how the frequency of these meetings affects their lives with particular regard to their homes and families. It also explores the activities and views of clerics and others within the religious realm and with whom these women interact. The broad theoretical framework that guided this research will be derived from ethnographic methods. This is done in keeping with the definition of ethnography as the study of people in a naturally occurring setting, involving “participation and observation...and is systematic, comprehensive and topic-oriented” and “could provide the opportunity for mutual relation of interactions... With systematic and comprehensive information about the community being studied” (Hymes 1977: 45).

The methods of data collection employed here led to the capturing of the social meanings, in the context of everyday life, associated with women's prayer assemblies and the maintenance of women's space in the place of prayer vis-a-vis their marriages within Ikorodu.

3.1 Research Design

This research adopted the mixed-method research design. The design is a mix of qualitative and quantitative research approaches which gathered a rich source of data from respondents on their views on how their frequent visits to the prayer sites have influenced their lives with particular regards to their marriages.

3.2 Data Gathering and Collection Technique

This research adopted the triangulation technique of data gathering, with the use of Participant observation, Administration of questionnaires, and interviews.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a method of data gathering which involves participating in the daily life of a community, or a group within their natural setting, getting to know them in a more intimate and detailed way by watching, observing, and talking to them to discover their interpretations, social meanings, and activities.

For this research, women's prayer groups, with regards to the location referred hereto as the Prayer assemblies were closely observed. There was participation in the prayer meetings; the researcher also observed how these women interact with one another, their social meanings and networking within this prayer space and how this prayer space referred to as the “prayer assemblies” influences their disposition towards themselves, their families and prayer itself.

3.2.2 In-depth and Key Informant Interviewing

For this study, the researcher conducted key informant interviews with fifteen respondents, who included pastor's wives, who were often the leaders of the women's groups, and women leaders within the prayer assembly. In-depth interviews were also conducted with twenty-five women who were regular attendees of these prayer assemblies, in whom the researcher had gained their trust throughout the fieldwork. An open-ended interview guide was used; everyone was asked the same questions, but the follow-up questions varied, allowing for the exploration of issues that were particularly important to women. A total of 40 women were interviewed using Key informants and In-depth Interviews.

3.2.3 Questionnaire

For this study, the researcher distributed questionnaires to respondents; 600 questionnaires were distributed to women who attend these prayer assemblies, the questionnaires were self-constructed and multi-choice in structure. Out of the 600 distributed 346 questionnaires were retrieved from respondents.

3.3 Sampling Technique/ Sample Size

As mentioned above, the design of the study is a mixed-method design, which involves the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study adopted the use of purposive and simple random sampling techniques. This is considered appropriate since samples are based on a focused group of women who attend a prayer meeting in these prayer assemblies that will be visited. However, a combination of purposive and simple random techniques was used in the distribution of questionnaires within the prayer groups.

Consent of the leadership of the women assemblies was sort before questionnaires were administered to the women. The women interviewed were those who felt comfortable discussing their marriage visa-a-vis the research with the researcher, these were women whom the researcher had interacted with for the duration of the research.

Women were purposively sampled and a simple random sampling technique was also used as it was considered appropriate because of its inclusiveness and because it will afford all members of the various prayer groups equal opportunity or chance of being selected for questionnaire administration. Copies of the questionnaire distributed were 600, the ones retrieved by the researcher were 346. The purposive sampling technique was also used to select candidates for in-depth interviewing. Those selected were 15 women in leadership positions in the women's prayer assemblies and 25 women who were regular attendees with deep insight and demonstrable understanding of the issues in point.

From the techniques above a total of forty respondents were interviewed and six hundred copies of the questionnaire will be distributed and 346 were retrieved from respondents.

3.4 Study Population

The population for this study are all adults; adults here are regarded to mean anyone who has attained the age of maturity, where in Nigeria it is taken as from the age of eighteen. The target of the study are women who are married and who are members of a Christian women's prayer assembly.

3.5 Instrumentation

3.5.1 Tape Recorder

Tape recorders were used to capture, on magnetic tapes, conversations, and interviews that took place during the fieldwork experience.

3.5.2 Camera

A camera was used in taking in capturing the important sphere of everyday life of the research process. A phone camera is used to record some of the significant moments of encounters and activities in the field.

3.5.3 Notepads

The use of notepad was considered important in this study, as it allows the researcher to write down important events, at specific times, during the study.

3.5.4 Interview Guide

The researcher made use of a set of questions that stirred the conversation towards the issues to be studied and help the researcher in her interview with the informants. These questions were structured and semi-structured.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the treating of evidence fairly and producing compelling conclusions (Creswell, 1997). The parameters for collecting data included questionnaires, participant observation, in-depth and key informant interviews. They underwent descriptive analysis/ narration techniques. Descriptive analysis was used in this study to extract data from the qualitative instrument used. This was done by analysing the frequency and prominence of important themes and concepts. While the data gotten from the Interviews and Participant Observation were thematically analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the relationship between the patronage of and participation in 'women prayer assemblies,' programs designed for women only, and marriage stability among selected women in Ikorodu, Lagos State. Questionnaires were distributed, and 346 were retrieved out of the 600 distributed. In-depth interviews were conducted among 40 members who were leaders and regular attendees of women prayer assemblies in selected churches. I started by giving an account of my observation of the women's prayer assemblies as a participant, which followed by the thematic analyses. Quantitative and qualitative results are presented in line with the study objectives and research questions. The qualitative analysis was done using simple random sampling. The analysis thus consists of a movement around both analytical circle and linear progression.

Since this research adopts the mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative modes of data analysis, interpretation and presentation was employed. For the quantitative aspect of the data gathering technique, descriptive statistical analysis was made used in line with the quantitative approach. Such tools included the use of pie charts, column chart and tables. For the qualitative approach, researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.

As a result, in keeping with the tradition of data interpretation and presentation mode in qualitative research, we emphasized the use of descriptive essays. I combined an insider's perspective with the tools of description and analysis as a Pentecostal and a married woman who has dealt with the issues addressed by this study.

4.1.1 Church Membership and Women Prayer Assembly

Women's prayer assemblies are a common phenomenon. This is due to women's commitment and dedication to religious activities (Carr, 2015). In this study, Table 4.1 lists the different interviewees and their church affiliation. The results showed that more participants joined the Church of God's Redemption (36%). A small number of people are members of "We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries" (12%). This disparity is not suggestive of the size of followership of these churches, as some women who are members of these churches are not involved in the women's prayer assemblies, owing to the nature of their responsibility. Some of the women prayer groups within these churches identified were; Joyful Women of Joy Cometh Ministries, Good Women's Fellowship of Redeemed Christian Church of God, Winning Women of We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries, Covenant Good Women's Prayer group of Christ's Apostolic Church, etc.

Table 4.1: Church Membership of Respondents

Churches	Frequency	Percent
Redemed Christian Church of God	126	36
Christ Apostolic Church	59	17
Joy Cometh Ministries.	72	21
New Covenant Gospel Church	48	14
We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries	41	12
Total	346	100

The role of women in society and, in turn, in the church is crucial (Maina 1995); wider gender relations issues affect this role, especially the role of women in the church. As pointed out by Eriksen (2014), gender relations refer to power relations in leading and gaining public roles; since women account for the vast majority of active church members (Bowen 1996), they are the supporting and the most conspicuous force in almost all church congregations. Women's assemblies in the church seek to provide opportunities for women to influence church activities, especially to make significant contributions in decision-making. They play the role of engaging and supporting church leaders and, in some cases, have created a way for women to be represented in the top cadres. (Offiong 2014).

Church members and women's prayer assemblies have a mutually beneficial relationship, especially by promoting and encouraging women's participation. Women are at the center of building social capital or characteristics of Christian relationships through networks, norms, and trust, allowing participants to act together more effectively and achieve common goals. goal (Mbuagbo and Akoko 2019). The Women's Prayer Meeting is a safe forum or space in the church because it is guided by prescribed rituals and etiquette, which can attract women in all aspects of life; thus introducing the potential of shared resources and incentive mechanisms in the church. The church receives help from the women's prayer meeting according to the needs of the church and also receives help from the women according to their personal needs. It serves as a retention mechanism for women to stay in the church and see themselves as part of the church through its activities.

This development creates a common sense of identity for participants in the church, which can encourage them to invite friends and neighbors to their gatherings and sell it as a comfortable space where a caring support system can be formed. The role of women in society and, by extension, in the church is crucial (Maina 1995); wider gendered relations issues have influenced this role, women play particularly in churches. As Eriksen (2014) noted, gender relations are about power relations regarding leadership and access to public roles; and since women do comprise the large majority of active

church members (Bowen 1996), they are the sustaining force in almost every church congregation, and are more visible.



Figure 4.1: Map showing the location of Ikorodu

Source: Google Map

4.1.2 Nature of Women Prayer Assemblies in Ikorodu

In what is to follow, I outline my observations as a participant in women's prayer assemblies and the important features of the terrain that served as the background for my field research in Ikorodu. I first described the activities of the city of Ikorodu and its residents and then continued to emphasize my observations of women's prayer assemblies in individual churches. Quantitative tools are then used to analyze the collected data to supplement the data collected from participant observations and interviews, which influence the central and secondary themes (objectives) of the research. The last section of this chapter attempts to decompose the key thesis of the research by placing the provided data in the preferred theoretical grid of the research.

4.1.3 Rubrics of everyday life in Ikorodu



Plate 4.1: A sign showing Ikorodu, which is placed at Ikorodu garage, often referred to as the city's center. Personal fieldwork 2019

Ikorodu is a traditional settlement of the Awori people of Yoruba tribe. It is located in the northeastern part of Lagos State on the coast of the lagoon, bordering Ogun State. It is located 36 kilometers north of Lagos, bordered by a lagoon in the south and Ogun State in the north. Ikorodu is on both sides of Ota-Ona, Awolowo Road, including Ojoru and Agbele, until it reaches Itamaja. Aiyeluja, the road extending from Ayangbure to Oke Oriya to Solomade, Etunrenren, Lowa and Olori, is on both sides of the road from Lagos to Owutu intersection. The northern extension line includes both sides of Sagamu Road leading to the sawmill and further afield to Odogunyan. Gbasemo in Aga is located in the south, connected to Ipakorodo Igbogbo Road, Oriwu Road and Solafun (in the Ijomu neighborhood) to Owode. Ikorodu was founded by settlers in the 17th century, and their agricultural activities led to the name Ikorodu, which is derived from the two words Oko and Odu. Oko means "farm". Odu is an extinct vegetable plant that is used to dye textiles and flourishes in settlements.

Due to the lack of a suitable name, the first settlers called their settlement Oko-Odu, which was later changed to Ikorodu. Due to the large amount of water around the city, the Ikorodus are basically farmers and fishermen. According to the Bobakeye of Ikorodu, Ikorodu belongs to Akarigbo of Shakamu. Another account of Ikorodu states that all the land from Shagamu to IkoroduEbute belongs to Akarigbo. Orisa Gaomu, king of Shagamu of Orile Offin, son of Akarigbo Koyelu, was the first to use the area for hunting and farming in the surrounding area. Akarigbo Koyelu has eight children, namely; Ogaremade, Lasunwon, Anoko, Ogboyari, Sekunmade, Adeolapo, Adegorishe and Oguntade. Six of them settled in Ikorodu.

Adegorishe and Oguntade settled in Shagamu. Ikorodu Oga, as its indigenous people usually say, Ogaremade is the so-called Oga. As one of Akarigbo's sons, Lasunwon became the king of Ikorodu, from whose lineage the current King Ikorodu emerged. Rademo and Sekunmade are the two recognized ruling families of Ikorodu. Sekunmade's lineage is the ruling king of Ipakodo, Anokun and Ogboyari, they are the brothers of others, who returned to Shagamu to become Akarigbos there. It should be noted that this serves as the history of the Ikorodu people from the royal angle (Banjoko 2020)

The population consists majorly of Yoruba, but there are other ethnic groups such as the Igbos, the Hausas, and others, even though they form the minority. The growth of Ikorodu town and the diversified nature of its residents, makes it a cosmopolitan city, as various ethnic groups live and do business within Ikorodu. It is a hospitable city as evidence in non-indigenes being able to buy and build houses and own businesses. Ikorodu town was a strategic town in linking Lagos to other parts of the country before the construction of the Lagos-Ibadan express road. The road which was first built in 1953 stretching from Ikorodu to Lagos Island, before this, people of Ikorodu town commute to Lagos Island through the use of boats. Ikorodu division was created in 1967 by Mobolaji Johnson. As of the 2003, census, Ikorodu has about six hundred thousand inhabitants, but the population is currently estimated to be about two million people, a community report on Channels TV indicates.



**Plate 4.2: A picture showing street hawking and the busy nature of Ikorodu town
(Personal fieldwork 2019)**

The growth of Ikorodu town and the diversified nature of its residents, makes it a cosmopolitan city, as various ethnic groups live and do business within Ikorodu. The road which was first built in 1953 stretching from Ikorodu to Lagos Island, before this, people of Ikorodu town commute to Lagos Island through the use of boats. The double-lane road linking the Ikorodu garage to other adjoining areas is lined with shops, terra-coated roofed buildings, converted to shopping centers, and a few offices. Just like any other urban center in Nigeria, the hustling and bustling of everyday life are evident; the streets are busy with human and vehicular traffic, with paced movement characterising the Ikorodu garage. There are hawkers of consumable goods, a few school-age children selling an assortment of domestic products, and many other people toing and froing by the roadside. Market-men and women shade their wares, calling on customers to patronise them. The bus conductors shout their various destinations to create awareness and attract those going in their direction as one enters the town.

Ikorodu garage is the busiest of the bus stops in Ikorodu and it is easily accessible to every part of the state. It is home to some of the inter-state parks. It is the city center where you can easily access another part of Ikorodu and the adjoining towns and cities. There exist an informal *bureau de change* operation by the street corner, who have workers calling out to change dollar and buy gold on the street. An adjoining market of perishable food, different pushcarts loaded with various merchandise, occasional beggars going from stall to stall or standing by the roadside, and the row of stalls on either side of the road where one can buy all sorts of household items.

Ikorodu's nomenclature is more than simply the name; it also includes some traditional institutions that qualify it to be named that. According to Agbaakin of Ikorodu kingdom, Ikorodu has 60 or more villages and is ruled by the Ayangburen of Ikorodu. Ikorodu kingdom extends beyond the boundaries of Ikorodu town. Three principal parts can be referred to as Ikorodu town, which are Ijomu, Aga, and Isele, as well as a lesser order known as the Ituns. Ikorodu kingdom includes territory in Ikorodu municipality as well as more than 60 communities and villages. These communities and villages have their rulers known as the Baale's, otherwise referred to as mini kings, who are under the rulership of the Ayangburen

Several religious establishments are seen throughout the Ikorodu metropolis and its surroundings. Ikorodu is dominated by three major religions: Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion, all of which are well established and have structures dedicated to them. The emphasis here is on prayer assemblies held within the church. In

Ikorodu, churches from various denominations of Christianity can be found, ranging from well-established orthodox churches to prominent Pentecostal churches and self-founded rising churches that are also associated with the Pentecostals.

The emergence of women's prayer assemblies in Ikorodu is as old as Christianity in Nigeria. From the moment of introduction of Christianity into Nigeria, through the orthodox/mission church by the missionaries, women had featured in the activities of churches. They have been known to play critical roles and were even referred to as the sustaining force of church insistence and vitality (Crab 1970). These prominent roles have led to women coming together to create prayer spaces for themselves using various organised groups. Women's prayer assemblies are by and largely synonymous with Pentecostal church culture; even though they are not exclusive to them. The advent of Pentecostalism in Nigeria and, by extension in Ikorodu, marked by the proliferation of churches; has made Women's prayer assemblies very conspicuous on the Ikorodu landscape. The significance of women's prayer assemblies within the churches can be seen in the devotion of resources to the creation of women's prayer assemblies, which serve as a strong structure for membership mobilization (Mbuagbo and Akoko 2019). Highlighted below are the Women's prayer assemblies noted during fieldwork, using participant observation.

4.1.4 Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Revival Center 1

Located on number 6, CAC street, off Megba Japheth Crescent Ibelefun estate, Owode Ibeshe, in Ikorodu, within the Bayeiku/Igbogbo Local Council Development Area (LCDA), is Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Revival center 1. It is a well-known place of worship within the Ikorodu community and it's the light of the world zonal headquarters of the Christ Apostolic Church overseeing three districts namely; the Ibelefun district, the Owode district, and Ibeshe district. At the onset of the research, permission was sort from the resident pastor, Pastor Adeyemi, who was graceful in his response and pointed out that to get authentic information about the women prayer meeting domiciled within the church, I may have to speak with the convener of the women prayer assembly and the wife of the zonal pastor.

Deaconess Wajero explained the structure of the women assemblies within the church. She noted that the church's women assembly leader is the wife of the zonal pastor, anyone who happens to become the zonal pastor, the leadership of the women assembly is bestowed on her by the husband's status as the zonal pastor in the church.

For the district, it is the wife of the district Pastor. The zonal women's meeting holds quarterly, or as occasion serves, the district meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month. There is a Wednesday meeting usually well-attended by women. It is regarded as the "woman prayer meeting". This aside, there is, also a meeting of the women executives across the district or the zone which holds every last Friday of the month, which is strictly for the executives. The executives are women in leadership of women groups in whichever capacity at the district and zonal level. As I wasn't qualified to be in the other meetings, by the nature of it being restricted to leaders within and across the district. The "women prayer meeting," opened to everyone and which this study investigated, holds every Wednesday between 9 am and 12noon, as seen in Plate 4.3, which highlights the programs of the church on a signboard, came about through a divine revelation.

According to Deaconess Wajero, who happens to be the convener of the weekly women's program and the wife of the zonal pastor and anchor of this program, it was "the Lord that laid this idea in her heart. He instructed her to gather women to pray". She noted that "we were still at the Christ Apostolic Church Alabukun branch of the church, at Ikorodu Garage, which was our headquarters then when God spoke to me. Our meeting started from there, and I gave it the name, covenant good women prayer meeting. It started with only two of us and has existed for over twenty years". It was to be a place where women could come together to pray concerning any issue, it is also a place of revelation. She noted that the weekly meeting is particular to the church branch because she received the revelation and anyone from anywhere is free to participate, giving the meeting an interdenominational tone, even though the majority of its membership stems from women from the Christ Apostolic Church. She admitted that not all women within the church come for the women prayer meeting, as it is on a weekday and the leadership is aware that women who work in the formal sector or work for people may not be able to make it to the meeting, however women who own their businesses or women who don't work, do attend.

The meeting usually begins with an opening prayer and lasts around 15 minutes. This opening prayer is designed in such a way that women are led to pray by calling out the prayer points and saying their prayers; however, this pattern of prayer is not limited to only the opening prayer; all prayers said in this assembly follow this pattern, as it is believed that prayers said with your mouth are usually more easily answered than prayers

said for you. The following is the order of the opening prayers, which are anchored by the women's leader:

1. Let's thank God for today, for the opportunity to be here today, many are no more, many are on their sickbed but He has deemed us worthy to be kept alive and healthy
2. Let's thank God for our children, our husbands, and all our family members because if any of them is sick or have one issue or the other, we will not be here saying we want to pray, we will be in them in the hospital or trying to find a solution. We should thank God for not making us experience confusion concerning our family members.
3. Let's ask to see the hands of God this morning, that the heavens should open over us and that every prayer raised should be answered speedily
4. Let's ask for mercy this morning, that God should answer our prayers with mercy and cleanse us from our sins.

The women leaders' invocations almost always follow this format, which appears formal and established. On further inquiry, I was informed that this pattern of prayer transcends the women's prayer assembly. It is the general way of praying within the Christ Apostolic Church, for every gathering, you must begin with thanksgiving and thank God for every aspect of life, that the Bible even talks about making our thanksgiving more our request, and an opening prayer section is a place where thanksgiving is offered, as it serves as the start of the meeting. The women leader is selected from among the women in an informal election, in the form of nomination, the selection is then ratified by the zonal pastor every five years. This is different from the wife of the zonal pastor or the resident pastor's wife, who are leaders as a result of their husbands' position. The three women play key roles in women's prayer meetings; which range from the opening prayer to the praise session to any other activity done in the meeting.

The Convener, who is the Zonal Pastors wife, is in charge of the allocation of women leaders' roles. At the start of any meeting, only a handful of women are usually around, but as the meeting progresses, more women come in, soon as the opening prayer is said, there is a praise session, and at this point, only women are in charge of the drum set and every other musical instrument to be used during the service. The praise session roughly goes on for 10 to 15 minutes. The Assistant Pastor then takes over. The next set

of prayers could last for another 10 minutes. The period is usually of a particular theme of prayer, dedicated to children, during which the women are led to pray for their children, and women who are yet to have their children are encouraged to pray for their unborn children, as it signifies their faith in God to give them children and they are also encouraged to pray it forward, a term that means you can pray for your children's future.

The programme's convener takes over from the assistant pastor at the end of this session. Her session is roughly 30 minutes long and includes prayers and sermons. The sermon period is typically solemn, during which the women are stirred to the theme of the day's meeting, biblical examples are presented to the women, as well as practical examples from contemporary times, to buttress the sermon. Following the sermon, more prayers are said in relation to the sermon, with the prayers drawn from the Biblical text used during the sermon. Thereafter, the Resident Pastor then takes over with announcements, such announcement includes days and time of service, special projects which the church will need the input of women in, burial or naming ceremonies, special visitations to churches under the headquartered church.

The participants are encouraged to write out their request in form of letters to God, this is done as the church recognises the need of women to vent, instead of them pouring out their frustration to humans, they are encouraged to tell it to God in the form of a letter, after the announcements, he prays on the letters written by attendees who may be facing one challenge or the other and preferred to have this challenge written 'to God' for divine interventions. He also prays on the water brought by the women. It is the custom among the attendees to come with a bottle of water and drop it on the altar as soon as they arrive; they picked it up at the end of the meeting. There is a shared belief that when the water is left on the altar and the pastor prays on it; it is transformed from ordinary water to that possessing supernatural power that can wade off evil spirits if sprinkled around the house or healing when drunk. The meeting closes with the benediction.

It is important to note that in the course of the meeting only two men are in attendance: they are the Resident Pastor and the Assistant Pastor. Their functions are as highlighted above. The average attendance at the prayer meeting is between 40 and 60. While the element of the service within the prayer assembly has become formalised, there's still some room for spontaneity, to allow for the move of the Holy Spirit. This spontaneity was observed to be in form of a "message" to the assembly or a prayer point dropped into the heart of the convener or the resident pastor. Within this assembly,

there's a general acceptance of the move of the Spirit, and when this happens closing time of the meeting is usually exceeded.

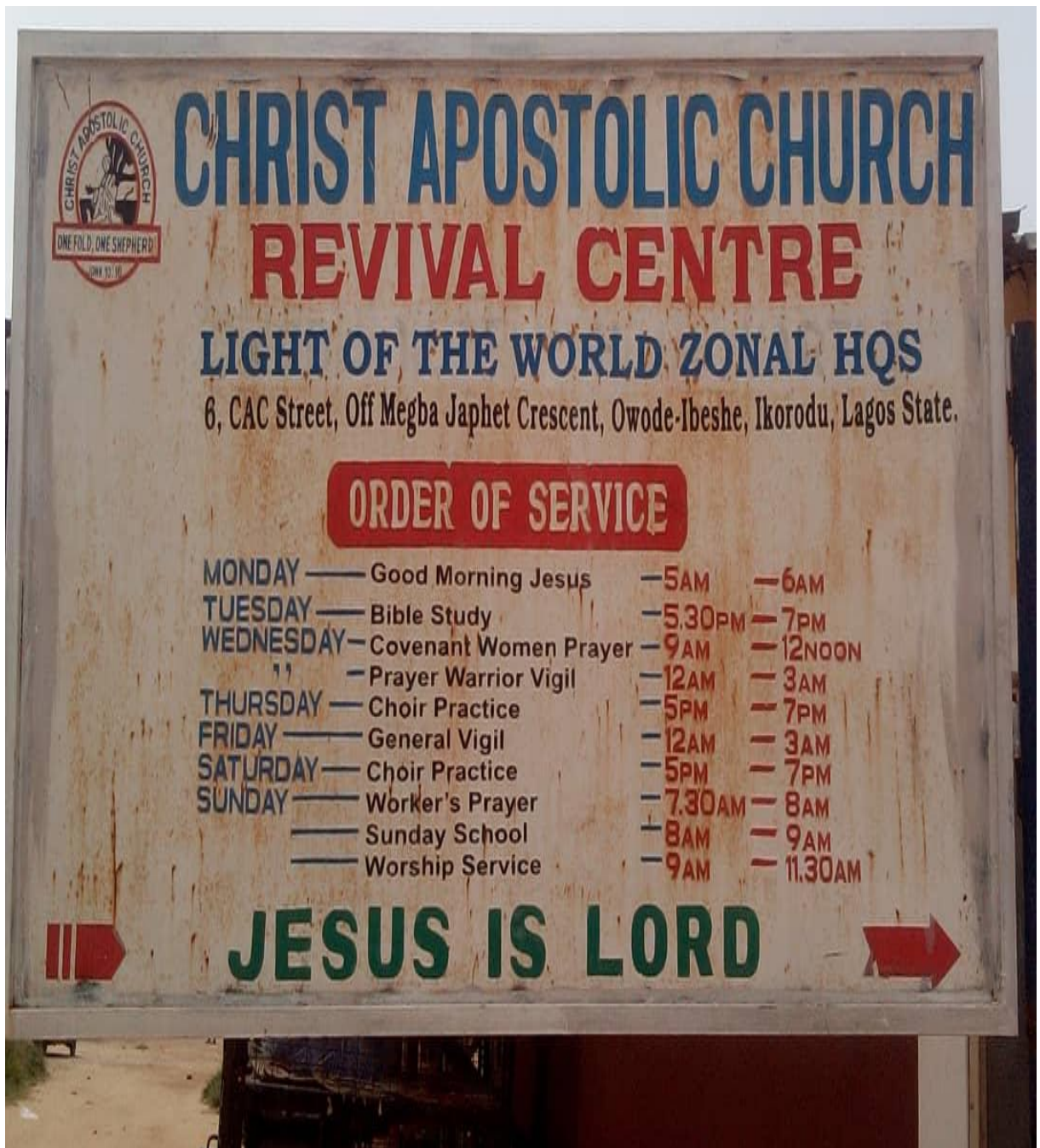


Plate 4.3: A signboard of CAC Revival Center, with the covenant women prayer highlighted. (Personal Fieldwork 25 November 2018)

4.1.5 Joy cometh Ministry

Generally referred to as Joyful Women Assembly, the ministry is located along with Number 26, Ebute-Igbogbo road Ebute Ipakodo in Ikorodu. The history of this assembly is as old as the church itself, which started formally in November 2016. The founder was formerly a Pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God and attained the rank of a Zonal Pastor before leaving the Church to start his ministry. He started firstly with a monthly Morning Prayer meeting tagged Joy cometh, and this translated subsequently into a personal ministry. The women fellowship called the “Joyful women” is a vibrant group within the church. It boasts of women membership in their hundreds. There is usually a large turnout of women in any of the meetings, or special programs. Attendees are not necessarily members of the church, the assembly takes on an interdenominational outlook, where every woman is welcome to fellowship with other Christian women.

The fellowship meets twice a month. The first meeting takes place every first Sunday of the month, after the second church service for about 15 minutes. The meeting is meant to keep the women abreast of important church information and activities relevant to the group; such information as marriage ceremonies of members' children, naming ceremonies, burial ceremonies, happenings in the church that needed women's attention. The second meeting, which is the “main meeting,” occurs every last Saturday of the month, between 7 am and 9 am. This choice of time is considered the best for making women turn up; and more so, it's on a weekend when most of them won't be working and can spend a longer time at the meeting and still get back home to attend to home chores or any other engagement planned for the day.

In regards to members' role allocations, the General Overseer's wife referred to as 'Mama', is assisted by other women leaders, chief among whom is the women president. The women president coordinates all the affairs relating to women's activities within the church. She reports back to Mama for decisive actions on any important matters. Fellowship meeting is held on every last Saturday of every month and is done within zones. Zones are formed based on the location of residence of the members. So a group of women that stay in a certain area belongs to that zone. Since everybody cannot see Mama or the President (even when you decide to see them, the protocol, you may be subjected to, may discourage you), the need for having zones is imperative because testimonies and vital information which may not have been disclosed in the church can now be done using zonal structure. Members' concerns or observations can be reported to

zone leaders, who in turn reports to the women president, who then take the issue to Mama if it cannot be handled by her. The primary means of communication within a zone is WhatsApp. Each zone has its own WhatsApp platform. Prayer points are posted through the App; so also are testimonies from members and any other important information needed to be shared urgently.

The first Sunday of the month meeting usually lasts about 15 minutes. It starts with the opening prayer, then a brief word of exhortation, and subsequently passing information on activities to the women. The meeting is usually brief, officials do realize that many women could be tired of a further stay after a long Sunday service because they needed to return home and take care of their family, especially in the area of meal preparation. The second meeting occurs every last Saturday of the month and lasts for roughly two hours. It brings all the women from the zone together. The meeting starts with an opening prayer which could take as long as 5 minutes. Then, follows is the praise and worship; done without a drum set or musical instrument. The women simply sing and clap their hands for about 10 minutes, and then enter into the main prayer session. It is a session that lasts for about 40 to 45 minutes. The prayer points raised cut across all areas of marriage and family issues; ranging from the preservation of members' marriages to prayers for crisis-free marriages, prayers against strange women, prayers to be worthy wives and mothers, and many more.

Aside from the prayer session is the 'sessional' meeting devoted to teaching women topics on marriage and family. An older married woman, who has had vast experience of marriage, speaks on the topic of the day. Most often the teachers use themselves as case studies without holding back the truth. Topics include the importance of sex in marriage; how to bring up Godly children; how to stay vibrant in a career while functioning as a wife and mother, etc. The teaching period lasts between 30-35 minutes, thereafter questions and answers exchanges follow. What I've observed is that during the question-and-answer session, the women tend to express any concerns they have about the teachings. Some people utilize their personal experiences to comment on what they've learned in the assembly. The teacher's or anchor's experience comes into play while addressing questions and putting objections into context so that alternatives can be offered. When an issue involving sex is discussed, questions, objections, and recommendations predominate. Based on the questions they asked and side comments they made during the interactions, I concluded that most women faced some form of difficulty in this regard.

On another occasion of the women's assembly, a topic around the dignity of work was taught and women were admonished to get something doing. The teacher that day made it clear that it is irresponsible of members as wives and mothers to rely solely on their husbands for everything, the anchor acknowledges the fact that some of the members are graduates and due to the situation of the country they haven't been able to secure a job, she, however, encourage members to get a skill that can fetch them an income. When the floor was opened for women to comment, the majority of comments and questions concentrated on how women could gain skills without cash, as monies are required to pay the skill instructor and purchase the necessary materials to learn. Having recognized the problem, the church was able to set up a week-long skill acquisition program with the help of "club five loaves," in which different skills were taught by professionals in a certain industry.

During this study, over ten distinct skills were organized and taught to anybody interested; the acquisition of this skill was not limited to church members or women; however, women were more likely to acquire this skill. Club five loaves is a group of church members who pool their resources to assist destitute people by providing opportunities to learn a skill, scholarships, and other services at the church's request. The group is mainly made up of wealthy members of the church. The events and activities in the assembly suggest the purpose of the assembly, though it is first a prayer assembly where prayers are offered concerning various aspect of life, it is also a support group for the women as the leadership of the group tend to listen and take necessary action within their limits to assist the member in becoming better. The women's prayer assembly is more of a learning environment, and no question is ever considered irrelevant.

The session is for women only but during the yearly women convention, which takes place every August, men are invited as guest ministers and fathers in the Lord, but even at that, the overwhelming majority are women as seen in Plate 4.4



**Plate 4.4: A section of the Joyful women during the women's annual convention of
(Personal Fieldwork August 3, 2019.)**

4.1.6 The Redeemed Christian Church of God

The Redeemed Christian Church of God, commonly referred to as Redeemed, is an organization that boasts many churches. The organization is segmented into parish, zones, and regions in terms of hierarchy. The women wing of this church has a vibrant fellowship referred to as "good women." The zonal headquarter church used in this study is located at no. 15, Sarah Olakunmbi street, Solebo estate Aga in Ikorodu. The good women fellowship holds its meeting every last Saturday of the month between 7-8 am, and it is anchored by the zonal pastor's wife referred to as 'our zonal mummy.' It is an hour-long programme christened "sisters breakfast meeting," which is an opportunity for women to pray, share the word of God, and feast.

A typical meeting day starts with an opening prayer by a designated member of the group, which is immediately followed by praise and worship; this lasts for 10 minutes. Thereafter comes the prayer session, anchored usually by the 'zonal mummy'. The process involves thanksgiving for 10-15 minutes, prayers of intercession for the church, for the families in general, and then for specific individuals who may want the sisters "to intervene" in whatever capacity they can through prayers. This is usually done by the leader asking members if anyone has a prayer request, after which another member delivers a brief exhortation of the fellowship, and finally, the benediction is said. Breakfast prepared for the sisters is taken. This is on a serve-yourself basis with fast food, such as bread, tea, and egg.

Every quarter of the year, women from churches throughout the zones gather in the zonal headquarters for a meeting; this meeting attracts a sizable number of women; at one of these meetings, after the music ministers had sung in a session tagged praise and worship, the "Zonal mummy" took over the podium to teach about forgiveness, where she encouraged the women to practice forgiveness in their daily lives. She charged them that sometimes it is not their husbands who are the problem; when something goes wrong at home, a woman must first check herself before blaming her husband accountable. Even when the husband is at fault, the women were encouraged to see their husbands through God's eyes and exercise forgiveness even when he does not ask for it.

The logic is that holding someone in unforgiveness hurts the person who has been offended and creates a schism between you and God, which may prevent your prayers from being granted. The anchor cited herself as an example of how she has practiced forgiveness throughout her 26 years of marriage. Following this lecture, an emotional call to repentance was issued, a call to repentance from unforgiveness and

holding on to sins in their marriage. There was a large response to this appeal, with sniffles and murmurs, which indicate a response to the call to repentance by the women. These murmurs of approval represent the women's faith in God to reach deep into their daily lives, to cure their anguish, and to teach them to be better wives to their husbands and to be full of love; it represents the women's belief that nothing is too difficult for God to do.

Every six months, the women fellowship organizes events to create empowerment for women who may be interested in learning some skills to make a living. The skill empowerment is open to any woman, and it is not limited to members of the assembly alone, as seen in Plate 4.5. Others from outside the assembly are encouraged to come as it is a way of reaching out to women in need, and they are encouraged to participate. The women are divided into groups, each group teaches a particular skill. Skills taught include Pastries, Knitting, Make-up, and liquid soap making. It should be emphasized that this meeting is a close-knit group of women, which is seen in how they relate to themselves and the level of confidence they have in one other, as women tend to respond to requests for prayer. They may deal with challenges that are currently affecting their marriages in prayers and practical steps. It is also an all-female affair because no men are normally present during the gathering.



Plate 4.5: A group in the empowerment skill acquisition of the Good women assembly of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Personal fieldwork 2019

4.1.7 We Are Alive In Him Overcomers Ministries

Popularly referred to as Overcomers ministries, it is located at No. 2, Aderemi Adedigba street, Olutoye oke, Ori-Okuta, Agric bus stop Ikorodu. The ministries group is headed by the Pastors wife and assisted by other women leaders in the church. The women's program, which is a monthly event, was initially held as a vigil that occurs from 11 pm to 3 am as seen in plate 4.6. The women come together to pray within the church premises. However, due to the security situation within Ikorodu, owing to the Badoo boys' activities, who were faceless and operated mainly at night to attack families and religious houses in relatively isolated buildings. It was believed, that members of this group sneaked into residents' houses in the middle of the night with the aid of charms to hypnotize their victims before raping and killing them (Akinrefon, 2017); because of this, the women prayer meeting was changed from a vigil to an evening program that holds from 5 pm to 7 pm every last Friday of the month. It was changed to this time to allow members who might have gone to work to be back. The 7 pm closing time will still allow members to get home in time.

When I went to my first meeting, the women were accepting and supportive of my research, and they didn't mind me recording the proceedings of the assembly; in fact, they were delighted I was there, as it seemed to them that they were receiving some sort of acknowledgment. Before each meeting, some of the women approached me to ask how my research was doing and what I thought of their gathering, and they offered to help me with anything I needed, which I truly appreciated. The women told me that the prayer assembly was more than simply a place to pray; it had become a place where they felt at home.

Between forty and sixty-five women attend the meeting, a figure that can vary considerably with the weather, a group that consists mainly of church members and includes women from diverse economic and career backgrounds. The meeting started with an opening prayer by the Assistant Pastors wife, who also doubles as the Assistant women leader, the opening prayer is usually brief within a space of three to five minutes; thereafter, a member of the prayer meeting that is also a choir member takes over with the praise and worship session, this individual would have been informed ahead of time that she will be part of the officiating minister for a particular meeting, this is usually done, so that the individual will be in church on time as it is recognized that most women will be returning from work at that particular time, hence the need to inform ahead of

time. At the start of the meeting, only a handful of women would have arrived, and others join as the meeting progresses.

I observed two types of women in this assembly: three quarters are young women between the ages of twenty-two and forty who have young children and need babysitting. The remaining quarter is made up of older women over the age of forty who have older children. For the women to be able to attend the meeting without being interrupted by their smaller children, the older women volunteer their children to babysit the younger ones at the church's children's area. This is done to alleviate the strain of women being unable to attend prayer meetings due to childcare issues.

These two groups of women are linked by a strong mentorship tie, since the younger women believe they may benefit from the life experiences of older women, particularly in the area of marriage. Adeola, a young mother who expressed interest in my research, told me, "she looks forward to coming to the assembly, outside of all the other things she enjoys in the assembly, she sometimes experiences confusion in certain areas of marriage, that she needs advice for, after the meeting she goes ahead and asks any of the older women around questions bothering her and she believes that because they have been married for a longer period, they must be doing something right and because they are also Christian wives, she believes they will give her godly advice." She also noted that it was a place where she could come to make friends with women who are seeking God and have young children, basically women within the same situation as her.

After the opening prayer is the praise session. The praise session lasts around 20 minutes, during which women sing and clap their hands; no drum set is employed. Following that, the assistant women leader leads a prayer session that lasts around 40 minutes. The prayers include, among other things, protection for the family, upliftment of the spouse, success in job or company, and protection from the ills of this world. Following this session, an intercessory session is held in which the anchor asks the women if they have any prayer requests, which can be classified as prayers for good health and healing, prayers for professional or business breakthrough, prayers against 'strange' women, and prayers against evil in family, business and careers.

With their heads bowed and their eyes closed, practically everyone offered a prayer in response to the specific request made by individuals asking intercession from the members. The prayers were both solemn and conversational. Prayer requests, especially for healing and good health, might be repeated over time, and what was thought to be responses to prayers were recycled back as testimony. Thus, prayer

requests were continual personal stories that may occur over time, alerting the group to the members' concerns. Outside of the prayers, members provide moral and emotional support to women who are going through a difficult time in their lives. A case in point was that of a member whose son had a medical condition that required surgery and an extended stay at the hospital, the women in this assembly contributed towards the surgery, even when the said member didn't request financial support, the women in this assembly also organised themselves to help stay with the boy in the hospital at a certain time, so the mother can take some break and also bringing her food in the hospital.

The prayer session rounds off with 5 minutes of personal prayers where attendees are made to take any position of their choice and pour their heart out to God. It is observed that the prayer session is usually the most impactful as most women look forward to this session, and reference is always made to the prayer session during testimonies. Following that, the Assistant Women's Leader requests testimony. This call always receives a positive response, with at least five ladies showing up to tell their testimony. This usually takes the form of a thanksgiving report, thanking God for an answered prayer. The women will indicate whether the answers came through intercessional prayer or personal supplication.

They also testify as to whether the events occurred unexpectedly and how God was able to intervene. This suggests that prayers and testimony are complementary and continuous. This session usually lasts between 15 and 20 minutes, depending on the number of testifiers after this is the word session, where teachings from the Bible is being used to teach women on everyday life issues that arise from marriage and family life, after this, there is the closing prayer and benediction. Women in this ministry see assembly to connect and take out time from their usual routine to pray and create quality friendship. It also serves as a forum that exposes them to some spiritual truth as on human reality.



**Plate 4.6: A signboard highlighting women vigil in the church
(Personal Fieldwork June 2019)**

4.1.8 New Covenant Gospel Church

Located at No1, Araromi Street, McCauley bus stop Baiyeku. The women's meeting holds twice a week, on Tuesdays and Sundays after service. The meeting after service on Sunday is to pass crucial information to women regarding the functions and roles to take for the week. The Tuesday meeting between 6 pm and 7 pm, is set aside by women to pray. The hour-long prayer meeting was presided over by the Pastor's wife who doubles as the women president. The women are divided into four groups of different leaders. The group and the leader take care of the women's prayer meeting activities for the week. Each group is notified of when it is its turn; to give all attendees a sense of inclusiveness. There is a rotation within the group of who takes up a particular role when it is its turn. This is to allow any willing member an opportunity to play a role. Even though the Tuesday women's meeting is tag prayer hour, the group in charge for that week decides how the program is run.

Each meeting typically starts with an opening prayer said by a group member. It is usually very brief. The individual proceeds with a praise and worship session; which lasts for about 15 minutes. The prayer session proper which is taken up by another member of the group, and could last for about 30 minutes. Then comes the “word session” led by another member, which lasts for 10 minutes. Finally, the Women president takes over with a range of prayer requests which may include the protection of members' marriages against strange women and financial provision to protection of children. Once every quarter, the Pastor's wife who is also the Women's president, invites seasoned women of God with a track record in a particular area of expertise, to teach the women in those areas where she is proficient and relate it to everyday life. The quarterly meeting is on a Saturday, between the hours 10 am to 12noon; the participants are usually notified before the time so that they can look forward to it and be prepared to participate.

The meeting takes place in a relaxed atmosphere which encourages the women to hang around for a long time, even after the meeting. Soon after the service, they engage in having, drinks and snacks for consumption. With this, the quarterly meeting sometimes exceeds that timeframe normally set for it, and there is rarely any attendees' protest. The quarterly Women's meeting starts with an opening prayer, that could last five minutes. There is a session of praise that lasts about 15 minutes, and the introduction of guests, who are usually female pastors. The teaching session commences and lasts for an hour. The question and answer session takes over, lasting anything from thirty

minutes to an hour. After the conclusion of this session, there is a vote of thanks and a presentation of a gift to the guest minister. The benediction follows immediately.

4.2 Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics sought included age, educational qualification, ethnicity, and length of the marriage. Results are presented below:

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	72	21
26-35 years	102	30
36-45 years	78	22
46-55 years	66	19
55 years or more	28	8
Total	346	100

From table 4.2 above, ages 26-35 had the highest number of attendees in the women's prayer assemblies, followed by ages 36-45. The ages 26-45 can be referred to as the middle age in which most women enter into the institution of marriage, most of these respondents believed that it's better to start with God early in marriage, as it serves as a measure of security. From the table age, 55 or more had the lowest number of attendees, as most respondent within this age bracket has had a stable marriage life, so they offer mentorship for younger women in marriage and some of them, intercede for their children's marriage, who are young in marriage.

Table 4.3: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Secondary	39	11
OND	61	18
HND	26	7
Bachelors	182	53
Masters	32	9
Doctoral	6	2
Total	346	100

In Table 4.3, the educational qualifications of the respondents were highlighted. The highest attendees were women with bachelor's degrees. The highly educated women, with a doctoral degree, are very few (2%). Attendees with OND appear to be more than those with HND. It would appear that most women seem comfortable going into marriage with at least some sort of degree, but the push further beyond OND to HND seems to diminish with responsibilities that come with being married and the required home support system may be lacking. Some women prefer to go for a Bachelor's degree rather than HND, because it is perceived to be higher in value, even though this is not the case, in reality.

Table 4.4 Ethnicity of the Respondents

Ethnic groups	Frequency	Percent
Igbo	115	33
Yoruba	219	63
Hausa	12	4
Total	346	100

Table 4.4 reveals the ethnicity of the respondents. It is worthy of note that Igbo attendees were close in numbers to their Yoruba counterparts and in the Yoruba city of Ikorodu. This is possibly so because of people of Igbo origin who have lived within the community for a long time. The Hausa ethnic group has the least representation of 3.5 percent, this can be attributed to the few numbers of Hausa settlers in Ikorodu.

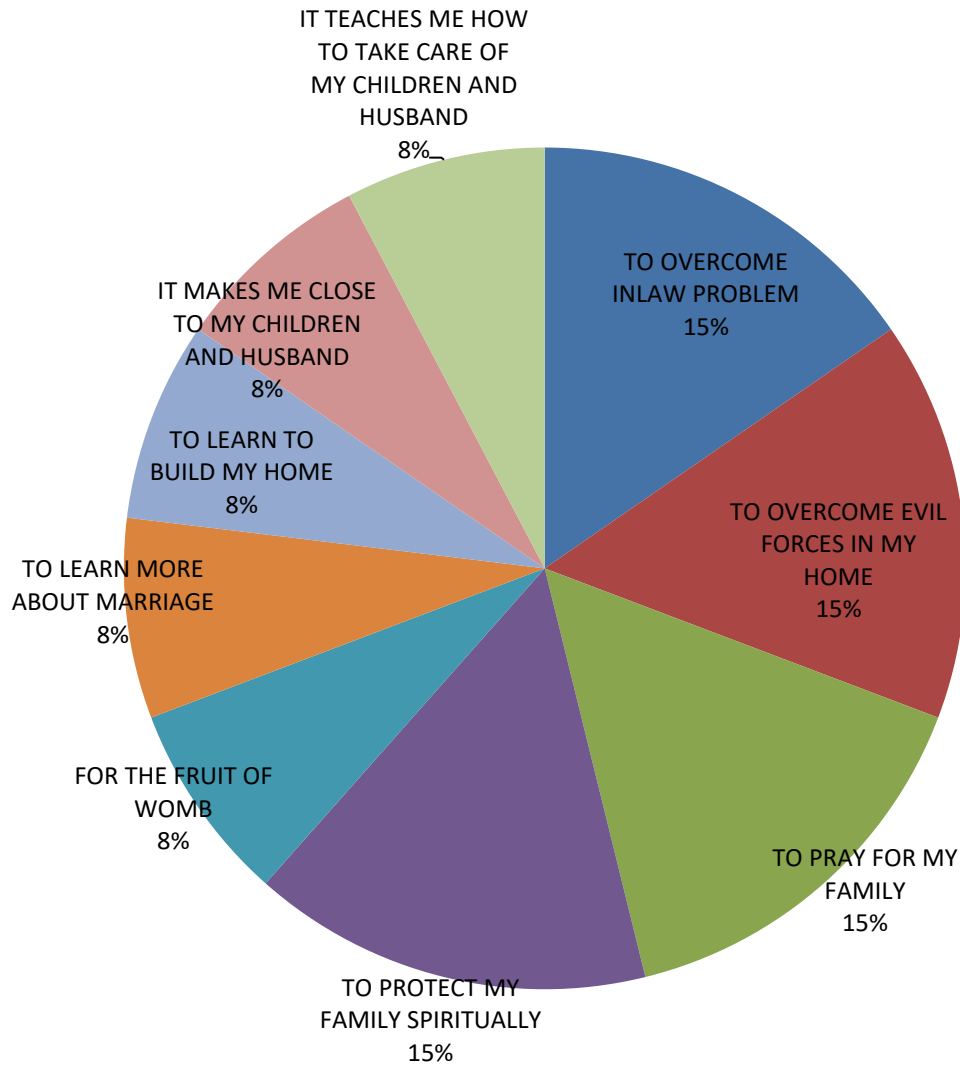
Table 4.5 Length of Marriage of Respondents

Length of Marriage	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	83	24
1-5 years	119	34
6-10 years	107	31
Above 10 years	37	11
Total	346	100

Table 4.5 showed the length of participants' marriage. The majority of attendees' marriage length is between 1-10 years (65%). This period is known as the adjustment period of marriage; which can be exciting and at the same time stressful for relationships (Harrar and Demaria 2006). It should be noted that participants whose marriages were over 10 years were the least present in the prayer assemblies. But those who had less than a year in marriage had a significant presence (24%) within the prayer assembly, suggesting that the older attendees had a longer length of marriage than the younger women.

4.3 Influence of Women Prayer Assemblies on Marriage Stability

Regarding the influence of women's prayer assemblies on the stability of marriages, a frequency distribution chart of 'reasons for attending women prayer assemblies' is presented as figure1, below and analyzed themes related to marital stability. The major impact of the women's prayer meetings includes “overcoming in-law problems”, “overcoming dark forces in their homes”. Other reasons are “how to care for their husbands and children” and “receiving the fruit of the womb”.

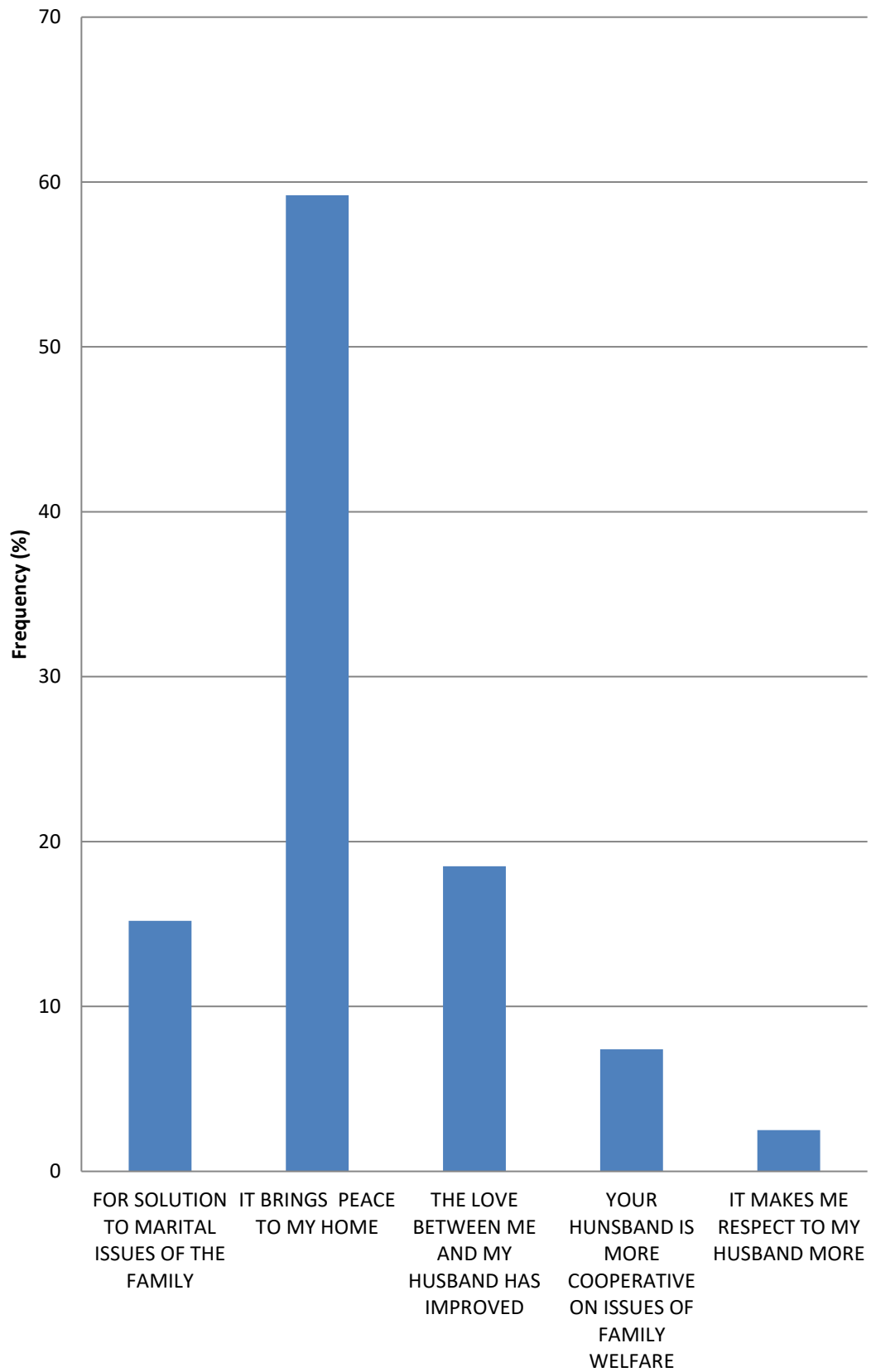


**Figure 4.2: Influence of women prayer assemblies on marriage stability
(Personal Fieldwork 2019)**

In the figure above, the chart is almost divided into two, one of 8% and the other 15%. The attendees attested to the fact that the women's prayer assemblies impact on the stability of their marriages. Some of their responses include; it helps me build my family; my request for the fruit of the womb was granted, to learn more about marriage, to learn to build my home, it brings me close to my children and husband, it teaches me how to take care of my children and my husband.

These highlighted themes have an 8% respondent rate. The themes of “overcoming in-laws problem”, “overcoming evil forces in my home”, “praying for my family”, “protecting my family spiritually”, all have 15%. The frequency appears to be higher in some themes (15%) and lower in others (8%) because of the attendees' perception of how these themes imparted their marriages on the preference scale.

In figure 2 below other themes that influence women's marriages are analysed.



**Figure 4.3: Influence of women prayer assemblies on marriage stability
(Personal Fieldwork 2019)**

In the figure above, other influences noted on marriage stability include, bringing peace to their homes (60%), many women believe this to be the most prominent of all impacts on their marriage. They also responded that the love between them and their husband has improved (19%) because teachings about marriage and family life do help them to be more tolerant of their spouses. The women also highlighted that the assemblies had impacted them in the area of “bringing solutions to their marital issues” (15%).

They attribute this to the prayers being prayed in the assemblies. Women also considered their husbands to be more cooperative on issues of family welfare (8%), as they have acquired wisdom in dealings with their husbands. The women also claim that the assemblies make them respect their husbands more (2%).

Table 4.6: Impact of Women Prayer Assemblies on stability of marriages

Prayer assembly impact	Response	Frequency	Percent
Do you think your participation in the women prayer assembly has impacted or influence the stability of your marriage	Yes	203	58.7
	Maybe	56	16.1
	No	79	22.8
	I don't know	8	2.4
	Total	346	100

From the Table 4.6 above, 58.7 percent of the participants, were certain that the Christian women prayer assemblies had an impact or had an influence in their marriages, 16.1 percent of the respondents were not so certain, this group tended towards agreeing that the prayer assemblies had an impact in their marriages, they were however not certain of the extent of the impact or influence. 22.8 percent of the respondent noted that the prayer assemblies did not have an influence on their marriage. This respondents noted that their choice of response stems from their observation that it's not only prayer that makes a marriage stable, however the attitudes of individuals within the marriage. 2.4 percent of the respondents noted that they didn't know. From the responses above, we can deduce that majority of the respondents which amount to 74.8 percent noted that the women prayer assemblies had an impact on their marriages.

To gain further insight on the influence of women's prayer assemblies on marriage stability, in-depth interviews were conducted among selected members in the churches, using simple random sampling. There were varied positions highlighted by the respondents for marriage stability. Some of the women believed that when a woman prays, her home becomes stable, as God always intervenes. Attending prayer meetings, and being able to pray, enhances proper child training as methods of dealing with children are taught. Their response also suggests that women must meet frequently, in the free atmosphere of the church, to discuss their marital problems without inhibition. For instance,

You know women in most cases, constitute the bulk of the membership of the church. We found out that there is a need for proper grooming, we celebrate ourselves, as a group, and meet to discuss issues about marriage.

Dr. Evelyn Umemezia/New Covenant Gospel Church. (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The need for frequent meetings by the women to pray was paramount as this in their view helps them in their marriages. It helps to expose them to the teachings of experienced individuals who are invited to give talks. The importance of Prayers cannot be overstated as seen in the quote below:

The journey of marriage has been far and deep, it's only God that can walk with someone in this marriage journey through continuous prayers. Once God supports you, no matter what, the journey will be successful. People have missed it and have gone astray from God because of wrong advice.

Deaconess Wajero/CAC. (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

“Walking with God in a marriage journey” refers to the relationship the woman has built with God through prayers and by doing the will of God (which are revealed through God’s words and teachings). This brings about the perceived support of God in their marriages which is believed to only give you advice as one with limited knowledge, only God knows all, so He is the better adviser. The key to fruitful prayer is a plea from the heart. Human life is full of ups and downs, prayer gives people the opportunity to pray to God for what humanity needs, and the hope that God can provide everything we need, as long as it conforms to his will. Johnson (2004) supports this point, that prayer should focus on needs. The scope of human needs varies according to the specific circumstances of the individual. This can range from basic physical needs to sustain life to the more complex challenges of marital stability. Some interviewees believe that it is better to tell people like God that they can meet their needs and have them in their hearts rather than talking about other people's problems. This research further confirms the above viewpoint and shows that there is a connection between prayer and marriage outcomes (such as stability).

Higher levels of religious beliefs are associated with a higher quality of marriage, satisfaction with the marriage, and a greater likelihood of maintaining the marriage (Wilcox & Nock, 2006). Couples who have been married longer show a higher level of commitment to prayer (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). The general level of prayer is related to adaptation to marriage, meeting the needs and expectations of the spouse, and adaptation to physical and mental changes caused by marriage (Sharlin, 1996). Even among people with unhappy marriages, greater confidence in prayer is associated with a new level of marital satisfaction (Wilcox, 2004).

One of our informants noted that before she joined the Women’s Prayer assembly, she and her husband had a lot of quarreling that sometimes lead to physical abuse, but because of her belief that God doesn’t like divorce, she decided to stay in her

marriage against advice from friends. She is of the notion that she now enjoys peace in her home, as God has been answering her prayers; and that the husband is now a changed person. She noted though that she has become more careful in the ways she speaks to him, especially when he is angry. A strong belief in marriage, as a lifetime commitment can also be linked to new levels of marriage stability and quality.

Well, from my experience, and from what I have heard from women, there have been positive changes. Let me also say there are also not too positive as I don't want to use a negative word. My personal experience has been positive; I have testimonies of healing and financial breakthrough and I have also seen others' lives transformed

Mrs. Olufunke Joseph/CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Mrs. Joseph's observation is echoed among many of the participants in the women's prayer assemblies, expressed in the verbatim content of the responses. There were cases in which involvement in women's prayer meetings did not yield desired results, as stated by one of the informants.

There was this case that came to my attention, sometimes ago about how going to all these prayer houses caused the separation. The couple had problems, so the woman went about looking for a solution, so she went to a particular prophet, who told her to go to a particular mountain, but she mustn't allow anyone to know where she was going, not even her husband.

-Mrs. Omisetan /CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The issue of not intimating the husband of her whereabouts did cause friction in her marriage. It is therefore important to consider ethical issues regarding prayers and relationships. One potential concern is that some people may incorporate problematic styles of relating into their prayers, raising the question of how one might address such problems without inappropriately infringing on the religious belief systems of spouses. Another question is how one could respond to, and be inclusive of spouses of

participants whose beliefs or prayer practices are very different from those of the group. Such issues have been addressed in similar studies (Beach et al., 2008a; 2008b); therefore, it is instructive to examine these issues in the context of the current study. Some of the respondents, during the interviews, gave detailed narrations of the challenges to marriage stability that women have faced attending women's meetings. These stemmed from the disapproval of some husbands of their wives' attending the meetings and ensuing misunderstanding between spouses emanating from issues relating to the timing of such prayer meetings. This is the view of Mrs. Godman:

“There was this time when we use to have our women prayer meeting as a vigil, one of the women’s husbands came around drunk around 1 am and start shouting that they should release his wife to him, thankfully, my husband, the bishop, was around that night. He was having his vigil in his office. It was his intervention and that of other men within the arena that saved us that day as the man came with a bottle saying he will smash anyone who resists him from taking his wife”

-Mrs. Godman/Overcomers Ministry (PersonalFieldwork2018)

There was also the case highlighted by an informant, Mrs. Joseph, in which the marriage was broken as a direct result of attending prayer meetings and religious associations. The couple, according to her, had problems; so the woman went about looking for a solution. She went to a prophet and she was told to go to a particular mountain but warned not to inform anyone, including her husband. She was later told that her husband was the source of their problem. Her frequent outings drew suspicions from her husband who thought she was becoming promiscuous. Eventually, the union was disrupted, as the woman later took the option of abandoning the relationship as her solution to the problem.

Later when the husband found out, he didn’t exercise patience, he didn’t believe she went to pray; he thought that she just went out on a promiscuous

mission. Not coming home on the second day got the husband very angry; he then called her to come home again, that if she didn't, he was going to kill her. By the time she came back home, she did it in such a way that, she came back when she knew the husband must have gone back to Lagos and came with a truck to pack her load and her children out of the man's house. She thought that the problem was too much, that she isn't ready to die.

Mrs. Olufunke Joseph/CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The case suggests that involvement in prayer meetings may have some negative impact on marriages, concerning issues of religious support styles and content of prayers. It is instructive to highlight that the value of prayers to the spouses and their family can be of beneficence as it is believed that inviting the divine into their marriage makes it stable. While avoiding themes of retribution and an unfavorable change in relationships and family lifestyle, through patience and communication with the spouse; group leaders are encouraged to function only in their role as providers of advice regarding marital enhancement.

Table 4.7: Choice of a woman leaving her marriage

Leaving a marriage for any reason	Response	Frequency	Percent
Do you think a woman should leave her marriage for any reason	Yes	87	25.2
	No	203	58.7
	I don't know	56	16.1
	Total	346	100

Table 4.7, above shows that 25.2 percent of the respondent believes that a woman can choose to leave her marriage for a variety of reasons, including neglect, domestic abuse, and spousal violence. They believe that for a marriage to be stable, there must be peace in the home and in situations where the woman's life is in danger, especially after prayers have been said and interventions from respected people have been made. They feel that at such moment, leaving the marriage is in the best interests of the woman. The majority of respondents (58.7 percent) agreed that a woman should not leave her marriage for whatever reason. Their belief derives from the sacredness of marriage and the significance of the vows made at the altar, which are till death do us part, as such women should be able to bear in marriage as it is a virtue of long suffering for those women since no marriage is ever simple. 16.1 percent of the respondents were unable to make a decision.

Buttersing the above, a few of the informants in the interviews conducted concerning the issue of marriage and prayers, were critical of why women believed so much in prayer in solving their marital issues, and find it difficult to sort out their differences in a mature way, that is beneficial to both parties. Dr. Aletan, a lecturer at the University of Lagos, who resides in Ikorodu and a member of one of the prayer assemblies, noted that issues of marriage are sensitive because it involves two people with different personalities having to live together forever. It was her opinion that one cannot change someone unwilling to change. Therefore, no amount of prayers could lead to change in situations without personal efforts. To her, vulnerable women may end up dying untimely, if they believe they cannot divorce their husbands; even in the face of serious abuse. Total dependence on prayers and supplications to God to change personal dilemmas in an abusive marriage is misleading and could have negative consequences. Indeed as one informant noted;

‘Don’t worry, God hates divorce, keep praying for him. God will touch his heart and try not to do what he doesn’t want, don’t argue with him’

Mrs. Damilola Agbaje /New Covenant Gospel Church (Personal Fieldwork 2018)

The above admonition refers back to the kind of oppression a woman may be trying to break free from and could have her option of freedom closed in the context of physical violence. Dr. Aletan concluded that, should the marriage not be working, after

one has tried to seek a solution, and one must have prayed, then one should get out of the marriage. Marriage is not by force, the two parties must be willing to make it work. A similar view was shared by Mrs Nwanneka, who believe that prayer is important in marriage, just as it is important in every other aspect of life, she however believes that communication between couples and holding on to individual side of the bargain can be stabilise a marriage.

In further buttressing this view, Mrs. Ariyo recounted a case about a very close family, a pastor, and his wife. The wife had alleged severally that, her husband (who is a pastor) is promiscuous; claiming that he sleeps around with female members of the church. The woman prayed, fasted got other pastors to intervene, but all efforts were in vain as her husband's vices only got worse. Most times, it was the woman that will go back to apologize to her husband. This, in a way, fueled the man's ego, and the audacity to do more. On one particular occasion, she caught her husband in bed with another female church member in their home. At this point, she had had enough, so she moved her things out of the house. Upon realizing that his wife was gone for good, he started calling people to intervene.

However, he was going about it without a sense of remorse. He was telling people to mandate her to come back because as a pastor's wife, her place was beside him always. He was more concerned about his image among members of the congregation. The woman on the other hand vowed never to go back to him, noting that since he wants to live his life in a promiscuous way, he should go ahead and turn his house into a brothel if he wants to:

This is an issue that we are still trying to intervene in. Maybe it will get resolved or not I don't know, but sincerely I don't think so. Will you now tell me that a pastor's wife, hasn't prayed enough? Am sure she did have. The issue of prayer and marriage stability doesn't make sense to me, don't get me wrong, I believe in the efficacy of prayer and that God answers prayers. But you can't turn God into a magician because God is not. You can pray but there must be individual accountability to the marriage.

Mrs. Ariyo/New Covenant Gospel Church (Personal Fieldwork 2018)

A similar position is held by another informant who said she did not really like women prayer assemblies. According to her, since she got married, she had attended the women's prayer assembly a few times. But her complaint is the continuous requests for financial contributions towards different projects. Her major reason for joining the women's group however is that church members needed to belong to a fellowship to be eligible for church support during ceremonies such as weddings, naming, burials, etc. Left to her, she would prefer not to belong to any church group as the women group had not added anything significant to her life. She believed that prayers could be done during general church programs or at home without the need for women's prayer assemblies. Her view is that God is everywhere. She noted that Prayer alone cannot sustain a marriage:

No, prayer alone cannot sustain a marriage, you can be spiritual and your marriage still fail, the practical point of view is important, when you pray and you don't practicalise it, a practical show of love in your house by submitting to your husband after praying, by obeying your husbands, by giving him regular sex which a lot of married couples especially Christians think is wayward, they think its sin, they think even in marriage, it's not holy, which is a misconception.

Mrs. Success Akokem, Christ Apostolic Church (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Establishing a causal relationship between prayer and the outcome of the marriage is also complicated by the mediating role of gender. Hansen (2007) believes that women develop values of compassion, self-sacrifice, obedience, and humility based on gender and prayer, leading to lower expectations of significant benefits from marriage while remaining satisfied regardless of the level of beliefs and religion. When spouses have a higher level of common religious beliefs, common prayer beliefs about the sanctity of marriage, and common religious beliefs about lifelong marriage, there also appears to be an interaction between prayer and the outcome of the marriage (Wilcox & Wolfinger, 2016). Hence as Mrs. Janet Oboh noted:

Prayer can affect the outcomes of marriage because prayer helps every other thing. Prayer, in the sense

that wisdom is gotten from God. Everything you need to do in adjusting your life and to get the right signals from the Holy Spirit, prayer alone can do it. When you are sensitive in the spirit, you will get signals from the place of prayer.

Mrs. Janet Oboh/Redeemed Christian Church of God (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The couple's commitment to prayer is also related to the positive outcome of the marriage. According to Kusner and colleagues (2014), an increased level of commitment to prayer between spouses, combined with a common belief in marriage sanctification, can reduce the possibility of negative attitudes during the conflict. When participating in a religious group, the commitment to prayer affects people's daily life decisions, emphasizing the importance of the role of religion in daily decisions.

According to Mrs. Chijioke, who thinks that prayer helps sustain marriage relationships. She joined a women's program on the advice of a friend. It was during this period, she and her husband had no job and were virtually begging to feed. Then a friend asked her to join the good women group in the hope that things could get better. After she joined, miraculously, her husband got a job which made them better off financially. She believes that it was her affiliation and the help of the women's prayer group that brought her closer to God who helped them. Further excerpts from her transcript showed that she was able to meet with other women and did benefit from such meetings such that her quality of English expressions has improved through constant interactions with her peers in the group. Through networking within the group, she was able to secure a good job:

I have a job, my husband has a job, my life is better off. That's why when we left our former parish to this new one, I still maintained attending the meeting in our former parish. I have to keep attending because I know God has more to do for me and my family. My husband is very happy that I joined, he keeps saying since I joined good things have been happening in our lives, so it has impacted my marriage positively like never before.

Despite the results pointed out in previous studies, which indicate a positive link between prayer and marital results, there are four major potentially dangerous denominations of taking these results. First, the magnitude of the impact in previous studies is usually small and can easily be dismissed as insignificant or exaggerated (Maoni and Kano, 2014). Second, virtuous non-religious groups that have a balance between prayer and the positive outcome of marriage are often promoted; therefore, the positive effect may not be the result of prayer (2001 Sullivan). Third, most studies have been unable to unravel the beneficial effects of religion from the potentially harmful effects of marriage (Maoni 1999). Fourth, there are self-reports of over-dependent relationship spouses in previous studies (Goodman and Dollahite 2006).

Other research has emphasized the potential importance of prayer in that it is the preferred way to deal with adversity among Africans (Chatters, Taylor, Jackson and Lincoln, 2008, Ellison and Taylor, 1996, Fowler and Mountain, 2004). It is related to feelings of peace, guidance, and efforts to manage adversity (Newlin, Knafl, and Melkus, 2002). In the face of social, political, and economic oppression, spirituality in prayer is said to promote hope (Matisse, 2002; Newlin et al., 2002). This has led several authors to call for greater attention to spirituality in marriage enhancement programs designed for couples (Ooms & Wilson, 2004; Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008).

Spirituality is defined as a relationship with God or a higher authority, which transcends religious participation and manifests itself through private prayer and meditation or through seeking spiritual guidance in daily decision-making (Upchurch and Mueller, 2005). Spirituality defined in this way has substantial cultural resonance for married African women because it is embedded in a culturally sensitive framework compatible with prayer and can increase efficiency through promises. The church is often viewed as a legitimate home that promotes commitments aimed at providing marital stability by strengthening family ties (Brown, Orbuch, and Bauermeister, 2008). Among African women, religious participation is participation in prayer meetings and participation in the church, and it is assumed to be the quality of the relationship or any other positive family outcome (Brody, Stoneman, Flor & McCrary, 1994; Taylor, Mattis, and Chatters, 1999). An informant has this to say:

The best thing is that you have to pray before getting married, for you not to marry the wrong man. God is going to show you your man and you are going to enjoy peace all through. Prayers by couples secure home; a prayerless woman is a powerless woman and likewise, a powerless person means the person cannot pray. Even your husband must be prayerful so that the home can be secured through prayer

Mrs. Titilayo Wood/ Redeemed Christian Church of God (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The above quote correlates with the earlier assertion that women's prayer assemblies can lead to marital enrichment and stability.

4.4 Benefits of Women's Prayer Assemblies

Table 4.5.1 below presents the benefit of attending women's prayer assemblies, using percentage frequency distribution.

Table 4.8: Benefits of women's prayer assemblies

	Response	Frequency	Percent
Have these programmes been of benefit to you?	Absolutely	191	55
	Sometimes	117	34
	I don't know	28	8
	Somehow	6	2
	Not at all	4	1
	Total	346	100

Results indicated in Table 4.8 show that the majority (55%) of the participants claimed to have benefitted absolutely from the women's prayer assemblies. This, they say is because they believe that every one of their prayers regarding their marriage, has been answered. Hence, they think there is merit in attending the programme of the assemblies. The respondents cut across age brackets, with more of those within the age bracket of 55 years and more, absolutely in support.

A significant number (34%) claimed that they sometimes benefit from women's prayer meetings, this they attribute to benefits beyond the answered prayers, which could include better and informed social interactions and lifting of financial constraints, The age bracket of most of the respondents was between 26 and 45. Only a small proportion (1%) of the respondents claimed not to benefit at all from the women's prayer assemblies. They would rather not belong to the women group, but the fact that it is mandatory in their church for every woman to do so.

Another benefit of women's prayer assemblies that was highlighted by the majority of the participants is the opportunity for women to converge and pray for the success and stability of their marriage. One of the interviewees described prayer as very important in every marriage, and in every relationship. She opined that if one really wants to enjoy marriage, and also to enjoy the success and peace in a marriage, it means one must be a prayer warrior, even without one's husband knowing. This suggests that irrespective of the spouse's disposition to prayer, a woman must always pray. Another interviewee said that prayer can make marriage be heaven on earth if there is a (women) group that is interceding on behalf of the marriage. Yet another participant made emphasis on how wives should treat their husbands like a baby and pray for them every morning, for God to release blessings that will make their day successful. This is what Mrs. Ajibade has to say:

Yes, it (prayer assemblies) has helped marriage stability. There are situations that women who have issues in their home, confide in some of our leaders in the group and they counsel them on how to handle such situations. There are even situations that will require some of the women leaders to physically and intervene in family matters and they have been able to sort out those issues that could have escalated into bigger problems.

Table 4.9: Benefits of wellbeing from women prayer assemblies

Benefit of well-being	Response	Frequency	Percent
Do you think your participation in the prayer group is beneficial to your well-being in general?	Absolutely	220	63
	Sometimes	119	34
	Somehow	5	2
	Not at all	2	1
	Total	346	100

Results from table 4.9 show that 63% of the respondents were certain that their participation in the prayer group has been beneficial to their wellbeing in general. By well-being, they mean that it has positively impacted every aspect of their lives. The majority of respondents in the marriage length of 10 years and above. The respondents' age cut across the board. 34 percent, of respondents, a significant number noted that the women's prayer assembly is sometimes beneficial to their general wellbeing. This they view in regards to other aspects of human interactions outside of prayers, such interaction as communication, however, three percent of the respondents thought otherwise. Many of them are of the view that it is because the church has made it mandatory to belong to the women group, that they felt constrained to be members. The conclusion is that more of the women have positive health and wellbeing gains from attending women's prayer assemblies.

Further analysis on the specific benefits of women's prayer assemblies among the participants using the percentage reveals the information presented in the chart below, as figure 4.4.

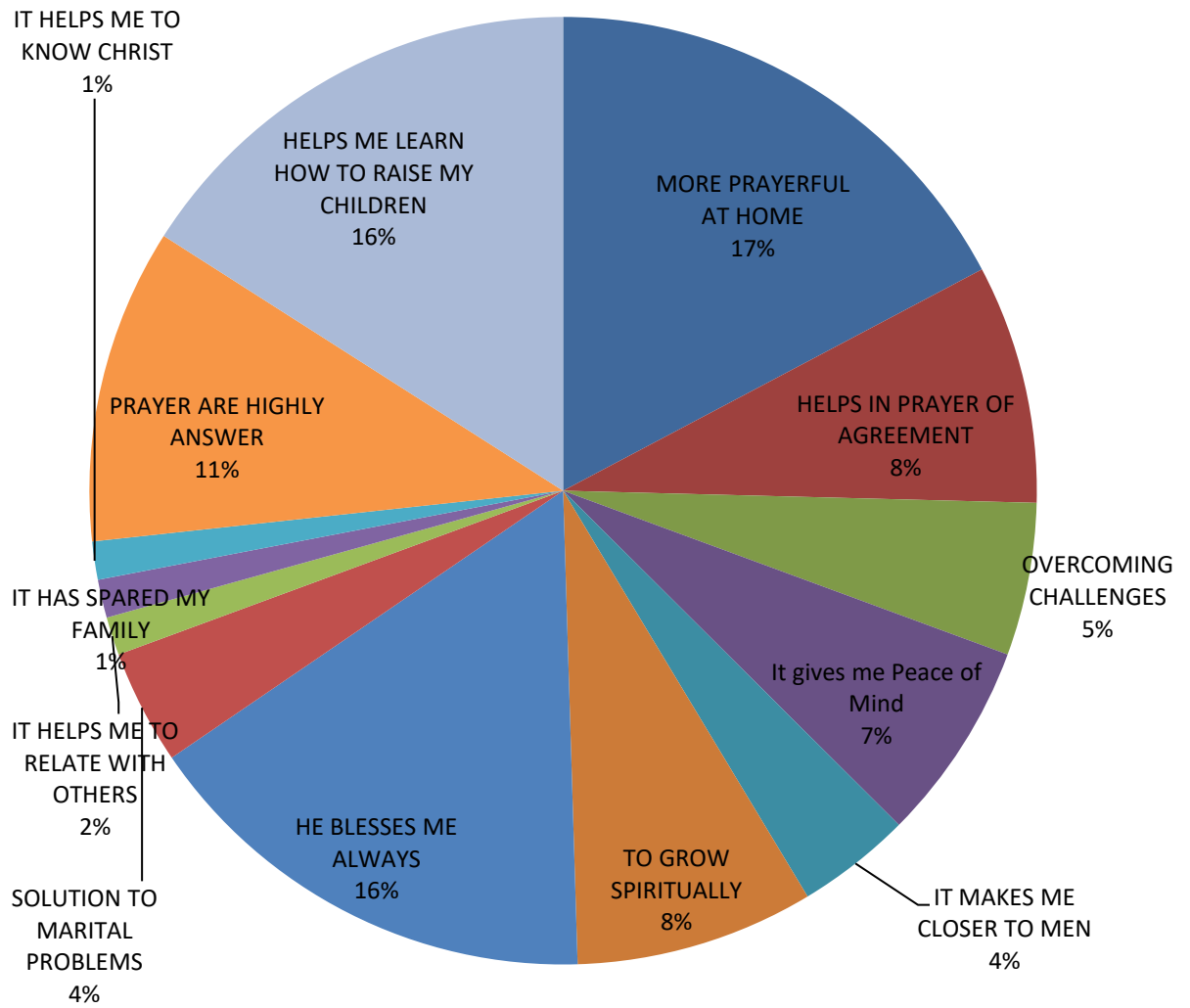


Figure 4.4: Specific benefits of women prayer assemblies (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Results in figure 4.4 show the significant percentages of the women who highlighted specific benefits from the assemblies that they attended. 17% of the respondents said it makes them more prayerful at home. 16% of the respondents opined that the meetings helped raise their children in godly ways. 11% of the respondents thought that prayers are answered during the assemblies. Other emergent themes highlighted included spiritual growth (8%), overcoming challenges/problems (5%), family protection (1%), and provision of inner peace (7%).

Some informants believe that church-based support networks provide members with multiple benefits, including psychological (for example, positive self-esteem, self-esteem), social (for example, perceptual and objective social support), and material (for example, money, services, commodity).

Previous studies and theories on church-based support networks (Goodman and Dollahite 2006) have shown that they can effectively deal with problems in life, including providing specific strategies and methods to deal with problems; assisting in problem definition (ie reconstruction) and resolution; adjustment Respond to difficult emotions and reinforce self-awareness (e.g., self-esteem, control) that fades in the face of stress (Goodman and Dollahite 2006).

Support from church members is related to positive health and health outcomes, such as self-assessed health status, life satisfaction, and low mortality. They claimed that this was the result of their participation in women's prayer meetings. The support of church members provides a protective factor for women.

Women have a lot of issues they go through; and as Christian women, they come together to pray on issues and even offer some kind of assistance to those who need it. Some people are looking for the fruit of the womb, some have problems with in-laws. We pray together and God answers us, especially here in CAC.

Deaconess Wajero/CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Social groups or support networks are related to understanding church-based gatherings, and this is where women's prayer meetings are infused with moral force or a sense of unity (Berger 1967). All members of the church are unlikely to act as supporters of one person or family. But they express the goals and objectives that some members of the church (embedded in the concept of pastoral care) can grapple with, such as

providing companionship, spiritual sustenance, and ensuring the physical and mental health of members in need. Therefore, church membership itself appears to provide the necessary links to meet individual needs.

As important as some of the positive and protective characteristics of church support, certain aspects of the church support network can also undermine mental health. Especially things like gossip, small differences, insults, and criticisms. Research has shown that these types of self-determination may be related to psychological distress and depressive symptoms (Ellison et al. 2009, Ross 1990). In this regard, further comments from the informants reveal;

It's either they are asking the members to contribute for one thing or the other. Today, they can say one of us lost someone, so we should contribute. You know the expenses are just too numerous..... and if you don't contribute, there is usually an unspoken protest that you get, that makes you feel bad when you are there

Mrs. Abisola Temitogba/ New Covenant Gospel Church (Fieldwork 2019)

There is a tendency towards negative support when a financial burden is placed on members, which is not convenient for some members of the group. But, then, there is this positive attitude;

Am so happy I am a member of this women's group. When my friend initially invited me, I was a bit reluctant, as I felt I may not be able to cope. But since I joined, the group has organized series of training programmes for women, before I came here, I didn't have any skills, I just do any petty work that I see. Now, I can produce liquid soap, disinfectants, and the rest.

-Mrs. Ejiro Ezekiel/ Joy Cometh Ministries (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The frequent presence of a partner's partner may be inversely proportional to the dissolution of the marriage (Call & Heaton, 1997; Ellison, Bartkowski, & Anderson, 1999). Sometimes, first of all, because attendance shows the family's universal religious commitment, which can contribute to a richer spiritual life. However, this may be seen as an external manifestation of the virtues of love, altruism, caring, and self-sacrifice in marriage and family relationships (Mahoney et al., 1999).

Second, regular participants can obtain moral support for their marriage from like-minded behaviors and church members, or in a group environment, and participate more in organized activities. This participation helps promote marriage commitments, provide psychological rewards, reduce misunderstandings, promote conflict resolution, and help resolve other issues that may strain the marriage, and prevent the dissolution of marriages that may violate religious norms (Mahoney, et al 1999).

The third and final point is when the congregation provides formal ministries, seminars, and other religious knowledge resources to enrich marriage (Wilcox, Chaves, & Franz, 2004), for example, through counseling and pastoral services Counseling, which can help resolve relationship problems, promote persistence, and limit separation or divorce. Therefore, in addition to their religious participation and commitment, spouses may have theological conservatism against the dissolution of marriage (Dobson, 1999).

In other words, those who regard the Bible as the inerrant word of God, as the source of authoritative guidance for human affairs (presumably including family life), may be familiar with emphasizing what the essence should be and the meaning of spiritual marriage. The most prominent of these are the prohibitions found during the investigation: "Faithful to marriage" and "Respect for marriage". From the standpoint of our interviewees, women who hold conservative theological beliefs about the Bible are unlikely to separate or divorce over time.

Khan (1979) further identified the "support fleet" as a functional element, incorporating the concept that the support network is a dynamic entity, which can continue over time and provide a positive life course. Convoy support members related to life events (i.e. death, divorce, relocation) vary in size, thus increasing new members or decreasing old members (Khan & Antonucci, 1980).

The concept of a support team is the fact that certain team members can share a long history of supportive relationships with the target person. When people experience a series of events and life transitions, accompanied by a relatively stable group of

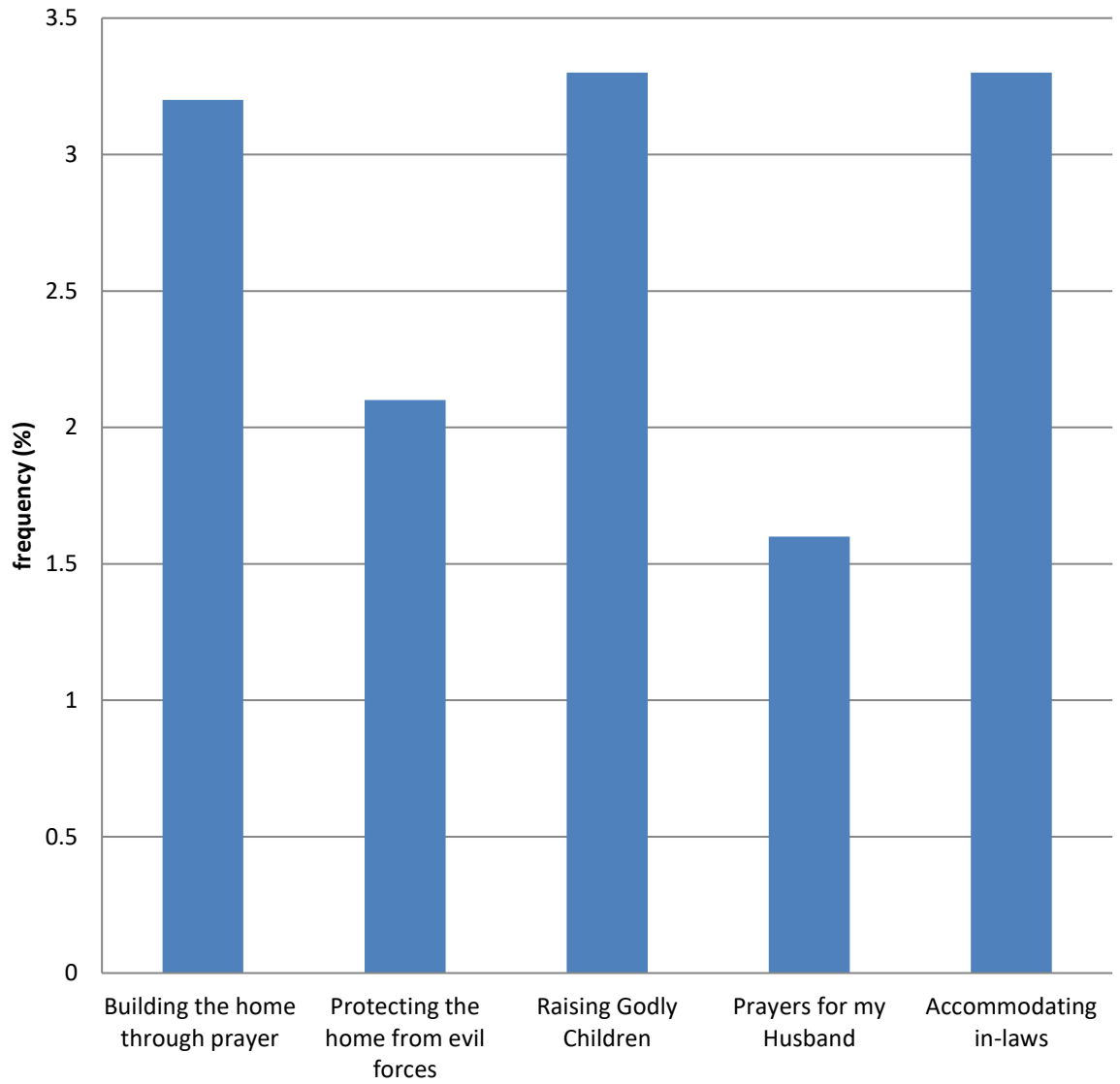
supporters, the quality of accompaniment from the church's support network is obvious. Furthermore, the church even formalized and ritualized important life events. Especially the baptism of the newborn (upbringing), marriage, final ceremony, and funeral (death). Generally speaking, the churches covered in this study provide support for the individual's progress through the life cycle.

4.5 Family issues raised in Women Prayer Assemblies

Few social groups in the church support most of their lives in the church. People who were initially connected to the church when they were young can continue to be members for many years because they are still in the custody of their parents; but due to changes in lifestyle or location, they go to other churches as adults. However, several generations of a family can also be active in the church for a long time.

The positive role of the "convoy quality" of the church support network has become more obvious, as people have experienced some life events and changes, accompanied by a relatively stable group of individuals, through events of formalization and ritualization of the church, such as baptism. Newborn (upbringing), marriage and final ceremonies, and funerals (death).

The frequency distribution in figure 4.5 below shows some of the issues raised in women's prayer assemblies.



**Figure 4.5: Family issues raised in women prayer assemblies
(Fieldwork 2019)**

Figure 4.5 shows the family issues raised in women's prayer assemblies. The family issues highlighted by the respondents which were not limited to a particular choice included building the home (85%); protection from evil forces (60%); raising Godly children (95%); prayers for husband and in-laws (95%). Similar issues are highlighted in the transcripts of interviewees' responses, for instance, witchcraft/sorcery emanated as an issue in one of the narratives. After several efforts to cure an ailment, a house help confessed to being behind the sickness. When the matter was taken to a prayer meeting of one of the churches, the interviewee noted:

We were going to an orthodox church before, then my husband became very ill, it was a strange sickness, there was nothing we didn't do, even his cousin that was a doctor tried his best to no avail, not until when I was invited to this prayer meeting. It was from there it was revealed to us that the source of the sickness was the girl who was staying with us at the time, the lady in question was daddy's relative, she later confessed that she was the one responsible for the sickness

Deaconess Wajero/CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

The Christian view is that evil comes from Satan and personal sin. There is also a traditional African view that evil is mainly related to witchcraft and witchcraft. These two evil visions are not opposed; as usual, many people surveyed believe that Satan himself is the inspiration for witchcraft and witchcraft. Some people even consider witchcraft to be synonymous with Satan (Bosch 1987).

Different members of the prayer meeting group have similar understandings of liberation from evil forces. Therefore, people understand that a person can get out of trouble by reading the Bible, praying, and attending church. But some other informants have different ideas. They believe that a person can free himself from the adversity of Satan. The dominant perspective noted in the many but varied responses is that deliverance is possible when we

Pray for children. Sometimes there could be a message to the church that we should pray for all children; and apart from that, a woman needs to personally pray for her children, because she does not know where they are. You can ask for their protection and good association or companies, especially those in the universities so that they don't join cults and do not depart from what had been taught to them at home.

Deaconess Adewole Oluwabunmi/CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Various responses suggest intercessory prayers for families, including children and husbands. Some of the related verbatim responses and discussions are highlighted below, from an informant;

The reason I go for the women's prayer group is for fellowship. I go with my brethren to church, to pray for my family, to stand in the gap for them. That's the reason why I go there; so, it's of great benefit for both my husband and children.

Mrs. Oshodi/Joy cometh Ministries (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

As one informant in this study stated, throughout the New Testament, there are repeated warnings to pray for one another, pray for the church, pray for leaders, pray for the sick, pray for sinners, and pray for all mankind. Bonhoeffer (1954) pointed this out, thus recognizing a personal discipline that allows people to "serve every day", we owe it to God and to others. Intercession is a gift of God's grace to every Christian community and every Christian (Bonhoeffer 1954).

Praying for another person is a practice that has received much research recently, especially in the area of intercession for physical healing and relationship reconciliation (Brown 2012, Blanton 2015). Generally speaking, intercession within a community of faith has its meaning:

When a woman prays, the children take it in and learn from it. A woman must know how to teach her children how to pray, and the way the child should go. Like my children, both night and day they go to church. We have taught them how to fast and pray. Only God can make us overcome the challenges of life. However, that the children are on their own, and they can do all these things without any problem. None of them has departed from it.

Mrs. Caroline Christian/We are Alive in Him Overcomer's Ministries, (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

In various social settings, prayer seems to have a real impact on social relationships. In an intimate setting, such as a family, when children learn the art of prayer, the effect becomes more obvious. The most studied relationships affected by prayer are those of a couple and/or married couples (Butler, Stott & Gardner, 2002). According to their research, for couples in conflict, and what happens if they use prayer of intercession, a conflict resolution technique has emerged for religious couples. The results of their research show that "prayer can help resolve the conflict process by reducing contempt, hostility, and hostility, and reducing emotional reactions," and "improving effective spousal attention to relationships and behaviors that are beneficial to their partners" (Butler, Stott and Gardner, 2002).

Table 4.10: In-law perceptions of women prayer meetings

In-law Perceptions	Response	Frequency	Percent
Do your in-laws or anyone outside your immediate family complain about your involvement in these prayer meeting	Yes	36	10
	No	302	87
	I don't know	9	3
	Total	346	100

Results presented in Table 4.10 show that the majority (87%) of the respondents reported that their in-laws were not against their involvement in women's prayer meetings. 10% of the respondents affirmed that their in-laws complained about their involvement in women's prayer meetings, as they believe it takes time out of their home responsibilities. However, contextual factors, such as an established level of warmth and rapport between wives and in-laws, play a significant role in cases where involvement in religious activities is frowned upon. Thus, wife and in-law rivalry may prompt sarcastic comments or complaints about wives' religious activities from in-laws. Also, wives, whose in-laws are of another faith, may not take kindly to a woman who attends a church-based women's prayer assembly.



Plate 4.7: The researcher and interviewing one of the leaders of women prayer assembly

Just like in the case of Mrs. Ajayi, a member of the “Good women” in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, who has been married for over 25 years, who affirmed that her husband is a Muslim and his relatives wanted her to change her faith at the inception of her marriage. But her husband had made a promise to her and her parent before marriage to let her continue to go to church. This promise the husband has kept, to the displeasure of his family. Initially, they were averse to the idea of her going for anything Christian, much more a women's fellowship within the church, but with the defense of her husband, they have long come to terms with it.

Over the years, researchers have been studying the relationship between religious beliefs and marriage. Most research is based on the view that more religious couples are more likely to have happy and stable marriages. Preliminary observations of the empirical results of these studies seem to generally support the idea of a happy marriage because it is religious (Wilson & Musick, 1996; Kunz & Albrecht, 1977).

It is well known that women who go to church frequently are more satisfied with the marriage, less likely to have domestic violence for a long time (Ellison, Bartkowski, & Anderson, 1999), and less likely to divorce (Bahr & Chadwick, 1985; Glenn & Supancic, 1984)). Women with higher scores on broader religious beliefs also proved to be happier (Mahoney, Pargament, Jewell, Swank, Scott, Emory, & Rye, 1999) and have more stable marriages (White & Booth, 1991). In this regard, Mrs. Abiola Ajayi comments are not out of step:

I am happy in marriage because in our women's prayer meetings we are taught how to live in harmony with our husbands. We even have prayer sessions for our marriages and our husbands in which we commit our family to God for guidance and protection. And it has been well with us. If necessary, we do visit some families to offer support.

Mrs. Abiola Ajayi /CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Women play many different social roles every day, such as taking care of the family, preparing meals among other things. These social roles help define who they are, what they do, what they think, how they feel about things, how they use their time, and how they use physical space. For Super (1990), the combination of personal marital life roles (ie work, family, religious groups) may lead to negative effects of stress or

positive satisfaction results, depending on the importance of each role in the individual life. The imbalance between social roles becomes the main source of personal stress, as individuals continue to strive to achieve a balance between roles (Frone, 2003). Women hope that religious gatherings can provide them with a way to deal with conflicts between different life domains. For instance;

I like to come here to pray. Before now, my husband and I use to have issues. A whole lot of issues use to result in shouting matches. Even neighbors do have to intervene. This has continued for a while until my friend brought me to this women's fellowship, where I get to pray about a lot of things bothering me and learn a lot about marriage. I feel better about my marriage now. Though we are not yet there, we are far better than the way we were before.

Mrs. Christina Idemudia, Joy cometh Ministries, (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Those members who go into prayer assemblies bring a reservoir of personal experiences with them which they face in stressful life situations. Pargament (1997), for instance, noted the imbalance of time and commitment between work and family, can lead one to be drained of personal resources:

The prayer meeting is ok, I don't have anything against it, it's just that the contributions that we have to make can be sometimes hectic, especially for some of us that are still praying for a job or a viable business.

Mrs. Ujulu, We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries, Personal fieldwork 2019

An individual's participation in religion can affect the way the person manages all other aspects of life. For many people, religion is a way of life (Pargament, 1997), so religious participation can provide people with a framework for life. Those apply to the widest range of human experience (Pargament, 1997). It can also serve as an important source of ethical frameworks and can shape the understanding of "ideal" family arrangements and expectations.

The prayers in our women's prayer group had help to stabilize many marriages and keep the home intact. There are various times that I have to pray for my marriage, especially when there are some challenges. Even my husband appreciates my going to the prayer meetings because sometimes he used to remind me about the meetings so I don't forget to attend.

Mrs. Sunmola Olubunmi Joy Cometh Ministries (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Despite the widespread use of prayer (McCullough & Larson, 1999) and its professed influence on people's lives (McCaffrey & Eisenberg, 2004), as noted in our sample, the vast majority pray regularly concerned with their spouse in one form or the other; like doing a quiet time or having time to pray with their family at a specific time of the day. Thereby suggesting that the spiritual dimension of their relationship is salient.

4.6 Spousal Support and Consent for Women Prayer Meetings

Since this study focuses on women who attended prayer meetings have it is pertinent to understand the level of support and consent that informants received from their husbands. In line with the African context of patriarchal leadership, the support and consent of the husband are needed before involvement in most activities.

Table 4.11: Spousal Awareness of Women Prayer Meetings

Husband's awareness	Response	Frequency	Percent
Is your husband aware of your coming to the program	Yes	222	64
	No	118	34
	I don't know	6	2
	Total	346	100

Results from Table 4.11 show that the majority (64%) of the respondents claimed that their spouses were aware of their involvement in women's prayer assemblies while 34% claimed that their spouses were not aware of their involvement in women's prayer assemblies. This outcome implies that some of the women participated in women's prayer assemblies without the knowledge of their spouses. A plausible perspective may be that some of these husbands are aware that their wives go to these assemblies but do not have specific details of the activities.

Table 4.12: Willingness to attend meeting in spite of husband's disapproval

Group attendance and husband's disapproval	Response	Frequency	Percent
Will you be willing to attend the meeting if your husband disapprove?	Yes	128	37
	Maybe	42	12
	No	178	51
	Total	346	100

Results from Table 4.12 show that 37.0% of the respondents affirmed their willingness to continue attending the women prayer meetings if their spouses withdrew support for such activities, while 41.2% of the respondents reported that would abide by their spouse's decision not to be involved in women prayer assemblies if such a scenario arose. The results portray the significant conflict that could arise in choosing between being a good wife and being a good servant of God. Women that are not able to reconcile such conflicts may end up straining their marriage relationships.

As the study revealed, in Table 4.11, 34% of the women in this study said that their husbands are not aware of their commitment to prayers meetings. In addition, in Table 4.12, 37.0% of the respondents are willing to go against their husband's will, if he disapproved of their going to the women's prayer meeting. This implies that many women, though not in the majority would challenge their husband's authority on their movement and their religiosity.

Husbands seem to view women's gatherings as a source of wife gossip; not necessarily because of the value of the meeting (Daneel 1990). Similarly, some women in the study of Dzivhani (1992) in Zimbabwe believe that women may be the target of witchcraft during women's gatherings.

In general, many wives continue to rely on their husbands financially due to the diversity of lifestyles. Whether they participate in social gatherings depends on their husbands' income and welfare (Finch, 2013). This is especially true for the members of the church women's groups we studied. In a report by Douglas (1995), 29% of the women members of the prayer meeting were employed outside the family. 10% are full-time jobs, another 19% are part-time jobs. The vast majority (71%) are full-time housewives and are completely dependent on their husbands' income. Therefore, this means that full-time housewives need the authority and permission of their husbands to participate in extracurricular activities at church. Mrs. Damilola Agbaje said

If my husband tells me to stop attending this meeting, I will. Because as a wife I believe in the absolute headship of the man. I will pray about it; though I don't see that happening anyway, because my husband happens to be a staunch minister. So I don't see that happening.

Mrs. Damilola Agbaje/CAC, (Personal Fieldwork, 2019).

Table 4.13: Spousal Support for Women Prayer Meetings

Support of Spouses	Frequency	Percent
Highly supportive	224	65
Supportive	81	22
Indifferent	23	7
Somehow supportive	12	4
Not at all	6	2
Total	346	100

Results from Table 4.13 show that the majority (65%) of the respondents have spouses that are highly supportive of their involvement in women prayer groups, while 22% claimed that their spouses were quite supportive of their involvement in women prayer groups. Only 2% of the respondents reported that their spouses did not support their involvement in women's prayer assemblies.

Table 4.14: Withdrawal of spousal consent for women prayer meeting

Withdrawal of spousal consent	Response	Frequency	Percent
If your spouse withdraws his support will you still be willing to go to this program against his will	Yes	128	37
	No	143	41
	I don't know	75	22
	Total	346	100

Table 4.14 reveals that 41% of the respondent reported that they will abide by their spouse's decision not to be involved in women's prayer assemblies if such scenarios arose. The result also shows a significant personal conflict on choice could arise in deciding between being an obedient wife and being a good servant of God. Women that were not able to reconcile this kind of conflict may end up straining their marriage relationship.

Some of the key informants who participated in the study highlighted cases in which lack of spousal support and consent in religious activities play a role in spousal relationship problems. A case to support this is mentioned by one of the participants about a couple who ended up having irreconcilable differences due to misunderstandings over prayer and church issues. According to the narrative, both the husband and his wife were having employment issues with neither, of them being able to hold on to a job or sustain a business venture.

So it became very tough for them to feed; to the extent that they started depending on others before the family could eat. The problem was too much, so she had to look for a solution, and she was told by some prophetic individuals that the man was the source of their problem as some forces from his family lineage were blocking his success. She was advised not to inform her husband but to go for a three-day prayer session at a certain prayer location. She then decided to visit the prayer mountain when her husband will be away for the weekend for some menial work.

She left her kids with the neighbor for the 3 day prayer period. But luck ran out on her when her husband returned home after spending just a night. When the husband came back, the neighbor told the husband that his wife will come back in 3 days. The husband on hearing this picked the phone and called the wife. After so many threats on the phone, she was forced to tell him that she was on the prayer mountain because the man already assumed that she went out on a promiscuous mission. On telling the husband where she was, that she went to look for a solution to their problems, and for things to get better, the man started cursing her on the phone that she left his children to

be suffering while she went on her escapades. After the phone call, the husband expected that she will return home, but she did not as she was told to finish the three days prayer, for the prayers to be answered. If not, she has just wasted her time. The husband didn't exercise any more patience, for he didn't believe she went to pray. He thought that she just went out on a promiscuous mission. Not coming home on the second day got him very angry, he then called her to come home again, and that if she didn't, he was going to kill her.

(An anonymous informant, CAC Personal Fieldwork 2019)



Plate 4.8: Women of the Christ apostolic Church, Covenant good women prayer assembly during one of their meetings. Personal fieldwork 2019

This case cited above highlights the implication of the non-awareness and non-approval of husbands for their wives' participation in women prayer assemblies. Spousal support and consent for women prayer meetings are often a function of the spousal communication process. A marriage without effective communication is likely to fall apart. Communication between the spouses is the sustenance of the marital relationship or any other significant relationship (Esere; 2002, 2006). It is a panacea for treating bad marital relationships (Olagunju & Eweniyi, 2002).

Since so many marriages tragically ended in divorce (Adegoke & Esere, 1998), the efforts of both spouses in the form of communication and strategies have become more important. Many marital problems escalate without communication, and many problems are solved with effective communication. Communication is the key to a successful marriage, without communication, marriage cannot survive in the divorce-filled world we live in (Jolin, 2007).

According to Idowu and Esere (2007), more than half of failed relationships are due to a serious lack of communication between couples. To have a long-lasting relationship, you must have excellent communication skills. Partners must be able to convey their own emotions and ideas, and they must also be able to absorb the emotions and ideas of their partners.

The art of listening can be more important than the art of speaking. When couples sit and listen to their partners instead of talking and expressing all their opinions at once, they will learn and grow more in their relationship. This does not mean that people do not express their opinions, but you also have to listen to the opinions of others and take them into account. Some people do not communicate with words, but with actions. Only through careful observation can you get what he / she wants from his/her partner. Stella Adejuwon, one of the participant noted

As husband and wife, there must be good communication and understanding. You cannot just stand up and go out without telling your husband where you are going and give good reason that he would understand. As a man of the house, he is the one with the final say

Mrs. Stella Adejuwon/ CAC (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Poor communication skills can cause irreparable damage to interpersonal relationships; they can affect productivity, satisfaction, performance, morale, confidence, respect, self-confidence, and even physical health. Effective communication in marriage is essential to a happy marriage and family life. For couples with difficulties, ineffective communication is a common problem (Esere & Idowu, 2000). Ineffective communication can lead to many family problems, including excessive family conflicts, poor problem-solving skills, lack of intimacy, and weak emotional bonds. Poor communication is also associated with an increased risk of divorce and separation (Esere, 2008).

Learning to communicate includes working hard with emotions. And as the divorce rate shows, many couples cannot reach this level of understanding, so the problem remains unresolved, and tensions deepen, leading to a lack of consensus and respect. Ultimately, this may cause the couple to break up because they don't know how to solve the problem. Francesca Grace noted;

There is this couple that is now separated because of infidelity problems. When we went to see both of them differently, we found that the problem is just poor communication because the two of them are not at fault; they just don't communicate well with themselves. This is why we encourage members of this group to be open with their spouses in their marriage

Mrs. Francesca Grace/ New Covenant Gospel Church Personal Fieldwork 2019)

Spousal support for women's meetings is noted as a principle upon which the church should thrive. In opening up churches, women's roles vary tremendously within them. Some women's prayer assemblies like those based in the Christ Apostolic Church and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, were founded on fundamental principles which promote a traditional social position of women, while others are "progressive" and are beginning to appreciate women's rights.

Religious fundamentalism has been identified as a trend that may limit women's participation in religious organizations and society, as well as their access to positions of leadership. (Mahoney and Cano 2014). In various Christian denominations, women have

been striving to open up the Church's hierarchies to the participation of women and to increase women's representation in Church and decision-making bodies

This is particularly true in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, where leadership roles are opened up to women. But in some Churches, men are adamant, insisting their roles are God-given, as seen with the Christ Apostolic Church, where women are not ordained and also for every woman meeting the Resident Pastor must be around to call out prayers and also to close the meeting.

Even though women are experiencing freedom in the male-dominated leadership church through their involvement with Women's prayer assemblies, many informants believe that women's group is viewed with suspicion by some of their spouses who feel that it should be strictly regulated for fear that it might turn out to be a form of religious clusters within the church. There are assertions (Nusbacher, 1999) that women group meetings should focus on performing specific duties in the churches, including cleaning the church and decorating, ushering, singing in the church choir, preparing the priest table, leading in praise and worship, cooking, and serving food, counseling the youth and taking care of the sick. In Mrs. Funmilayo Okusi's view

There is this friend of mine whose husband does not allow her to attend women's prayer meetings. Her husband thinks that where only women gather together there is no peace between them. That they will quarrel all the time and it will lead to many bad consequences, even diabolic activities.

Mrs. Funmilayo Okusi (Personal Filedwork 2019)

4.7 Women Prayer Assemblies Participation and Marriage

Based on the research instrument used in this study, all items that describe role conflict at home as regards attendance of women-only prayer assemblies were compiled together and analysed using the percentage frequency distribution of responses. Results are presented below. Results highlight various items that describe the effect of church-going activities and the marital roles of the respondents.

Table 4.15: Women –Prayer meetings and Business activities

Time at work	Response	Frequency	Percent
Time spent here could have been spent at work, business	Yes	81	23
	No	251	73
	I don't know	14	4
	Total	346	100

In Table 4.15, 73% of respondents were certain that the time spent during women's prayer assemblies did not infringe on their business activities. 23% of respondents claimed that there is some business cost due to the time spent during women's prayer meetings. Most of the women's prayer assemblies are, of course, held during weekends or evenings of weekdays. Therefore, members who are self-employed traders or artisans may sometimes experience conflicting interests between business activities and women prayer assembly.

In buttressing this point, one of the informants, Mrs. Adeoye said that people who have their businesses do come for prayer meetings while those working for people are not able to come for meetings all of the time. According to her, while she was still at the Ikorodu Garage branch of the Christ Apostolic Church, she never missed any prayer meetings because she had apprentices that managed the business in her absence. She was of the opinion that once one makes up her mind about not missing the meetings, one's business will not suffer because one has come to meet with God. Thus, the fact that these women take out time to participate in women prayer meetings, despite the meetings coinciding with work or business schedules, there is still a level of commitment and importance attached to the prayers meetings.

Table 4.16: Women –prayer meetings and Household activities

Involvement in Programs	Response	Frequency	Percent
Do you think coming to this program affects your routine household chores	Yes	158	46
	No	174	50
	I don't know	14	4
	Total	346	100

Table 4.16 above shows results that 45.7% of the respondents affirmed that attendance of the women prayer meetings affected their involvement in home chores, as chores have to be delayed till the end of women prayer meetings, especially for those meetings that held early in the day. 50.2 % of the respondents did not feel that their attendance at women's prayer assemblies affected their household chores because of their belief that God comes first before any other thing.

Also, the plausibility for this small disparity lies in the availability of house assistance that some of the women have at the home front. For instance, women with grown-up children or with house-help enjoy assistance with home chores while attending women's prayer meetings, but some of their counterparts without the luxury of such assistance do experience conflicts between meeting attendance and home chores.

4.8 Unpacking the Issues: Christian women Prayer Assemblies and Marriage Stability in Ikorodu

The data presented above has revealed several themes. In addressing these issues, we will attempt to employ two hermeneutic strategies to help us make sense of the dual issues of Women's prayer assemblies and marriage stability. These are the two ideas that frame the arguments in this thesis.

In discussing the issue of Christian women's prayer assemblies, we will return to the concept of belongingness, which is an aspect of the theory of needs that we proposed as a theoretical framework elsewhere in the thesis. We maintained in that section of the thesis that the needs theory involves a hierarchy of needs, with the most basic being physiological needs, followed by safety needs, social needs, of which belongingness is an aspect, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. This formed the five stages of needs as theorised by Maslow (1943).

The women's prayer assemblies involve the practices, actions, and activities of married women within a group that, when closely examined or scrutinized, reveal an unmistakable attempt to espouse the space of prayer to attendees. They are also actions and practices that attempt to invest in a specific space — that is, the defined spaces for these assemblies to take place. In this regard, prayer assemblies refer to clearly defined places of worship with Christian values defining the assembly's identity and purpose.

This identity, in our opinion, is central to the concept of human needs. Although some see the point of departure for needs theories as an attack on the application of its hierarchy in everyday life (see Greenberg & Baron 2003), we do not think this is helpful.

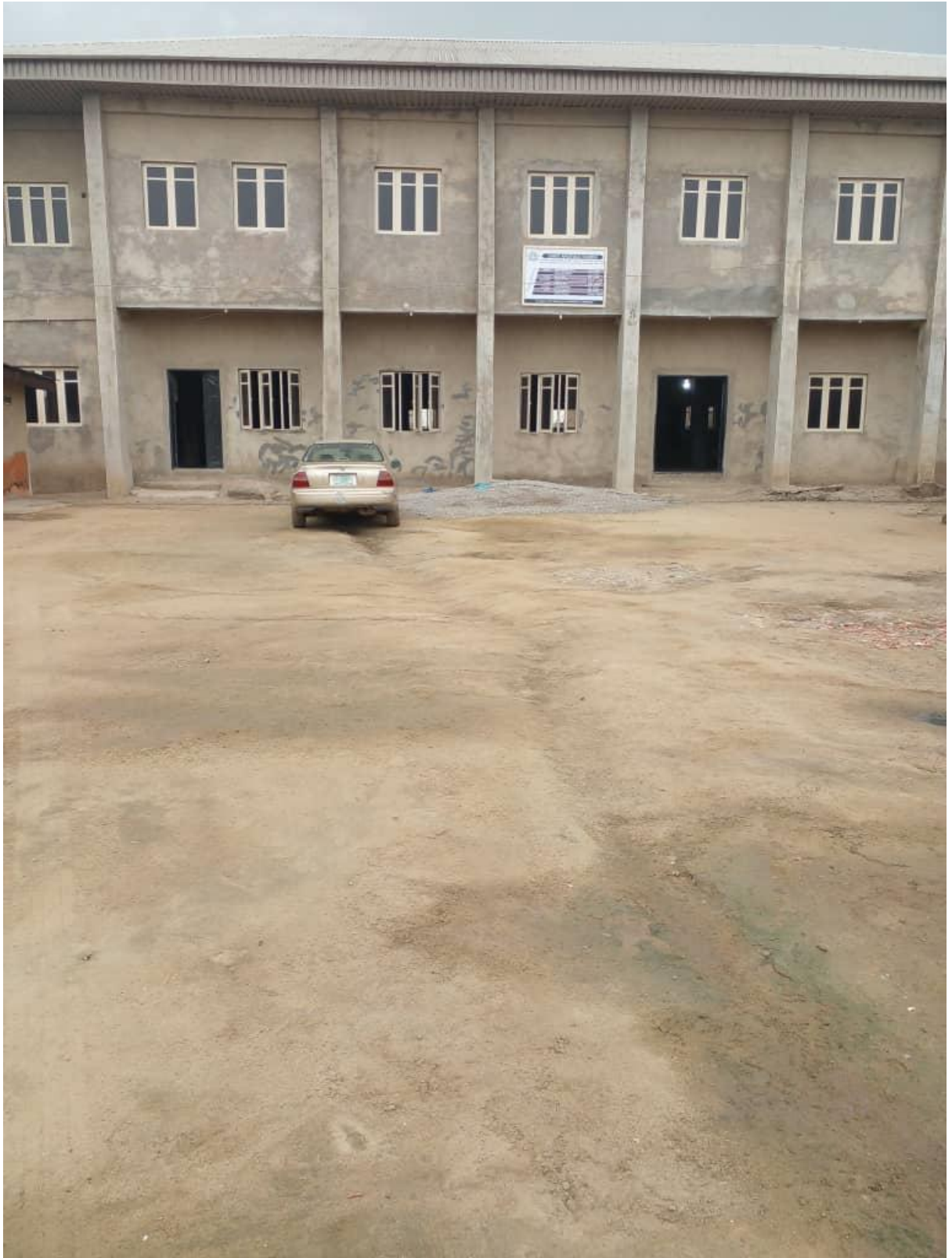


Plate 4.9: Showing one of the defined prayer spaces in Ikorodu

The women prayer assemblies in Ikorodu define their sense of self-identity through social practices such as what they do, what they share, what values they have in common and projects, how they organize their meetings, the types of expressive public activities they engage in, and the way or manner they define the prayer space in contrast to the dominant church culture surrounding where this assimilation occurs.

All of these are components of their lived experiences and how they manipulate them as a body in space to create a space or a place to develop a sense of home or a sense of place as socio-religious conditions allow. For women like those in Ikorodu, transforming a place into a community of women, or simply making a place or creating a space (investing in a space with meaning), becomes critical in the context of maintaining a distinct identity. As Preucel and Matero (2008) put it, naming is not a neutral practice:

To give a place a name is to situate it within a knowable universe and to assert a form of possession. The knowable universe is itself historically constituted, a palimpsest of the knowledge of all previous generations. It is also the subject of potential contestation and negotiation since who has the right to name a place, to single it out from all other places in the landscape, reveals the historically specific dynamics of power relations operative in a particular society. Naming is thus the preeminent act ... (2008: 81)

The public sphere is crucial in this regard as a more visible site of representation and practices. In the case of the women's prayer assemblies that I visited, I was privileged to see what is most striking in the display of visual materials of representation related to the Christian faith during fieldwork.

These can take many forms, from the arrangement of the chairs to the musical instrument used during the assemblies meetings to the building that houses the prayer assemblies, all of which serve as reminders of the sacredness of that defined space. Women who enter that space, for instance, women who come into that space are aware of its centrality to prayers, thereby preparing their minds to meet with the sacred when they are within that space.

Even though this study focuses on prayer in a group setting, specifically on Christian women in prayer assemblies dedicated solely to them, it should be noted that prayer is a private practice. Although women can be led in prayers, the person has the choice whether to participate or keep mum; it is the usage, not the origin, that identifies it as a private practice (Thomas 2011). This intimate praying practice allows one to communicate one's innermost sentiments. This exemplifies how the private and public realms are intertwined in prayer practice. While prayers occur in the mind of the person, they are, above all, a social reality that lives outside of the individual and in the realm of ritual and religious tradition (Mauss 2003).

Prayer is an essential ritual in the institutional life of the Christian community, with the goal of determining and testing the extent to which divine expectations regulate conduct and construct worldviews (Froese et al 2021). This assertion was backed up by informants, who believed that prayers served as guides and guardians in making life decisions. According to one of the informants, Deaconess Wajero,

Life's journey can be long and complicated, but God helps in the journey of life, which is why it is important for every woman to pray, because it is not easy, and only God can make the journey easy

Deaconess Wajero, Christ Apostolic Church (Personal fieldwork 2019).

The complications that emerge from life's journey inform participants' need for God, which is expressed through prayers. Participants stated that their source is God, an emphasis that is standard to Pentecostals, and that a prayer assembly is a place where they can meet with God. Biblical injunctions such as "you shall not forsake the gathering of the brethren" were central to their thought. This concept of recognising God as their source, created a sense of community among the women, a community of women who pray at a specified time and a given location.

The commitment of participants to one another, when anyone was absent repeatedly, there's an establishment of contact with him by calling her on the phone or nominating a few women to visit such members. This sense of community transcends the prayer assembly and spill into the larger congregation. This creates a sense of closeness within the assembly, this closeness or intimacy, this intimacy with others may also imply

intimacy with God, intimacy with God may be intertwined with intimacy with others. As an informant noted:

I like it here, the people are friendly and receptive, I feel welcome here, that why I will always come, I feel I can just be myself here, there is so much pretending out there, I can just come here worship God without having to be conscious of myself

Mrs. Nwanchukwu, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Personal fieldwork 2019.

Intimacy in a small group entails the ability to be vulnerable, to speak openly about the challenges of life, with regards to marriage, children, work, business. This involves risk and a great deal of trust, which can only be acquired over time. In one of the assemblies investigated, there's a session allocated to members who may be struggling or facing a form of difficulty where the other women will pray as a group holding hands together for the particular woman who requests the prayer.

What is striking about this is that it create a democracy of disclosure in mutually agreed on and constructed sacred spaces. This level of intimacy can be said to be equal to mutuality and autonomy (the choice to participate or not). This intimacy has been able to foster friendship and a sense of 'other' family with the assembly. The friendship formed within this assembly has transcended the assembly, as some have become friends outside the group. As Mrs. Titilope noted:

After I got married I had to move here from Ede, so it was a new place for me, no family, no friends, I felt seriously isolated, I heard my neighbour talk about a conference coming up, so I approached her to ask, she told me, its a yearly conference of the women assembly that she attends every last Saturday of the month. I told her I will like to come, and that's how I started coming, 85 percent of the friends I have now are from this assembly, they are good people, they have become like the family I left back home.

Mrs. Titilope, Joy Cometh Ministries, Personal fieldwork 2019

Thus creating a theory of attachments which, strengthens and supernaturalises the theory of needs. People's attachment to the assembly stems from their belief that it is a sacred space where they can receive answers to their prayers.

Wuthnow (1994) observed that small groups, such as the women's prayer assembly, represent inward, privatised, and domesticated spiritualities while providing a much-needed arena for spiritual inquiry. The prayer meetings studied, can be accessed as having an interpersonal perspective of God. They describe their interpersonal connection to God, with words as it brings peace in my home, protection of family from evil, solutions to marital issues, etc were highlighted to be as a result of their participation in the women prayer assemblies.

Some participants' use terms like "my relationship with God is stronger," implying that spiritual growth is characterised as experiences of intimacy and companionship with God. This helped to develop domesticated faith since it infiltrated many aspects of life, and because life cannot be divided but must overlap, this domestication of faith helped strengthen the participants' Christian Journey.

Furthermore, the belief that individuals have a feeling of place inside prayer assembly leads to social interactions with other participants, resulting in a strong sense of connectivity within the gathering. The love and affection that members feel for one another was obvious in the environment of the prayer assemblies observed during the field research. Following the sessions, the mood is casual, with ladies talking about their children, spouses, companies, and life in general. This climate is conducive to the formation and maintenance of friendship, as well as the maintenance of an empathic environment.

It is clear that the prayers and activities that take place inside this group are not the only reasons members come; the environment that follows, which fosters an emotional bond, also plays a big role in their participation. During my participant observation, I had an informal conversation with one of the participants, in which she mentioned how coming to the assembly had kept her sane. She described her experience as follows:

Few months into her marriage, her husband lost his job and not having a viable means of living herself, things became tough, it got to the extent that her in-

laws felt she was bad luck to her husband, as they believed he was doing better before marrying her. This lasted for over two years into her marriage, coupled with the fact that she doesn't have a child as at then. She said she was fed up with all that was happening and decided to confide in a friend, her aim for confiding in her friend was to seek financial assistance from her, however, her friend decided to bring her to this prayer assembly, she followed all the teaching and prayed, sometimes even staying back to pray after the meeting is over. Then things started changing, my husband got a job and in a year, he changed jobs twice, each one better than the previous. Then my in-law's attitude started changing towards me, I don't know if it's because I pray more or there's a difference in my attitude towards them or because their brother is now doing well, all I know is that they changed for the better, and now I have my babies. The next thing for me is to have a business or get a job. If not for this assembly I don't know what would have happened to me.

Anonymous informant, Personal fieldwork 2019/ Joy Cometh Ministries

As demonstrated above by a participant in one of the prayer assemblies examined, the prayer assemblies can expand beyond a specified spiritual area to create an environment of psychological healing. This brings two parts of a relationship in the assembly together: a relationship with God and a relationship with other participants, with prayer assemblies acting as the common denominator.

Participants typically feel social acceptability and emotional upliftment long after such meetings are ended, Drapper (2019). This is significant because the participants' views and sentiments during the assembly were shaped by the social traditions to which they were exposed. (1) The family (2) The religious establishment (3) The state or political power (4) Civil society (5) Commercial culture According to Pravdova and Rodosinska, these are the five social structural components that impact an individual's

prayer experiences (2013). It's worth mentioning that the religious institution, referred to as prayer assemblies in this study, was singled out as one that has an impact on the social outcome of an individual.

Apart from its being a sacred social setting, it also affords the participant opportunity to pour out their distresses to a supreme being, who is believed to hear them. Mrs. Folake, one of the informant believe that the prayer assembly:

It's a place to pour out your heart to God, that's why we have this group because it's not all issues you can deal with on your own as humans, especially as a woman, that is why we have spiritual leaders to coordinate us. Some burdens cannot be shared with anyone, but when we come here, we see that the particular burden may be lifted because the teaching of that day may be centred around it.

Mrs. Folake, Joy Cometh Ministries Personal fieldwork 2019).



**Plate 4.10: A cluster of women interacting during the women prayer assembly
Personal fieldwork 2019.**

As stated by the above comment, the role of the women's prayer assembly's leadership is essential in the members' minds. Due to the gendered vision and practice of patriarchy that retains dominance within the Christian religion, women have found it difficult to rise to positions of leadership in churches.

The gender divide between men's and women's social, cultural, and religious responsibilities, in which men are responsible for the public sphere and are family leaders, while women are responsible for the household, supports church leadership politics as a male domain (Anwar 2013). Sundkler and Steed (2000) draw attention to the church's dual role as a catalyst for women's freedom and as a party to their subjugation.

They emphasize that the church has offered new opportunities for women through education for girls and leadership roles in women's prayer meetings. "Discriminating actions supported by spiritual power were done in and through the churches," on the other hand. Within the church, people considered as authorities, such as Reverends, Priests, and Pastors, are referred to as possessing divine authority. They ascribe this to the church being primarily a mirror of patriarchal culture and values.

Gender disparities in leadership study looked at men and women in a variety of leadership roles. Some compared them in controlled environments, while others studied their leadership characteristics in organizational situations. However, there is much disagreement over how to interpret the outcomes of such research (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Yukl, 2001). Bass, Eagly, and Johannesen-Schmidt investigated this variance in interpretation in their meta-analysis of male-female disparities in leadership styles, discovering that even while some laboratory settings revealed no obvious differences.

Several studies show that women are less cohesive, less authoritarian, and less competent in coping with interpersonal difficulties than men, whereas men are more helpful and empathetic, open-minded, and accepting of responsibility (Lipman-Blumen, 1992; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Ridgeway, 2001; Rigg and Sparrow, 1994). Women were shown to be more consideration-focused in the majority of studies that indicated differences, whilst men were found to be more task-oriented (Bass, 1990).

While inequalities in the road to leadership are to be expected, Bass claims that once men and women are in such positions, such discrepancies tend to vanish, suggesting that both use the same male tactics. This seemed to be a typical result from previous studies, suggesting that women needed to lead like males to be successful. Because of the changing landscape for women and leadership roles, Bass realised that past findings

may need to be reconsidered. It appears that differences between men and women are occasionally visible, emerging and vanishing with varied social settings. Pounder and Coleman (2002; Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001)

Women have found ingenious methods to counter this; Olajubu (2003) highlighted that women have used alternate areas of power to effect change inside holy spaces such as the church. Women's participation in the church was well documented during the emergence of Orthodox churches in Nigeria; however, little access was given to women in leadership. With the advent of the African Independent church, even though male leadership was paramount, it recognised the spiritual gift of women as prophet and prophetess, which was an improvement over what was obtained within the mission churches (Omoyajowa 1982, Olademo 2012).

The ideology of these latter churches was greatly affected by African culture, which resulted in a dual form of leadership, one for males and one for females. However, with the arrival of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, this system of dual leadership was maintained with varying degrees of adaption. Women's roles in the Pentecostal sphere are evident in ritualised spaces such as the women's prayer assembly. These ritualised places serve as platforms for the presentation of gender roles.

Though Christian women confront a variety of difficulties inside the church, one of the most persistent has been a patriarchy. Sharma and Young (1999) defined patriarchy as a hierarchical concept of difference based on dualism, which manifests itself in the oppression of one group over the other, with a heavy focus on separateness as a characteristic for holiness. Others see patriarchy as the result of male elitism, which develops as a basic concept of Christianity based on the idea that redemption via a male saviour perpetuates patriarchal tyranny.

One expression of this is the exclusion of women from leadership structures based on the concept of separation as a holy characteristic (Olademo 2012). Despite the orthodox and patriarchal doctrine of today's Pentecostal congregations, leadership is still dominated by men. Women are disproportionately underrepresented in positions of considerable influence and power (Agadjanian 2015). The women who do belong to assemblies with lax ordination rules.

Except for the New Covenant Gospel Church and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, whose ordination standards are eased, the congregations studied in this research have stringent ordination regulations that desire the ordination of males over women. Women have found an outlet to express their influence and power within the

leadership of the women's prayers assembly in churches with stringent ordination requirements, therefore exhibiting the charisma of leadership and their talent inside these assemblies.

There is a reflection of a religious organisation adjusting to external political and institutional pressures, particularly those involving women's rights and gender equality, as well as internal organisational and sociocultural characteristics of different denominations, even in assemblies with lax rules for women's ordination. Women's ascent to religious leadership was assisted by both external and internal forces. They ran afoul of the religious organization's internal goals and beliefs regularly. As a result, while formal female leadership is no longer frowned upon in principle, it is nevertheless usually relegated to supporting roles (Agadjanian 2015).

Women's prayer assemblies have taken up this responsibility. There are three primary pathways to become a leader in women's prayer assemblies, as observed while in the field. The first is to become a leader through a formal election in which members of the assembly vote for the candidate; it has been observed that individuals with a lot of charm and people skills are generally picked. This indicates that an individual's degree of involvement among members, perceived amount of compassion, and generosity toward the assembly and individual members all contribute to the individual being such a strong contender.

During the transition in the women executives, this approach of becoming a leader in women prayer assemblies was noticed with the Joy Cometh Ministries. Women executives at Joy Cometh Ministries are a group of female leaders that supervise smaller groups of women inside the Joy Cometh Ministries women assembly. The leadership is rotated every three to four years, or when vacancies arise. This vacancy may occur as a consequence of some of the leaders' migration, making them unable to perform their leadership responsibilities, or, more rarely, as a result of death. Even after an election is scheduled, some incumbents who are still active and want to keep their positions proclaim their desire, and they are frequently reelected.

The second method is to become a leader by selection; in this case, the leaders of the women prayer assemblies are chosen from among the women; women who are devoted and whose attendance is consistent are chosen; as previously stated, the church leadership makes such a selection based on the pastor's wife's recommendation. Those chosen by this technique do not need to accomplish much; nonetheless, they must be regarded as spiritual and capable of carrying out their duties as leaders of the women's

assembly. The Christ Apostolic Church was recognised to have used this form of leadership in their women's assembly.

The third method that was observed in all of the assemblies was the leadership of the women's assemblies based on the status of the woman's husband within the church. The wife of the presiding pastor becomes the de facto leader of the women's assembly, a position she earns due to her husband's prominence inside the church; she may appoint other women to lead, but they all report to her as the arrowhead of the women's assemblies. It should be noted that many of these women in positions of leadership lack formal religious training; nonetheless, because of their long involvement with the assemblies, they are deemed suitable and fit for leadership positions. It can therefore mean, the prayer assembly serves as a forum for the expansion of the women's social and religious boundaries.

Attendees of the women prayer assemblies rever the leadership of this assemblies and they are view as knowledgable, spiritual and persons who could handle sensitive matters, concerns has however been raised as to some individual leaders, as noted by an informant:

I like attending women's meetings however, I have my reservations about some of its leaders, when you discuss an issue with a leader with the hope of prayers and advice, your issue turns out to be a topic of gossip among members. this thing is based on the person leading the group, what kind of person are you? If you are a type of person that says ok, you are so concerned with others, you want people's problems to be resolved, there are people that even if you have to pray or bring it out for people to pray about, you don't mention their names, then 2, you don't have to discuss it with anybody, let say you are the group leader and I now come to you, my sister, my marriage, maybe my husband is cheating on me, I don't know what to do, a strange woman wants to take my home. What do you think I should do? You start asking me questions and I told you

and you say don't worry my sister the Lord is in control, we will put you in our prayer and we will also pray together. Ok by this time I have confided in you by talking with you, you can bring it to the group they pray on it, that there is one of us here having issues in her marriage, a strange woman wants to take over her home, let's begin to pray; it's now left for you to ask me should I mention your name or not? So I can say no, that I want it between us, just tell them to pray for me, so what will now make you after the prayer, to now start discussing it with some of the members in the group and you know not all of these members can keep their mouth, some will still discuss it with other persons, so that's how the whole gist will transfer, so I don't want all that. Nothing of such happened to me but people that the thing happened to, that one day it may be my turn, I may be having some little issues, it may not be about marriage, it may be about something else, that ok o, pray for me before you know it, the gist is everywhere and in this world, a lot of things are happening. I understand that you want the individual's problem solved, but you don't have to mention the person's name, while you raise it as a prayer point within the group. (Personal Fieldwork 2019)

A participant's comment above illustrates an anomaly that may emerge in leadership when instances like these arise, leading to hurt and mistrust. One of the cornerstones of prayer assemblies has been noted to be trusted; when feelings of distrust emerge, care must be taken to avoid a split, since this hurt emotion extends beyond the offended to others who may believe the same destiny awaits them if presented with similar circumstances. When asked if the event resulted in a breakup or some members leaving the prayer assembly, the informant stated that it was difficult to leave because of

the length of time the women had invested in the prayer assembly and the level of acceptance they feel within the assembly; however, the women "extended grace" to this particular leader because she was "new" in leadership, while other leaders addressed the issue within the assembly. The informant concluded that the group's other leaders must have corrected her, informing her of what is and is not proper behaviour.

The amount of time the ladies have spent in the women's prayer assembly, as mentioned by the informant, suggests that the women have a sense of ownership, which may drive them to seek an alternative to leaving the assembly. According to Wuthnow (1994), there is no social compact binding the assembly together. Most group members think they have made some sacrifices to be a part of the group; they like being a part of the group because they believe it allows them to express themselves and their spirituality. Wuthnow observed that group members have developed confidence in one another, promoting emotional closeness; yet, these ties remain weak, which is subject to change because anyone can leave at any time.

As Mrs. Folake's claim above demonstrates, the burden-sharing aspect of the women's prayer meetings was also represented by informants in the research. Women are exposed to various levels of stress as caregivers in most families; as a coping mechanism, Christian women find a common forum to pray and discuss; in some of these discussions, which can take the form of teachings, solutions to life's problems are found; and in some instances, even when solutions are not found, women take solace in the fact that there are people like them going through similar challenges. This fosters a feeling of community and identity among the women in the prayer assemblies, creating a group that acts as a psychological support network.

The above-mentioned informant also noted the prayer assembly's teaching component. Teachings were found to be essential to the activities carried out inside the assemblies examined in this study. Some lectures took the form of a bible study, in which a part is read and lessons from the character are taught, while others served as the foundation for prayers. Others adopt an interpretive approach, which means they take a text and try to comprehend it in multiple ways before making links to their personal and social life. However, the majority of the teachings focused on a certain area of life.

On the dynamics of marriage, principally the distribution of authority within marriage, Weber (1968), reasoned that authority is voluntary acceptance of an individual's teaching that derives from legitimacy owing to the orientation a group or individual has been subjected to. Women prayer assembly leaders studied, enjoyed, and

wielded authority inside the assemblies, probing how this extends beyond the assemblies and, by extension, the church. According to Deaconess Wajero, the Christ Apostolic Church's zonal pastor's wife,

the authority or the power of the man in marriage is quite clear, as referenced in the Bible, and that she may have seen a vision to start covenant good women prayer meetings. However, her husband's position as presiding pastor lends legitimacy and recognition to the group. She stated that any authority she has within the church is subject to her husband's, and that's where the issue of submission comes in. According to her, there is no authority dynamism in her marriage. The authority lies in God and with her husband in her marriage.

Deaconess Wajero, Christ Apostolic Church, Personal fieldwork 2019.

Well if you talk about authority, as a Pastor's wife and a leader of the women ministry, and also as a co-labourer in the kingdom of Christ, yes I do have some level of authority and I command a certain level of respect from people, it is a different thing altogether when it gets to my husband, to outsiders yes, but to my husband or my marriage; you are well aware what the bible says, so there is no negotiation to that, the authority in our marriage rest with him.

Mrs. Oshodin, New Covenant Gospel Church, Personal fieldwork 2019.

You know when it comes to authority or power in a marriage, you are automatically talking about who the leader is because the leader has the final say and that is power or authority. In this regard, it's my husband of course, even within our Yoruba setting, a woman has to defer to her husband, and the Bible also recognise that part of our culture. So that is it.

This claim introduces the idea of invisible power or legitimate authority (Komter 1989; Shenan and Lee 2001), in which women voluntarily disempower themselves for the authority figure in the house, a phenomenon referred to as domestic authority by Bartwoski and Xu (2010). This is especially noticeable in terms of parenting, housekeeping, and financial ability. However, in a Christian household, this is considered proper behaviour. Despite research (Crabb 1991, Dobson 1982) warning against males exercising authoritarian leadership in their families, all appear to agree that husbands are not required to seek, much less listen to, their wives' counsel.

They argue that God holds husbands accountable for biblical family leadership. Dobson believes that men are to lead in a benign manner, and he concludes that for those who embrace God's method for the home, it is apparent that husbands carry the primary duty for resolving domestic issues.

This responsibility is implicit in the leadership role that males are given. This line of thought encourages women to regard their position as that of an executive vice president in an organisation, where the president has the final say in decision-making; they believe it is a herculean task for a husband to make decisions, even when they are not correct; however, they advise wives not to exercise grudging obedience when their thoughts conflict with the decision. Other studies, on the other hand, believe that for a marriage to work, both partners must submit to God directly, putting their interests aside for the sake of the marital union's collective good. (Hardesty 1992, Groothuis 1994, Wagner 1994). These studies advocated for mutual submission and joint decision making

The informants, when asked if their husband were to forbid them from attending the prayer assemblies and will prefer they stay at home or run their errands instead of attending the assembly, what will the women do? The majority of the women, amounting to 51% as presented in table 4.5.2, say they will not attend the program. It is important to reiterate this here as it is believed as the proper thing a submissive wife does. In the informant's view "a submissive wife always obeys her husband, even when it's not convenient". Some of the participants interviewed had this to say:

this question should have been directed to my members, because my husband has always been supportive, but generally, you know the Bible says we

should be submissive, if he says you shouldn't come, you have to obey him and go on your knees, so the Holy Spirit can minister to him. Then also that woman will need to examine herself, probably she's being disobedient, her life should affect her home positively.

Pastor (Mrs) Ajibola, Personal Fieldwork 2019 Redeemed Christian Church of God

I will try to convince him, try to beg him, but if he still insist that I shouldn't go then I won't have a choice than to stay back.

Mrs. Oshodin Personal fieldwork 2019, New Covenant Gospel Church.

Yes, yes I will but I wouldn't do it the way an unbeliever will, or in disobedience, because as a wife I believe in the absolute headship of the man, the way I will go about it, may be different from the way others may go about it. I will pray about it, though I don't see that happening anyway, because my husband happens to be a staunch minister, so I don't see that happening.

Mrs. Umemezia, Personal fieldwork 2019 Joy Cometh Ministries
God forbid, both of us have committed ourselves to this church and God. But if that happens then I will have to obey him because he is my husband, he is my head.

Mrs. Adewole, Personal fieldwork 2019 Christ Apostolic Church

From the informants' views, it is clear that the women in these prayer assemblies take the tenets of the man's headship in a marriage seriously. As Manning (1999) discovered, women in Christian assemblies either resign themselves to the headship of the man within the family, believing that there are no alternatives, or they reinterpret scriptures to mean mutually submissive relationships. This concept is frequently combined with feminist ideals. She believes that women may reason that women's subordination or reliance is a reasonable payment for their husbands' security and

sustenance. It can also be implied that the husband's decision about where and who their wives associate with, will be obeyed by the women.

This argument provides credence to Wolf and Blood's (1960) study, which indicates that the spouse with the most or final choice in a marital partnership has the greatest power. They also said that the partner with the most authority in the marriage had the most resources. Power-giving resources include education, age, wealth, status, and specialised skills. They observed that because males are seen to be more suited to public life, they tended to have more of these traits in their favour. Recent research (Coltrane 2000) found, however, that the perception of a wife's job may have a bigger influence on marital power than her employment.

Even when husbands are underemployed or jobless, wives adopt gender-based coping methods to manage. One such strategy was for husbands to entirely disengage from any sort of housework, therefore upholding Biblical and traditional roles in the home. This helps to clear up any discrepancy between the male and feminine roles, confirming husbands' dignity (Bartkowski 1999) Gallagher and Smith (1999) discovered that couples in their research relied on scriptures to defend and justify husbands' headship, particularly in the areas of giving, spiritual leadership, and decision making.

One area of this research is how women have been able to manage their church goings and their home responsibility, which I will refer to as the church/household conflict and how this conflict is negotiated by the women in these assemblies. Church/household conflict can be an issue for women who devote their time and resources to the attendance of women prayer assemblies, while still responsible for domestic duties. One of the informants noted:

I can attend my women's church group, without infringing on my roles as wife and mother. My husband is very understanding, and I ensure that his food and other necessary things are ready before I go for my meetings. There are times that I have to miss these meetings, just to stay at home, when my husband or my children are not feeling well.

Mrs. Edison Benny, We are Alive in Him Overcomers Ministries. (Personal Fieldwork 2018)

Household duties are largely viewed as a female responsibility in the cultural context of this study. This is when the distribution of gender roles comes into play. This gender role allocation begins at birth and penetrates every aspect of marriage; this is due, in part, to the fact that such a culture is predominantly patriarchal and traditional in nature.

According to Aina (1998), Nigerian culture is a patriarchal society with a sex-based structure of social stratification and differentiation that gives material benefits to men while severely limiting female functions and responsibilities. In general, husbands, fathers, and men are expected to provide financially for their families as breadwinners and major ultimate decision-makers in society in the home, with minimal gender flexibility in performance. Globalisation, Westernisation, and Modernisation are only progressively tackling this gender rigidity, but the nature of change is still extremely modest and completely unrecorded in the setting of traditional families, particularly in the framework of traditional families where men and women are traditionally assigned different roles (Olutayo and Akanle, 2007).

According to a study, men who participate in household duties choose particular domestic tasks in the family and leave others to women, and for the few men who do participate, they seek the assistance of other females (South and Spitze, 1994). Education, employment position (whether employed or unemployed), wages, occupational repute, and age are all characteristics that impact the outcomes of housekeeping discussions among spouses and in the family as a whole (Akanle and Olutayo, 2012)

Despite globalisation and modernising elements that have contributed to women working outside the house, Helen and Jennifer (2004) said that women have remained primary caretakers in families despite contributing financially inside the family. According to Cody-Rydzewski (2007), because work status contributes considerably to spousal authority, it appears appropriate to include the precise kind of employment as well.

However, in the African setting, where some households earn too little to pay for housekeeping or have strong traditional gender roles, even when money is not an issue, it appears that such a distribution of domestic duties does not exist. Patriarchy and traditionalism are commonly identified as persistent factors in gender inequalities in Africa. Patriarchy, by definition, makes men and women's relationships in African

nations the least egalitarian, but traditionalism reduces the mutability of patriarchal systems (Beaujot and Liu 2005).

According to Lips (2001), gender roles are created as a result of family socialisation, and what happens in a marriage between a woman and her husband is nothing more than the outcome of early childhood socialisation. Departure from such is difficult, if not impossible, especially if the couple adheres to traditional culture. This is particularly the case in Ikorodu, among the assembly, examined, where males retain control despite women's educational achievement. This was a recurring theme in this study, one of the informants, Mrs. Adewole noted:

On the issue of housework, nobody can fulfill everything, but I will do my best and I will do what my husband will be comfortable with, I will do what will not bring about complain from him that is it because you are a church leader, you want to abandon everything at home? No, I won't do that I will schedule everything

(Mrs. Adewole Personal fieldwork 2019, Christ Apostolic Church)

The assertion from Mrs. Adewole clearly shows gender role theory at play, where the woman is socialised to see housework as her responsibility, irrespective of her status. Another informant Mrs. Oshodin also share similar views with Mrs. Adewole;

I have not failed in my responsibility as a wife and as a mother, that's because I have the cooperation of my husband and his understanding, am not saying am perfect, but I try to balance my work-life responsibility or should I say my work-church responsibility and my husband's understanding goes a long way in helping me and I have grown-up children.

(Mrs. Oshodin Personal fieldwork 2019 New Covenant Gospel Church)

This viewpoint is consistent with that of women interviewed in prayer assemblies, who believe that a woman's obligations at home must be met. The task here is to ensure that the domestic chores are completed. This viewpoint is consistent with that of Akanle and Oluwakemi (2012), who discovered in their study that women across homes were involved in domestic duties regardless of education level or financial position of the family or the lady.

Christian women's activities have traditionally paralleled women's interpersonal concerns within the context of marriage (Conzad 1999), which have emphasised their responsibilities as wives, mothers, and caregivers in the home; however, women have been able to obliterate themselves from traditional gender roles in recent decades, thanks to the gender revolution (Beck and Beck Gernsheim 2002).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At this point in the thesis, we will summarize the main points of the work and argue that the problem has not been fully explored, both in terms of the various topics covered and in terms of the application of theoretical approaches to the treatment of thematic concerns. The effort here includes eliciting the key issues that have emerged in specific ways from a study of the relationship between Women Prayer Assemblies and marital stability. This was done by searching out the impacts women's prayer assembly have on stability of marriages; the self-benefit attendees receive in these assemblies. The issues raised in these assemblies and how they relate to the family were investigated. The combination of marital roles and church attendance was also explored.

5.1 Summary

This study investigated the relationship between women's prayer assemblies and marriages, as well as the intervention of Christian religious spaces in the determination of marriage stability, with a focus on women's prayer assemblies in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria. The study started with, the background of the study where the study was introduced to readers. This is followed by the statement of the problem, aims, and

objectives. The questions pertaining to this research were asked. The chapter ended with the definition of terms.

This mixed research was undertaken with the belief that will elicit sensitive information about marriage, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in understanding how marriage stability has fared within the context of a Christian religious group; however, this formed the crux of this study. The study focused on women's prayer assemblies and the experiences of the women who attend them relative to their marriages in the Ikorodu area of Lagos State, Southwest, Nigeria. It also looked at how women formed a web of networks within the assemblies, which aided in self-development and support. It also investigated how these assemblies maintain both actual and symbolic spatial connections with the 'church' and how they have been able to create a space that is also distinctively their own.

Ikorodu is one of Lagos state's divisions. It is a cosmopolitan city, like the rest of Lagos state, with residents from all over the country, including Hausa, Igbo, and other ethnic nationalities. It is native to the Awori people, a sub-ethnic group of the Yoruba ethnic group. Ikorodu is located on the northeast side of Lagos state. It is the largest local government in Lagos state in terms of land size. In 2003, it was divided into six local development councils for administrative purposes. According to the 2006 census, the city has a population of 535,619 people, which has grown over the years.

Religion thrives in the city, as evidenced by the beautifully built mosques and churches, even traditional religion enjoys religious freedom, as demonstrated by the Oro day. Ikorodu is home to a variety of religious denominations, ranging from orthodox to African Initiated Churches to Pentecostal. Women prayer assemblies have grown in popularity as a result of the proliferation of churches, particularly those of the Pentecostal faith. These women's prayer assemblies are unique to Pentecostal churches, though they are not exclusive to them. The attendees in these prayer assemblies are women who are married and have come together to form a socio-religious group. It is religious because it is church-based and it is social as it helps women establish relationships that act as support for each other.

According to my observations, the women's prayer assemblies are regarded as a sacred space by the attendees, with the liturgical rituals of the "mother" church being followed. In the conduct of Women's prayer meetings, they reflect the church's order of service. The wife of the presiding pastor is the leader of the women's group, a role thrust upon her by the nature of her husband's position. The leadership is in charge of

organizing the women in these assemblies as well as the activities that take place in them. The study's central argument was thus to contrast these activities in relation to marital stability. Despite being physically separated from the church, the women's prayer assemblies serve as an extension of the church (Personal fieldwork 2019). The deployment of Christian groups in marriage stability to such an extent that studies the impact of such groups on marriage, vis-à-vis their homes and families appears to be lacking, such that explored the use of observation, interviews, and questionnaires appears to be lacking. This exploration is what this study has primarily attempted.

The literature reviewed showed that women have featured greatly in the history and development of the church in Nigeria, with particular reference to southern Nigeria and Lagos. This development was divided into five segments; the first was traced back to the introduction of Latin Christianity in the 15th and 16th century which saw the introduction of Catholicism into Nigeria (Ade-Ajayi 1965; Ayandele 1966; Adamolekun 2012, Olulana 2015). This was closely followed by the period that has been termed the period of denomination and mission activities, which was brought about by the evangelical revival of the 18th century (Oduyoye 1969, Fatokun 2005). The third is known as the period of evolution of African Independent Churches, which came about as a protest movement against the marginalisation of the indigenes within the foreign mission. (Ajayi 1998; Omoyajowo 1973). This is followed by the period of Indigenous African churches which saw the emergence and establishment of African-owned churches largely owing to the revival of the 1930s (Olayiwola 1989; Gaiya 2002; Fatokun 2011). The fifth period is known as Charismatic Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. A period that saw the beginning of the proliferation of churches in Nigeria (Adamolekun 2012).

For each period in the history and development of Christianity in Nigeria, women have featured prominently. The proliferation and churches and the subsequent establishment of women's prayer groups are noted in previous research (Heuser et al 2009; Nusbacher 1999). This research is largely silent on marriage stability and women's prayer spaces. Indeed, the concept of marriage has enormous literature, little attention has however being placed on the link between women's religiosity and their marriages. It is such gap in the literature that this study has attempted to fill. Maslow's theory of need and gender role theory were the theories used in this study. The research was based on ethnographic fieldwork and questionnaire distribution. For fifteen months, the fieldworker participated as a member of the women's assembly, collecting data through

participant observation and informal, semi-formal, and in-depth interviews, as well as distributing questionnaires. For the questionnaires, the data was presented in simple statistics, while the ethnography was presented in descriptive and narrative forms.

5.2 Conclusion

The research looked at how women's prayer assemblies in a few Pentecostal churches in the Ikorodu area were able to influence marriage stability. It has tapped into a key intersection in gender (in this case, female gender), religion, and marriage research. According to the findings, women's prayer assemblies are linked primarily by communication strategies used by the group's coordinator to influence or impact the participants' marriages. We pointed out that, while we attempted to show in the study that there are links between prayer and marriage outcomes, attitude toward spouse also plays a significant role in marriage outcomes. These attitudes are what the prayer assemblies have attempted to influence through the teachings and relationships formed within the group. The women prayer assemblies is an extension of the church, as it is commonly referred to as the women's wing or the women's fellowship aspect of the church; while it cannot be said to be fully autonomous, it can be claimed that they do have some "control" over the space they occupy, which has been viewed as both private and public. That control, in our opinion, is manifested in the manner in which they conduct their services, the nature of the programs held, and their ability to establish themselves as an important pillar in the homes of attendees.

The assemblies studied to provide the needed support for their members, this support could be in terms of offering advice or alternative to navigate the murky waters created by conflicts in marriages, the support can also be in terms of offering practical skills to women to earn a living and not be entirely financial dependents on their husbands. These assemblies also provide communal relationships and to some members a form of 'other' family. The study also found that women in marriages, particularly those of the Christian faith, will maintain spatial and symbolic connections with prayer assemblies in relation to their marriages, regardless of how long they have been married, because it has evolved into a forum for mentoring younger married women.

Finally, it is demonstrated that the attitude of Women in Prayer Assemblies in Ikorodu toward marriage stability is ambivalent, resulting in the creation of parallel thoughts at times. Indeed, the attitudes of some of the women in this study show that, while marriage stability is desirable, it cannot be forced due to a variety of factors.

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The study offered important information in addressing knowledge gaps in the domain of Christian women prayer meetings and marriage stability of its members, opening new theoretical and methodological options that serve as a window to better understand the phenomena of prayer assemblies. As a result, it has added to current knowledge in the fields of gender studies and religion. Second, the study contributed to research on marriages, specifically Christian marriage.

The study also aided in reaffirming the function of prayer assemblies in its members' marriages, since they serve as a forum for sustaining and extending marriage ideals. The research provides a framework for Christian leaders, and by extension leaders at all levels, to appreciate the significance of women's assemblies and how they might serve as a psychological release for women who attend them. Though a few women were opposed, primarily due to the financial donation, they all agreed that the prayers offered benefited them.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Studies

There are some limitations to the study. These drawbacks are mentioned here as justification for more research. They also suggest that the information presented in this study can serve as a springboard for more in-depth research into other aspects of the study that were not adequately covered here. What has been presented is a broad overview of women's prayer meetings in Ikorodu, as well as marriage stability. The intersection of women's prayer spaces and marital roles has been well documented.

Also, most of the women interviewed shy away from accepting or talking about conflict within the prayer assembly, the emphasis was on togetherness and the ability to forgive one another. The conflict here is stifled rather than received, the groups suppress not only the potential negative effect of conflict, such as a breach in relation but also the potential at reconciliation and forgiveness. Even a cursory glance reveals that the study attempts to discuss marriage stability. However, the female gender was the focus of this study. The male population's input is lacking in a study that attempted, in part, to examine marriage stability. To conclude, a future researcher may want to look at the male perspective of women's prayer assemblies and marriages or combine the views of both genders.

Furthermore, the research was conducted in selected assemblies in Ikorodu, which may not be representative. For these reasons, the study is better classified as a micro-ethnography. If some future researcher takes on the task of uncovering more data in this regard, the argument will be brought into sharper focus. It is also a preliminary contribution to the ever-expanding corpus of marital stability.

REFERENCES

- Abekhale, S.O. (2016). Marital disharmony and family stability in Gboko metropolis: Counselling intervention strategies JORIND 14(1) ISSN 1596-8303. Retrieved from www.transcampus.org/journal
- Aderinto, C. O. (2003). Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria. In *Socialization and Sexuality Discourse in Nigeria*. Understanding Human Sexuality Seminar Series No. 2. African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre.
- Adegoke, A. A. & Esere, M. O. (1998). Sources of stress and coping strategies among divorcees in Ilorin Metropolis. *The Counsellor: Journal of the Counselling Association of Nigeria*, 16(1), 227 – 233.
- Adeyemi, E. (1991). *Causes of divorce and separation as perceived by married couples in Tertiary institutions Ilorin metropolis*. Unpublished M. Ed. project, University of Ilorin.
- Agadjanian, V. (2015). Women's Religious authority in sub-saharan settings: Dialectics of Empowerment and Dependency. *Gender and Society*, 29(6), 982-1008. Retrieved July 14, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43670032>
- Aina O. (1998) Women, Culture and Society. In Sesay, A. and Odebiyi, A. Eds, *Nigerian Women in Society and Development*, Dokun Publishing House Ibadan
- Akanle, O., and OluwakemiI, E. (2012). Traditionalism and household chores in Ibadan, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, 38(2), 203-224. Retrieved August 30, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43488401>

- Akinboye, F.O. (1997). Avoiding marriage Pit-falls: a study of marriage and sexuality in six local communities in Ondo state. *Journal of Sociology*(1) 2:34-45
- Akujobi, R. (2011). Motherhood in African Literature and Culture. *CLC web: Comparative Literature Culture* 13 (1). Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4474.1706>.
- Akinrefon, D. (2017). Inside Badoo cult by Gani Adams, OPC leader. How godfathers recruit unsuspecting residents into cult. Weird handkerchief soak human blood. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/07/inside-badoo-cult-by-gani-adams-opc-leader/>
- Alvin, R. (2012). *Gender and Spirituality Are Women Really More Spiritual?* A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for graduation in the Honors Program Liberty University Spring. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1293&context=honors>
- Andreß H.J., Borgloh B., Bröckel M., Giesselmann M., Hummelsheim D. (2004). The economic consequences of partnership dissolution: A comparative analysis of panel studies from five European countries. Paper presented at the 3rd Conference of the European Research Network on Divorce, December 2 – 4, 2004 in Cologne/Germany.
- Animasahun, R.A and Femi Fatile E.A (2011). Patterns of marital instability among married couples in Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of African studies and development* 3(10) 192-199.
- Ammons, S. K., & Edgell, P. (2007). Religious influences on work-family trade-offs. *Journal of Family Issues*, 28, 794-826.
- Angel, U. (2008). *Mastering interpersonal communication skills between you and your spouse*. New York: Sage Publications Inc.
- Anselmi, D.C and Law, A.L. (1998). *Questions of gender: Perspective and paradoxes* London: McGraw-Hill.
- Awe, O. O. (1996). *The validity and reliability of martial adjustment scale*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Bartkowski J.P (1999). “One step Forward, one step back: Progressive Traditionalism and negotiation of Domestic Labour in Evangelical Families” *Gender issues* 17(4) 37-62
- Bartkowski J.P (2001). *Remaking the Godly Marriage: Gender negotiation in Evangelical Families*. New Brunswick, N.J Rutgers University Press
- Bartkowski J.P and Xu X. (2010). Religion and Family values reconsidered. *Gender Traditionalism among conservative Protestant*. Rutgers University Press. Doi:10.1314012.1,2371.0086

- Beach, S. R. H., Fincham, F. D., Hurt, T. R., McNair, L. M., & Stanley, S. M. (2008a). Prayer and marital intervention: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 27, Gender*, 641–669.
- Beach, S. R. H., Fincham, F. D., Hurt, T. R., McNair, L. M., & Stanley, S. M. (2008b). Prayer and marital intervention: Toward an open, empirically grounded dialogue. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 27*, 693–710.
- Beaujot, R and Liu J. (2005). Models of Time use in paid and unpaid wor. *Journal of family issues 26(7)* doi.org/10.1177/0192513x04273583
- Berger, P.L (1967). *The Sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of Religion*. Garden city, NY: Double day.
- Blanton, A. (2015). Standin’ in the Gap: The Materialities of prayer. In *Hittin’ the Prayer Bones: Materiality of Spirit in the Pentecostal south* (pp. 156-184). University of North Carolina Press. Retrieved 15 March 2021 from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469623986_blanton.11
- Bowen, K. (1996). Evangelism and apostacy: the evolution and impact of evangelicals in modern Mexico, *American Journal of Sociology*.
- Bradbury, T.N and Karney B.R. (2004). Understanding and altering the longitudinal course of a marriage. *Journal of Family and Marriage, 66:862-879*
- Brown, C.G (2012). How do Sufferers perceive healing Prayers? In *Testing prayer* (pp155-193). Cambridge, Massachusetts: London, England: Harvard University Press. Retrieved March 18,2021 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jbjq26.8>
- Cherlin, A.J (2004). The Deinstitutionalisation of American marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family 66:848-861*
- Chun, H. and Injae L. (2001). Why Do Married Men Earn More: Productivity or Marriage Selection. *Economic Inquiry, April*: 307-19.
- Cody-Rydzewski, S. (2007). Married Clergy Women: How They Maintain Traditional Marriage Even as They Claim New Authority. *Review of Religious Research, 48(3)*, 273-289. Retrieved August 30, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20447444>
- Cerioli A. and Zani S. (1990). A Fuzzy Approach to the Measurement of Poverty, in Dagum C. and Zenga M. (eds.), *Income and Wealth Distribution, Inequality and Poverty, Studies in Contemporary Economics*. Berlin: Springer Verlag, pp. 272-284.
- Cheli B. (1995). Totally Fuzzy and Relative Measures in Dynamics Context. *Metron, 53*, pp. 83-205.
- Cheli B. and Lemmi A. (1995). A Totally Fuzzy and Relative Approach to the Multidimensional Analysis of Poverty. *Economic Notes, 24*, pp. 115-134.

- Cherlin, A. J. (2004). The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(4), 848–861. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600162>
- Chiappero M. E. (1994). A new approach to evaluation of well-being and poverty by fuzzy set theory. *Giornale degli Economisti e Annali di Economia*, 53, pp. 367-388.
- Chodorow, N. (1989). *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, UK; Polity Press.
- Close, B (2001). ‘Forced marriage, forced sex: the perils of childhood for girls, in *Gender and Development*, vol. 6, no. 3, November 1998, Oxfam, UK
- Coltrane S. (2000). Research on household labour. Modelling and measuring the social embeddedness of Routine. *Family Work. Journal of Family and Marriage*. Doi 111/j.1741.3737.2000.01208.x
- Coontz, S. (2004). The World Historical Transformation of Marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66 (4), 974–979. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600171>
- Crabb L. (1991). *Men and Women. Enjoying the difference*. Zondervan publishers.
- Daniel, K. and Angus D (2010). High Income improves Evaluation of life but not emotional well-being. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1011492107>
- Deaux, K. and Lewis L.L. (1984). Structures of gender stereotypes: Interrelationships among components and gender label. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(5), 991-1004.
- Dehejia R, and Wahba, S. (1998). Causal Effects in Nonexperimental Studies: Reevaluating the Evaluation of Training Programs. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 94 (448): 1053 1062.
- Dehejia R, and Wahba, S. (1999). Propensity Score Matching Methods for Nonexperimental Causal Studies, NBER Working Paper No. 6829.
- Dobson C. (1982) the nursing process and mental handicap. [Doi.org/10.1177/10.1111/j.1468-3156.1982.tb00037.x](http://doi.org/10.1177/10.1111/j.1468-3156.1982.tb00037.x)
- Duncan, G. J. and Hoffman, S. D. (1985). A reconsideration of the economic consequences of marital dissolution. *Demography* 22: 485–497.
- Daniel, K. (1995). The marriage premium. In *The New Economics of Human Behavior*, edited by Mariano Tommasi and Kathryn Ierulli, 113-25. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Edin, K. (2000). Few good men: Why poor mothers don't marry or remarry. *American Prospect*, 11, no. 4, January: 26-31
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1999). *The Social Foundations of Post-industrial Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eurostat (2002). *European Social Statistics: Income, Poverty and Social Exclusion: 2nd Report*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Ezeilo, U. C. (2000). Male Role and Responsibility in Fertility and Reproductive Health in Nigeria. Ibadan, Centre for Population Activities and Education Development.
- Ellison, C.G., Zhang, W., Krause N. and Marcum J.P (2009). Does Negative Interaction in Church Increase Psychological Distress? Longitudinal findings from the Presbyterian Panel Survey. *Sociology of religion* winter 70(4): 409-431. doi:10.1093/socrel/srp062. Retrieved March 13, 2021 from <https://www.researchgate.net>
- Ellison, C.G., Burdette, A.M. and Wilcox, B.W. (2010). “The Couple that Prays Together: Race and Ethnicity, Religion, and Relationship Quality among Working-Age Adults.” *Journal of Marriage & Family* 72 (2010): 963–75.
- Eriks, A. (2014). Sarah’s Sinfulness: Egalitarianism, Denied Difference, and Gender in Pentecostal Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions. Retrieved 10 March, 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.10861678288>
- Esere, M. O. and Idowu, A. I. (2000). Effects of cognitive restructuring in resolving marital conflicts among selected couples in Ilorin. *Nigerian Journal of Applied Psychology*, 6(1), 87-98.
- Esere, M. O. (2002). Approaches to marital therapy. *The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 8(1), 61-85.
- Esere, M. O. (2006). Communication management skills training as marriage enrichment programme in the improvement of marital adjustment. *The Counsellor*, 23(1), 69-77.
- Esere, M. O. (2008). Communication in marriage relationship. In LA Yahaya, MO Esere, JO Ogunsanmi, & AO Oniye (2008). *Marriage, sex and family counselling*. Ilorin: Unilorin Press Ltd
- Fatokun, S.A (2011). Evangelical Christian in the Muslim sahel. *Journal of Religious history*. Doi:10.1111/j.1467-9809.2010.01045.x
- Fritzell, J. (1990). The dynamics of income distribution: economic mobility in Sweden in comparison with the United States. *Social Science Research* 19: 17–46.

- Filsinger, E.E. and Wilson. M.R. (1984) "Religiosity, Socioeconomic Rewards, and Family Development: Predictors of Marital Adjustment." *Journal of Marriage & Family* 46: 663–70.
- Frone, M. R. (2003). Work-family balance. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.) *Handbook of occupational and health psychology* (pp. 143-162). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
- Gallagher, S.K and Smith, C. (1999). Symbolic Traditionalism and Pragmatism Egalitarianism in contemporary Evangelicals, Families, and Gender. *Gender and Society* 13(2): 211-233
- Gerrits, O. (2002). Infertility and Matrilineality: The exceptional case of the Macua of Mozambique. In Fikir Aseffa (2011) socio-cultural perceptions of infertility and their implications: A study of Women experiencing childlessness in South Gondar, Ethiopia.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press; Cambridge. MA
- Gornick, Janet. (2002). Reconcilable Differences. *The American Prospect*, Spring, 22-28.
- Gove, B. (1986) Webster's third New International Dictionary of the English language unabridged. USA. Merriam-Webster Inc.
- Gray, Jeffrey S. (1996). The fall in men's return to marriage: Declining productivity effects or changing selection? *Journal of Human Resources*, 32, no. 3: 481-504.
- Goodman, M.A. and Dollahite, D.C. (2006) How Religious couples perceive the influence of God in their marriage. Review of religious research, vol.48, no2 Springer publisher. Retrieved 10 February 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20058129>.
- Groothuis, D. (1994). Wagering Belief: Examining Two objections to Paschal Wager's. *Religious Studies* 30 (4) doi 10.1017/5003441250002312x
- Hardesty K. (1992) People helping people. Sage Journal doi.org/10.1177/104837139200500312
- Hellen, C. and Jennifer D. (2004). *Emotional health and wellbeing*. Sage Publisher
- Hao, L. (1996). Family Structure, Private Transfers, and the Economic Well-Being of Families with Children. *Social Forces*, 75, no. 1, September: 269-92.
- Holzer, Harry, and Paul Offner. (2002). January 3. Welfare: What About the Men? *Washington Post* (Washington, DC), A17.

- Hansen, G.L. (2007). "The Effect of Religiosity on Factors Predicting Marital Adjustment." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 50: 264–69.
- Harrar, S. and Demaria R. (2006). *The 7 stages of Marriages Readers Digest*.
- Hawkins, D.N. and Booth. A, (2005). "Unhappily Ever After: Effects of Long-Term, Low-Quality Marriages on Well-Being." *Social Forces* 84: 451–71.
- Heaton, T.B and Pratt. E.L (1990). "The Effects of Religious Homogamy on Marital Satisfaction and Stability." *Journal of Family Issues* 11: 191–207.
- Heaton, T.B. and Albrecht, S.L. (1991). "Stable Unhappy Marriages." *Journal of Marriage & Family* 53: 747–58.
- Idowu, A. I. & Esere, M. O. (2007). *Communication in counselling: A multidimensional perspective*. Ilorin: Tim Sal Publishers.
- Isiaka, A. A. (2005). The relationship between spousal communication and divorce. Unpublished Masters Project University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Johnson, J (1999). 'Married adolescents girls; human rights, health and development needs of a neglected majority,' paper presented by the Population Council at the Supporting Event: Early Marriage in a Human Rights Context, United Nations Special Session on Children, 8–10 May 1999; p.1
- Johnson, E. P. (2004). *Psychology of Religion*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.
- Jolin, K. (2007). *Ways to encourage communication between your spouse and you*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Julie E. Press. (2004). Cute Butts and Housework: A Gynocentric Theory of Assortative Mating. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4), 1029–1033. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600178>
- Kenny, Lawrence. (1983). The accumulation of human capital during marriage by males. *Economic Inquiry*, 21: 223-31.
- Komter, A. (1989) Hidden power in marriage. *Gender and Society* 3(2) 187-216 doi: 10.1111/fare.12129
- Korenman, Sanders, and David Neumark. (1991). Does marriage really make men more productive? *Journal of Human Resources*, 26: 282-307.
- Kurdek, L. A. (2004). Are Gay and Lesbian Cohabiting Couples Really Different from Heterosexual Married Couples? *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4), 880–900. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600164>

- Kusner, K.G., Mahoney, A., Pargament, K.I. and DeMaris, A. (2014). Sanctification of Marriage and Spiritual Intimacy Predicting Observed Marital Interactions Across the Transition to Parenthood. *Journal of Family Psychology* 28: 604–14.
- Lambert, N.M. and Dollahite, D.C. (2008). “The Threefold Cord: Marital Commitment in Religious Couples.” *Journal of Family Issues* 29: 592–614.
- Lang, Kevin, and Jay L. Zagorsky. (2000). Does growing up with a parent absent really hurt? *Journal of Human Resources*, 36, no. 2: 253-73.
- Lazur R.F and Majors R (1995). Men of colour ethnocultural variation of male gender role strain in Levant R.F and Pollack W.S (eds). *The New Psychology of Men* pp337-358, New York, Basic Book.
- Le Bourdais, C., and Lapierre-Adamcyk, É. (2004). Changes in Conjugal Life in Canada: Is Cohabitation Progressively Replacing Marriage? *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4), 929–942. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600167>
- Lechner M. (2002). Some practical issues in the evaluation of heterogeneous labour market programmes by matching methods. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A* 165(1) 59 82.
- Lerman, R. I. (1996). The impact of changing U.S. family structure on child poverty and income inequality. *Economica*, 63, no. 250 S: S119-39.
- . (2001). Marriage as a Protective Force against Economic Hardship, The Urban Institute, Washington DC, October.
- . (2002). Married and Unmarried Parenthood and the Economic Well-being of Families: A Dynamic Analysis of a Recent Cohort, The Urban Institute, Washington DC, February.
- Leuven, E. and Sianesi, B. (2003). PSMATCH2: Stata module to perform full Mahalanobis and propensity score matching, common support graphing, and covariate imbalance testing. University of Amsterdam and Institute for Fiscal Studies, London.
- Lichter, D., Roempke Graefe, D. and J. Brian Brown. (2001). Is marriage a panacea? Union formation among economically-disadvantaged unwed mothers. Paper presented at the Population Association America, Washington, D.C.
- Lips. H.M (2001). *Gender: The basics*. Routledge New York
- Littlewood, D. H. J. (2004). ‘The Family’ in Haralambos, M. (ed.) *Development in Sociology*, vol. 10, Causeway Press, Ormskirk.
- Lundberg, S., Pollak, R. and Wales, T. J. (1997). Do Husbands and Wives Pool Their Resources? *Journal of Human Resources* 32 (3), 463 480.

- Maasoumi E. and Nickelsburg G. (1988). Multivariate measures of well-being and an analysis of inequality in the Michigan data. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, 6, pp. 326-334.
- Mahoney, A. et al (1999). Marriage and the Spiritual realm: The role of proximal and distal religious constructs in marital functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology* 13 (3): 321-338. Retrieved on 13 March, 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org>
- Mahoney, A. and Cano, A. (2014). Introduction to the Special Section on Religion and Spirituality in Family Life: Delving into Relational Spirituality for Couples. *Journal of Family Psychology* 28: 583–86.
- Manning, C. Wendy D., and Daniel T. L. (1996). Parental cohabitation and children's economic well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58 (November): 998-1010.
- Manning, C. (1999). *God gave us the right. Conservative Catholic, Evangelical Protestant and orthodox Jewish Women Grapple with Feminism*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Manting D. and Bouman A. M. (2004). Short and long term economic consequences of union dissolution: The case of the Netherlands. Paper presented at the 3rd European Conference of the Research Network on divorce: Keulen.
- Marx K (1844). *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher)*.
- Mass B. S. and Ichino A. (2002). Estimation of average treatment effects based on propensity scores. *The STATA Journal*.
- Mate, R. (2002) *Wombs as God's Laboratories: Pentecostal Discourses of femininity in Zimbabwe*. Cambridge University press Doi 10.3366/afr.2002.72.4.549
- Maylor A, (2004). 'How marriage changes girls' lives: Married adolescents in Kenya', paper presented at the Reproductive Health Priorities Conference, Durban, South Africa, 1–4 October 2004 Di-Domenico, K and Meldrum, S (2005) *Women, Families and Feminist Politics: A global exploration*, Harrington Park Press, New York.
- Mbiti J.S. (1970). *African Religions and Philosophy*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Mbuagbo O.T and Akoko R.M (2019). Balancing material prosperity with Spiritual growth for effective Christian Citizenship: the case of women of Full Gospel Mission Cameroon. *International Journal of Modern Anthropology Int.J.Mod.Anthrop.*2019. vol.2, issue12, pp:80-95. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijma.v2i12.3>. Retrieved 15 March, 2021 from <https://www.researchgate.net>
- McLanahan, Sara, and Gary D. Sandefur. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Mead, N (1996). *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals*, Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Development Agency, London
- Mincy, Ronald. (2001). Marriage, Child Poverty, and Public Policy. *American Experiment Quarterly*, Summer: 68-71.
- Morrison, Donna Ruane, and Amy Ritualo. (2000). Routes to Children's Economic Recovery After Divorce: Are Cohabitation and Remarriage Equivalent? *American Sociological Review*, 65 (August): 560-80.
- Moyo, F.L (2004). Religion, spirituality and being a woman in Africa: gender construction within the African religio-cultural experiences, *Agenda*, 18:61,72-78 Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ragn20>
- Munroe, M. (2003). Understanding the woman's communication style: Promoting positive Muslim marital relations. *A Journal of Sound Islamic Thoughts*, 1(1), 46-51.
- Nantambu, K. (1996). Egypt & Afrocentric geopolitics: Essays on European supremacy. Kent, OH: Imhotep. Cited in Mazama M.A (2002) Afrocentricity and African Spirituality, *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 13th Cheikh Anta Diop Conference Selected. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180935?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Ngcobo, L. (1988). "African Motherhood: Myths and Reality" Criticism and Ideology: Ed Kirsten Holst Peterson. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies 140- 149.
- Nock, S. (2016) The Marriages of Equally Dependent Spouses. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38(2) 661-665.
- Nusbacher, A. (1999). Efforts at Change in a Traditional Denomination: The Case of Orthodox Women's Prayer Groups. *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, (2), 95-113. Retrieved June 1, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40326490>
- Oduyoye M.A (1969) *The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland, 1842-1888*. Daystar Press
- Offiong, E.E. (2014). The changing Roles of Women in the church: A case of Women in Calabar, Nigeria, 1990-2000. In: Smith R.D, Ackah, W., Reddie, A.G. (eds) *Churches, Blackness and contested Multiculturalism. Black Religion/Womanist Thought/Social Justice*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York Retrieved 14 December 2020 https://doi.org/10.1057/978113786380_4
- Olademo O. (2012) *New Dimensions in Nigerian Women Pentecostal Experience: The case of DODIM, Nigeria*. Penn State University Press 5 (1) www.jstor.org/stable/10.53251/jwor/chri.5.1.0062

- Olajubu, O. (2004) Seeing through a woman's eye: Yoruba religious tradition and gender relations. *Journal of feminist studies* 201) 41-60
- Olayiwola, D.O. (1989). The social impact of New Religious movement on contemporary Yoruba life: The Aladura as a case in point. *Africana Marbuguensia* 22(2): 33-44.
- Olutayo, A.O and Akanle, O. Modernity, Macdonalisation and Family values in Nigeria doi 10.36108/NJSA/7002/500140)
- Omoyajowa, J.A (1982) Cherubim and Seraphim: The history of an African Independent Church. New York: NOK Publishers International
- Ooms, T. (2002). Marriage Plus. *The American Prospect*, Spring, 4-9.
- Oppenheimer, Valerie. (2000). The Continuing Importance of Men's Economic Position in Marriage Formation. In *The Ties That Bind*, edited by Linda Waite, 283-301. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Peel, J.D.Y. (1968). Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba London: oxford university press
- Peterson, Richard R. (1996). A re-evaluation of the economics consequence of divorce. *American Sociological Review*, 61: 528-36.
- Pleck J.H. (1975). Masculinity-Femininity: current and alternative paradigms. *Sex roles* 1: 161-178.
- Pleck, J.H, Sonnenstein F.L. and Ku L.C (1993). Masculinity ideology: Its impact on adolescent males heterosexual relationships. *Journal of Social Issues* 49(3) 11-29. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.1993.tb01166.x
- Preston, Samuel. (1984). Children and the Elderly: Divergent Paths for America's Dependents. *Demography*, 21: 435-57.
- Poortman A., Kalmijn M. (2002). Women's labour market position and divorce in the Netherlands: evaluating economic interpretations of the work effect. *European Journal of Population*, 18, 175 202.
- Poortman, A., (2000). Sex differences in the economic consequences of separation: a panel study of the Netherlands. *European Sociological Review* 16: 367 383.
- Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Ross, C.E (1990) Religion and Psychological Distress. *Journal for the Scientific study of Religion*. Vol. 29, No.2 236-245. Wiley. Retrieve 15 January 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable138743/>

- Sasser, Alicia. (2001). *Changes in the Marriage and Child Wage Premium for Men*, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Sawhill, Isabel. (1999). Families at risk. In *Setting national priorities: The 2000 election and beyond*, edited by H. Aaron and R.D. Reischauer, 97-136. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Sayer, Liana, and Suzanne Bianchi. (2000). Women's Economic Independence and the Probability of Divorce. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21, no. 7, October: 906-43.
- Sen A.K. (1999) *Development as freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Seltzer, J. A. (2004). Cohabitation in the United States and Britain: Demography, Kinship, and the Future. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(4), 921-928. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600166>
- Sharman, A. and Young, K.K (1999). *Feminism and World Religions*, Albany state University of New York Press
- Shields, N. (1975). Functionalism, Darwinism and the Psychology of women: A study in social myth. *American Psychologist*, 30, 739-754.
- Smith J.A., Todd P. (2005). Does Matching Overcome Lalonde's Critique of Non-experimental Estimators? *Journal of Econometrics*, 125(1-2), 305 353.
- Smock P.J. Manning W.D., Gupta S. (1999). The Effect of Marriage and Divorce on Women's Economic Well-Being. *American Sociological Review*, 64, 794 812.
- Smock, P. J. (1993). The economic costs of marital disruption for young women over the past two decades. *Demography* 30: 353 371.
- Smock, P. J. (1994). Gender and the short-run economic consequences of marital disruption. *Social Forces* 73, 243 62.
- Smock, P. J. (2004). The Wax and Wane of Marriage: Prospects for Marriage in the 21st Century *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4), 966-973. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600170>
- Smock, P. J. Wendy D. M, and Sanjiv G. (1999). The effect of marriage and divorce on women's economic well-being. *American Sociological Review*, 64 (December): 794-812.
- Song, Xue. (1999). Cohabitation, marriage, and labor supply: Household specialization or self-selectivity? Ph. D. Diss., Department of Economics, The Johns Hopkins University.
- Sorensen, Elaine, Ronald Mincy, and Ariel Halpern. (2000). *Redirecting Welfare Policy Towards Building Strong Families*, Urban Institute. Washington, DC.

- Spencer, S., Steele, C. And Quinn D (1999). stereotype threat and women's math performance, standford University. Citeseerx ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.370.3979&rep=rep
- Sharlin, S.S (1996). Long-term Successful Marriages in Israel. *Contemporary Family Therapy* 18: 225–42.
- Shehan, C.L. Wilbur Bock, E. and Lee. G.R. (1990). “Religious Heterogamy, Religiosity, and Marital Happiness: The Case of Catholics.” *Journal of Marriage & Family* 52: 73–79.
- South, S.J and Spitze, G. (1994). Housework in Marital and Non-marital household, *American Sociological Review*, 59 (3) doi.org/10.2307/2095937
- Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (pp. 167-261). San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sweeney, M. M., & Cancian, M. (2004). The Changing Importance of White Women's Economic Prospects for Assortative Mating. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4), 1015–1028. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600177>
- Thomas, Adam, and Isabel Sawhil. (2002). For Richer or for Poorer: Marriage as an Antipoverty Strategy.
- Tiesel, R and Olson, R, (2005). ‘Early female marriage in the developing world’ in *Gender and Development: Marriage*, vol. 11 no.2, July 2003, Oxfam, UK
- Trifiletti, R., (1999). Southern European Welfare Regimes and the Worsening Position of Women. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 9(1), 49 64
- Tsui K. (1985). Multidimensional generalisation of the relative and absolute inequality indices: the Atkinson-Kolm-Sen approach. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 67, 251 265.
- Thornton, A., Axinn, W.G. and Hill. D.H. (1992). “Reciprocal Effects of Religiosity, Cohabitation, and Marriage.” *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1992): 628–51.
- Uunk, W. (2004). The Economic Consequences of Divorce for Women in the European Union: The Impact of Welfare State Arrangements. *European Journal of Population*, 20, 251 285.
- Uzoka, F. A. D. (2001): “Gender, Population and Development: Emerging Issues” in in Ebigbola, J. A. and Renne, E. P. (eds.) *Population and Development Issues: Ideas and Debates*. Ibadan, African Book Builders Limited.
- Usoroh, C., Ekot, M. And Inyang, E.S. (2010). Spousal communication styles and marital stability among civil servant in Akwa Ibom state. *JHER* 13(1) 74-84.

- Verma V. and Betti G. (2005). Sampling Errors for Measures of Inequality and Poverty. Invited paper in *Classification and Data Analysis 2005 - Book of Short Papers*, pp. 175-179, CLADAG, Parma, 6-8 June 2005.
- Verma V., Betti G. (2002). Longitudinal measures of income poverty and lifestyle deprivation, Working Paper 50, Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche, University of
- Waite, Linda J. (1995). Does marriage matter? *Demography*, 32, no. 4, November: 483-507.
- Waite, Linda J., and Maggie Gallagher. (2000). *The case for marriage*. New York: Doubleday.
- Walker, A. (2004). A Symposium on Marriage and Its Future. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4), 843–847. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600161>
- Weber, M. (1969). *The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland, 1842-1888*. Daystar Press
- Weitzman, Lenore. (1985). *The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America*. New York: The Free Press.
- Winkler, A. E. (1997). Economic Decision Making by Cohabitators: Findings Regarding Income Pooling. *Applied Economics*, 29, no. 8: 1079-90.
- Whelan C.T., Layte R., Maitre B. and Nolan B. (2001). Income, deprivation and economic strain: an analysis of the European Community Household Panel. *European Sociological Review*, 17, 357-372.
- Wilcox, B.W. (2004). *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Wilcox, B.W., and Nock, S.L. (2006). What's Love Got to Do with It? Equality, Equity, Commitment and Women's Marital Quality. *Social Forces* 84 (2006): 1321–45.
- Wilcox, B.W., and Wolfinger, N.H. (2016). *Soul Mates: Religion, Sex, Love, and Marriage among African Americans and Latinos*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Wolfinger, N.H. and Wilcox, B.W. (2008). "Happily Ever After? Religion, Marital Status, Gender and Relationship Quality in Urban Families." *Social Forces* 86 (2008): 1311–37.
- Yahaya, L. A., Esere, M.O., Ogunsanmi, J. O. & Oniye A. O. (2008). *Marriage, sex and family counselling*. Ilorin: Unilorin Press Ltd.

- Yusuf, J. (2008). *Influence of spousal communication on marriage*. Unpublished M.Ed project, University of Ilorin.
- Yusuf, S. T. (2005). *Indices of marital stability as perceived by University of Ilorin lecturers*. Unpublished B.Ed. project, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Yusuf, M.O., Nwankwo G. (1997). *A Handbook of Methodology in the Social Sciences*. Ibadan: Hopes Publication.

APPENDIX

WOMEN PRAYER ASSEMBLIES AND MARRIAGE STABILITY IN IKORODU LAGOS STATE

This questionnaire is designed to examine issues of women prayer assemblies in relation to their Marriages. The survey takes a look at women's interest in women prayer assemblies and the programs organized in relation to the stability of their marriages. Through this survey, your response will be helpful in determining the impacts that women prayer assemblies or programs have on the stability of marriages and families in Ikorodu Lagos state. Your responses will be used for research purposes only. Thank you.

Section A: Socio-demographic of Respondent

Please tick the correct response

1. How old are you;
 - a) 18-25 years
 - b) 26-35 years
 - c) 36-45 years
 - d) 46-55 years
 - e) 55 years and more
2. What is your educational qualification?
 - a) Secondary
 - b) OND
 - c) HND
 - d) Bachelors
 - e) Masters
 - f) Doctoral
3. What ethnic group do you belong to?
 - a) Igbo
 - b) Yoruba
 - c) Hausa
 - d) Others
4. For how long have you been married?
 - a) Less than a year
 - b) 1-5 years
 - c) 6-10 years
 - d) Above 10 years

Section B

Please tick the correct response

1. Are you an attendee of a 'women only' prayer assembly popularly known as women prayer groups?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) I don't know

2. Do you belong to any of the assembly's women prayer groups?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

3. If yes, name the ones you belong to

- a)
- b)
- c)

4. What is your reason(s) for doing so?

- a)
- b)
- c)

5. How often do you attend the prayer group(s) meetings?

- a) very often
- b) often
- c) seldom
- d) not so often
- e) not at all

6. Have these programmes been of (any) benefit to you?

- a) Absolutely
- b) Sometimes
- c) I don't know
- d) Somehow
- e) Not at all

7. Is your spouse aware you come to this program?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

If No, why (Please write freely)

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. What level of support do you get from your spouse with regards to this program?
- a) Highly supportive
 - b) Supportive
 - c) Indifferent
 - d) Somehow supportive
 - e) Not at all

9. Why do you feel the need to belong to this women-only prayer group?
- a) For divine involvement
 - b) For upward social and financial empowerment
 - c) To make friends
 - d) For solution to marital issues of the family
 - e) For my children's welfare
 - f) Others (Please state here).....

10. Do you think your participation in the women prayer assemblies as imparted as an influence on the stability of your marriage?
- a) Yes
 - b) May be
 - c) No
 - d) I don't know

11. Do you think your participation in the prayer group is beneficial to your wellbeing in general?
- a) Very beneficial
 - b) Somehow beneficial
 - c) I don't know
 - d) Rarely beneficial
 - e) Not beneficial

12. In what specific ways is it beneficial (Please list the benefits below)
- a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

13. Time spent here could have been spent at work, business or at home?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I don't know

14. What makes you prefer coming to this assembly rather than stay at home?
- a) The environment is nice
 - b) There is spiritual upliftment here

- c) My prayers are answered here
- d) To avoid tension at home

15. Do you think your coming to this program is a spiritual routine, or is it a means of escape from routine household chores?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) I don't know

If yes, state your reason, and if no, state your reason

.....

16. If the timing of the program conflicts with other important things, will you still be willing to go for this meeting?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

If yes, please state reason, and if no please also state your reason?

.....

17. If your spouse withdraws his support as regards your going for this program, will you still be willing to go to this program against his will and why?

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

18. Do you think a women should leave her marriage for any reason?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

19. How has your involvement in this women prayer assembly being beneficial to your home?

- a) There is financial improvement
- b) There is peace in the family
- c) The love between you and your husband has improved
- d) Your husband is more cooperative on issues of family welfare

20. Do your in-laws or anyone outside your immediate family complain about your involvement in these prayer assemblies?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

If yes, why?.....

21. Does attending these prayer assemblies and programmes affect your children?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

If yes, please explain how

.....
.....
.....

22. What exactly, has this program contributed to the improvement of your home?

Please mention them

.....
.....
.....
.....

23. What exactly are the topics raised in this women prayer assemblies?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Are you a regular attendee of this 'women only' prayer assembly?
2. How often do you come here?
3. Of what benefit has this program been to you?
4. Is your spouse aware you come to this program?
5. Is he in support or is he indifferent?
6. Do you feel your participation in the prayer group being beneficial to your well being in general?
7. Doesn't time spent here could have been spent at work, business or at home?
8. What makes you prefer coming here rather than staying back to do some other seemingly important things?
9. Do you feel your coming to this program is a spiritual routine, or is it a means of escape?
10. If the timing of the program conflicts with other important things, will you still be willing to go for this meeting?
11. If your spouse withdraw his support as regards to your going for this program, will you still be willing to go to this program against his will and why?
12. How has your involvement in this 'women-only' prayer assembly beneficial to your home?
13. What exactly about this program has contributed to the improvement of your home?

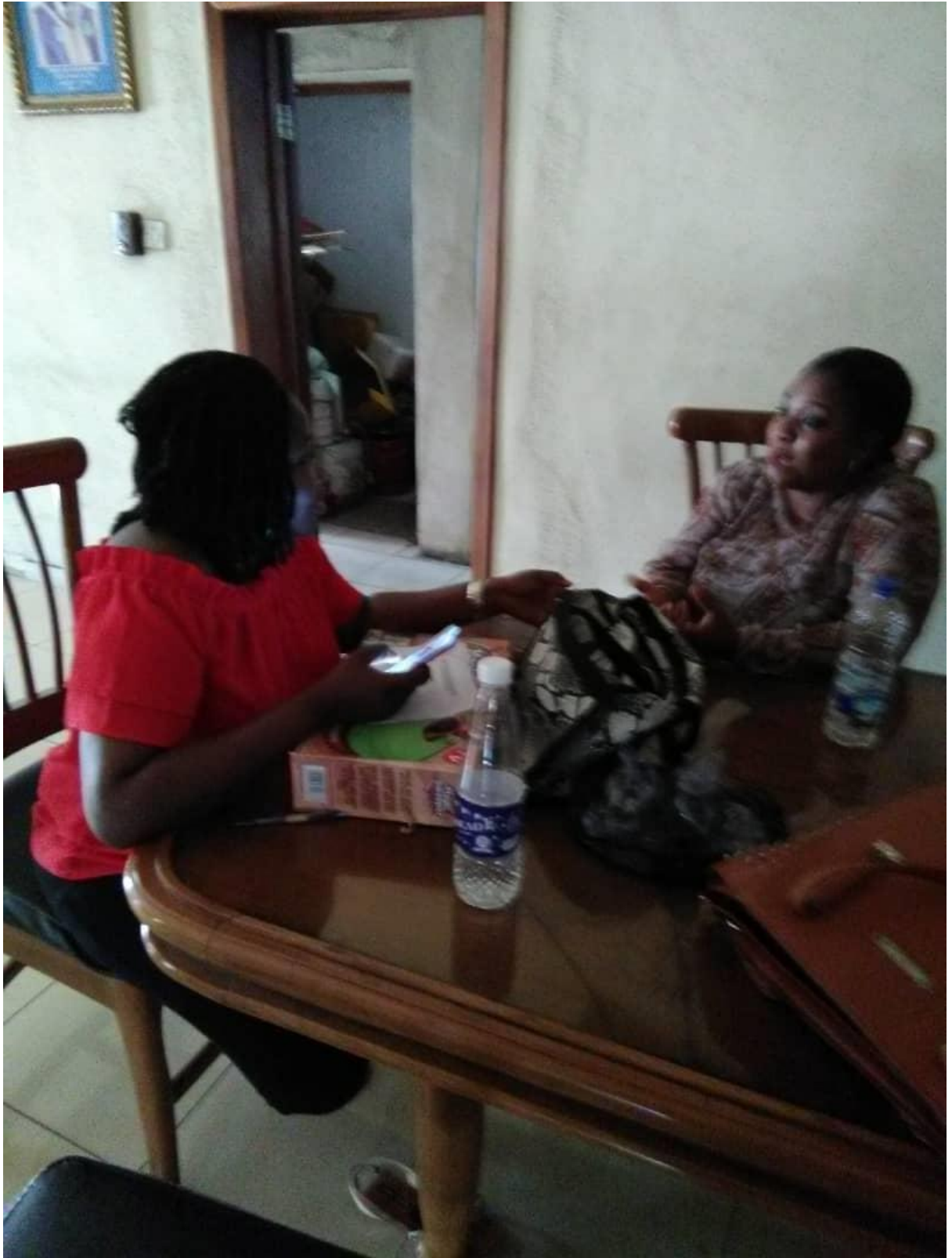


Skill acquisition programme at the Joy cometh Ministries Personal fieldwork 2019



The researcher interviewing one of the participant at her place of work.

Personal fieldwork 2019



The researcher with one of the leaders of the prayer assembly in her office.

Personal fieldwork 2019



The researcher interviewing one of the participants of women prayer assembly at her place of work



A picture showing the hustling and bustling of Ikorodu town