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## **Factors Leading To Divorce and Level of Awareness in the Church: A Case of Africa Inland Church, Starehe Sub County, Nairobi County, Kenya**

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study was to identify factors leading to divorce and level of awareness in the Church. It identified factors leading to divorce among families, and also examined the level of awareness of the type of support given to members by the Church. The study was conducted in Starehe Sub County in Nairobi County, targeting the Africa Inland church. Church leaders and members of the church were involved to give their views on problem of divorce and if there any strategies that the church has applied in addressing divorce. The research was built on the ecological system theory which look at five environments that human being interact which has great impact on once future and present life. The researcher used mixed research design. A mix research method is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative research design and methods in a single study to understand research problem. A purposive sampling was used to select a sampling frame consisting of those members who have been divorced between the age of 18 and above 50. The main data collection tools included questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussion. The findings of the research were analyzed using computer packages such as Micro Soft Excel that enable researchers to come up with recommendations for adoptions by relevant stakeholders to address these challenges. The study established that unfaithfulness within families tops the reasons for divorce in the church with more than a half (54%) of respondents agreeing to it. The second most important factor was financial differences at (15%). While misunderstanding scored (13%) however, culture, drug and alcohol become last in the list scoring (9%). Many of the divorced members came into conclusion that the church is in campaigns to make sure people in the church are aware of the divorce issues

and its consequences. The study recommended that there is need for the church to instill values for a Christian marriage. Although the church is often not directly to impose on society laws and customs it finds compatible with Scripture, it has a solemn duty to instill or teach members of the church and the society at large, what God also says about Christian union between husband and wife.

**Keywords:** *Divorce, Level of Awareness, Africa Inland Church, Starehe Sub County, Nairobi County & Kenya.*

## 1.0 Introduction

There has been an increase in divorce rates in almost every corner of the world (Maria, Frank and Laura, 2005; Hayedeh, Amir & Dabagh, 2014). According to statistics, 50 per cent of new marriages globally end in divorce within the first 12 months (Hayedeh, Amir & Dabagh, 2014). Copen *et al.*, (2012) noted that United State of America is leading the rest of the world in divorce rates. It is estimated that almost fifty percent of couples are likely to be divorced in the course of their marriage. Similarly, half of children in the United States are likely to see their parents undergo divorce before their 18th birth day.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has not been spared either. The problem of divorce is a reality in most parts of the continent. Although most of cultures in Africa strongly discouraged, today, there are quite many divorce cases, an indication that jealously guarded institution is has slowly dying. Currently, South Africa tops the list at 61.2% (Hayedeh, Amir & Dabagh, 2014). Kenya, like the rest of the African countries is currently displaying increasing trends in divorce rates. It is said that the married are divorcing faster than those getting married. The above statistics on divorce is a sign of the seemingly inexorable decline of the social institution of marriage (Maria, Frank & Laura, 2005). One of the reasons could be that divorce is socially acceptable to many people today. Kenya is showing increased trend in divorce rate with 76 per cent of men blaming their wife's for the divorce

According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2008, two hundred and twelve thousand nine hundred and seventy two have divorced. In Nairobi statistics by KNBS indicated twenty one thousand five hundred and seventy three are divorced with Nairobi North having the highest statistic at seven thousand six hundred and one being divorce. Though divorce may not be as high as in the United States, but Kenya has its own share. An unconfirmed report says that 10 percent of all first Marriages end in divorce or separation. The following two real stories, downloaded from one of the leading newspapers in Kenya, the Standard Online Edition, have classic representations of the deteriorating levels of marital harmony in Kenya today (Mbunga, 2010). Taylor and Francis (2005) argued that another reason could be that fewer people belong to religions that oppose divorce and fewer people following rules of religion even if they attend services regularly.

Besides the married couples' monthly meetings, other forums in the church exist for the enhancement of spiritual growth for the entire local body of believers. These opportunities include the ladies' fellowship, discipleship fellowship, youth fellowship, a single adult fellowship, and two main church choirs, which not only sing during worship Services but are also part of the small groups that participate in the regular spiritually nurturing activities of the church.

The immediate context of this study was my home church, Africa Inland Church Plains view in Nairobi, Kenya. The church is part of the Africa Inland Church Nairobi Region, which is part of

the larger Africa Inland Church, Kenya. Africa Inland Church is an evangelical church founded by the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) from the United States in 1895. Africa Inland Church (AIC) Plains view started in the early 1979s in a middle-class suburb, South of Nairobi. It has a Sunday worship service attendance of slightly over one thousand people. Over 60 percent of the congregation is people forty years old and younger. Slightly over 40 percent of the members are married couples, ranging from one year of marriage, to those married for over fifty years. The leadership of the church is comprised of three pastors, thirty elders. The church has three services running back-to-back on Sunday morning, beginning with the first service at 8: 30 a.m. to 10:30am followed by the English service at 10:30am to 12:15pm and then the Kiswahili service which makes the day at 12:30pm to 1:30pm. The church has a forum every third Saturday of the month for married ladies to meet monthly for fellowship. There is a weekly fellowship for daughters of Naomi. These are the widowed and a counseling session once per month for the married couples who are between one year to ten years. The second one is for couples who have been married between sixteen years and more. The monthly meetings provide couples with opportunities for worship, recreation, and learning from one another on matters of common interest.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Africa communities still treasure marriages however, Africa has its share, and a study of South Africa indicated that one in every three marriage ended in divorce, Narran (2006). Kenya is showing increased trend in divorce rate, with two hundred and twelve thousand nine hundred and seventy two having divorced by 2008. In Nairobi, statistics by KNBS indicated twenty one thousand five hundred and seventy three were divorced with Nairobi North having the highest statistic at seven thousand six hundred and one being divorced. AIC in Starehe, being in Nairobi North has its share of the divorce cases recorded. The church does not keep records for the divorced members thus the researcher relied on the three hundred and twenty four respondents who gave their views on the divorced issues being victims of divorced themselves.

The church intervention to salvage the marriages of many families seems not to do much as family systems are vulnerable (Frits, 2000). There is need to understand the consequences of divorce particularly at household level and in the church. One also needs to understand the religious methods adopted. It is also important to examine the proper ramification of effects of divorce in the church so as to arrest the situation, hence the proposed study. There are different factors that make the problem a critical issue. According to O'Donovan (2000), causes of increase in rate of divorce are unfaithfulness and infidelity among married couples in the church. This has been emphasised by Kitembo *et.al.*, (1998) who looked at the acceptance of customary marriage plus Christian religions as a confusion among Christians which has increased the unfaithfulness and increases in divorce rates. Though the church offers some awareness using different platforms such as media, seminars and training facilities as it has been a tradition especially in Africa inland church, divorce cases are still on the increase. Thus this study sought to identify factors leading to divorce and level of awareness in the Church. It identified factors leading to divorce among families, and also examined the level of awareness of the type of support given to members by the Church

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

- i) To identify factors leading to divorce in the church
- ii) To examine the level of awareness of the type of support given to members by the church

## 1.4 Research Questions

- i) What factors lead to of divorce in the church?
- ii) What is the level of awareness of the type of support given to members by the church?

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework: Ecological Systems Theory

This study was based on Ecological System Theory. The theory was founded by Bronfenbrenner in 1979. It focuses on five areas which can affect a human being. Knabb, *et, al.* (2009) noted Ecological Systems Theory(EST) looked at human development that consists mutual accommodation and progressive development all through the course of life, between growing human being, an active and the changing traits of the immediate settings in which the developing people lives, as this process is influenced by the relationships between these settings, and to a larger context in which the settings are built.

EST holds that human beings encounter different environments throughout their lifespan and which have some influence their behaviors. These systems comprises of the micro system, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macro system, and the chronosystem (Knabb, *et, al.*, 2009). The micro system's setting relates to one's direct environment and includes the family, friends, neighbors, classmates, teachers and other people who have a direct contact with you are included in your micro-system (Maria, Frank & Laura, 2005). The micro-system refers to the setting where we have direct social interactions with these agents of sociology. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the theory states that we are not just receivers of the experiences we have when socializing with these people in the micro-system environment, but we are contributing to the development of such environment. The Social agents of a family play a very important role in ounce's life and especially in the institution of marriage which influences the behavior of men and women and how the addition of children, the occupational roles of husband and wife, and other elements of reward and tension in a marriage (Kevin, 1997). A child brought up in an abusive environment always was an abuser when grown of age. Such children were abused themselves as children and use violence in other parts of their lives or they may have seen a model of violence in their parental families (Abbott, 1992).

This theory is linked to this study from an organizational context (in this case the church), where there may be dysfunctional situations in regard to it's inter- organizational service network, its governmental relations and its local community as well as economy. Secondly, an aspect of development, which in the context of this study was infrastructural development of the church, requires a well balance and working system. Each subsystem requires adequate and well-working, input-output, integrative linkages with other subsystems, and with the larger environment, for adequate, equitable exchanges of resources (such as those needed for infrastructural development). Something like infrastructural development of the church needs to contribution of its members. When different families pulling resources together they achieve more in contribution towards church projects.

However in cases where divorce happened, this contribution to the development of oneself and that of the church is affected. EST is not without shortcomings the major one being its inability to offer or give detailed mechanisms for development. This notwithstanding, it is the best approach for this study as it integrates multiple influences on development. Bronfenbrenner acknowledged

that there multiple and complexities of process by which one or more subsystem affect the other. In this research, divorce as a dysfunctional aspect of the system, can affect infrastructural development of the church (subsystem) through complexities and multiple paths. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory provided a backcloth or an appropriate framework for this study as a way of viewing the interconnecting relationship between various social influences on development

## 2.2 Empirical Review

### 2.2.1 Factors Leading to Divorce in the Church

According to O'Donovan (2000) many Christian marriages are in frustrated or unhappy situation. Being a Christian does not guarantee happiness and fulfillment in marriages. The author continues to argue that divorce can be caused by infidelity or unfaithfulness by one or both marriage partners. The same sentiment is shared by Treas (2003) who argues that infidelity, simply defined as breach of trust between the two partners and implies a general lack of faithfulness to a moral duty or responsibility to each other.

Therefore for any marriage to thrive, a clear or feeling of faithfulness and commitment is a must. Conway and Conway (cited in Mbunga, 2010, p.33) explains that couples who accommodate or embark on marital commitment enjoy firm marriages. Faithfulness or marriage commitment is one of the three most important factors for making most Christians marriage work. Besides, a lot is said in the Bible about faithfulness and advising against immorality, which is more likely to destroy marriage and bring terrible devastation to couples or to previous consenting parties (Mbunga, 2010). In the context of the current study, the biblical idea of "leaving, cleaving and becoming one flesh" (Gen. 2:24) to fidelity and faithfulness in marriage is quite relevant.

Hausmann, *et al.* (2010) argues that some of the reasons which have resulted into divorce are new marital arrangements where families are now educated and have changed their faith to Christianity and also they have moved from rural areas to cities. There is exposure to industrialization and high population growth which has forced families to move and work harder to meet their household needs (Fenech, 2012). Another problem is exposure to what is happening in other parts of the world, ([www.uonbi.ac.ke](http://www.uonbi.ac.ke)) changes in gender roles and relations, as well as the high occupational mobility and geographical movement which tend to divide people along the lines of age, gender, class and residence (Fehlberg *et al.*, 2011).

These factors have contributed to the transformation of traditional African systems and to delocalization of marital arrangements, as well as the moral decadence which is evident in most parts of the slums area. March *et al.*, (2000) framework of social relations approach is to increase human well-being development. Human well-being concerns survival, security and autonomy. The Bible encourages a Christian husband not to take a Christian wife to court (and vice versa). Instead, the Bible sets up other avenues in circumstances such as Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 mention to handle disputes among believers.

This ability to participate fully in the decision that shapes one's choice and life chance has affected many of African nations. The poorer and poverty state of many people, marriage has been strained hence divorce in Africa and Kenya happens every day (Hausmann, *et al.*, 2010). Age, Education and income are very important factors in the stability of all marriages. However, Pamela Thompson a psychologist ascertains that females earn more than male and have a more favorable career track. Culturally, the man in natural order of things is to be the head of the family

(Sodenmans *et al.*, 2013). As the head of the household, the said man has to feed his family rather than subjecting them to poverty (O'Donovan, 2000). The harshness of an African woman and toughness makes marriage to be much more fragile.

### **2.2.2 The Level of Divorce Awareness and Types of Support Given to Members by the Church**

The Church uses media to create awareness where people are taught on how to remain healthy and focused during divorce situation and maintain good diet by keeping away from alcohol or drugs (Miller & Claire, 2013). The Christian and the whole community has helped the divorced and gave them care to make sure they do not consider themselves as separated from the church (Taylor & Francis, 2010). Through media channel, the church air divorce ministry by giving faith and courage to divorced people (Fenech, 2012). This helped the divorce to seek help from good people who have learned how to move ahead with rebuilding their lives (Pinsof & Wynne, 1995). Also broadcasting programs of peer support group's professional counseling and kind people in faith community are place where the congregation seek out support.

The church as a community provides the potential for nurturing human beings into the fullness of their humanity (James & Shafer, 2012). Through social media, the church has been creating awareness to the married couple on values of marriage (Kilbride & Kilbride, 1990). Therefore support social climate in which human communities are maintained and strengthened for the sake of all person and their growth and be sensitive to others (Hayedeh & Rostami, 2014). Family is the basic human community which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility and respect (Fehlberg *et al.*, 2011). Fidelity and affirmation of the importance of loving parents for all children and shared responsibility and encouraging social, economic and religious efforts to maintain and strengthen relationships within families are important (Fenech, 2012).

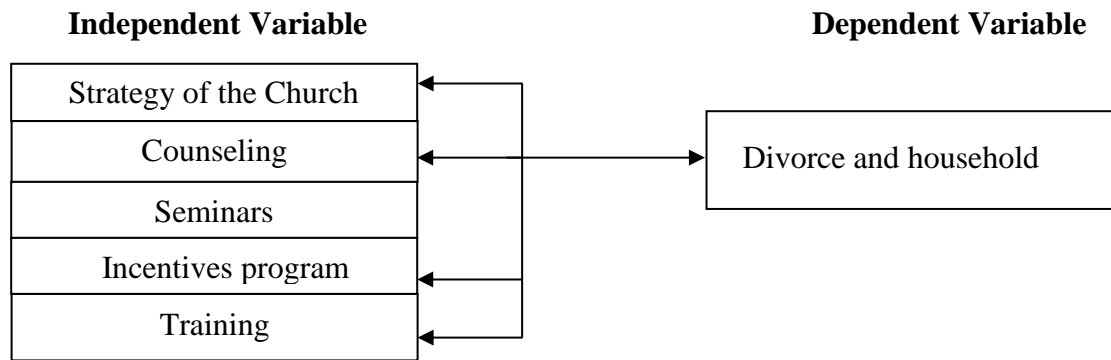
Divorce is against Gods plan. The church is using different media channels to give premarital marital and post marital counseling in order to create and preserve strong marriages (Hayedeh & Rostami, 2014). However, majority of western countries are facing high divorce rates and increasing neutrality in custody (Eurostat, 2010). This is not different in Kenyan settings where a child custody arrangement in post-divorce is for the benefit of the child (Sodenmans *et al.* 2013). Fehlberg *et al.* (2011) argued that the danger of joint custody is that in adolescence stage of the child, there is less cooperation from the child. As soon as one hears the word divorce, a swell of emotions sweeps over each of our hearts and minds (Smith, 2010a). We have all been affected in some way or another by divorce in our lives, in our families, among our friends, and in the church. Few things are more painful than divorce, and its prevalence in and effects on our culture cannot be overestimated (Pinsof, & Wynne, 2000). More specifically, its prevalence in and effect on the church cannot be overestimated.

We are uneasy, in a sense, in even addressing this issue. We are uneasy in part because divorce in our culture, and in the church, has become so easy (Pinsof & Wynne, 2000). This is not to say divorce has no cost, but to say that there have been few times in history when the ability to leave one's commitment of marriage has been so easy (Uecker & Jeremy, 2012). We are also uneasy because we want to shepherd our faith family. We, in no , want to hurt men and women whose lives have already been wounded by the pain of divorce (Miller & Claire, 2013). We know that any discussion of divorce uncovers these wounds, and our intention is to lead every member of our faith family beside the still, soothing water of the Word.

We know this is a delicate journey, but we press on because we are convinced the Gospel has radical, transforming, beautiful, challenging, and eternal implications for divorce (Haviland, 2011).

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a research tool which helps a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under study and to communicate this. Conceptual framework has potential to help in subsequent finding (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Researchers use a conceptual framework to steer their data collection and analysis. The figure below illustrates how factors affecting the roles of religion (independent variables) influence the divorce (intervening variables) and the house hold (dependent variables). The independent variables have outlined some of the key elements that will affect the role of religion especially the church in divorce.



Source Author 2015

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

### 3.0 Research Methodology

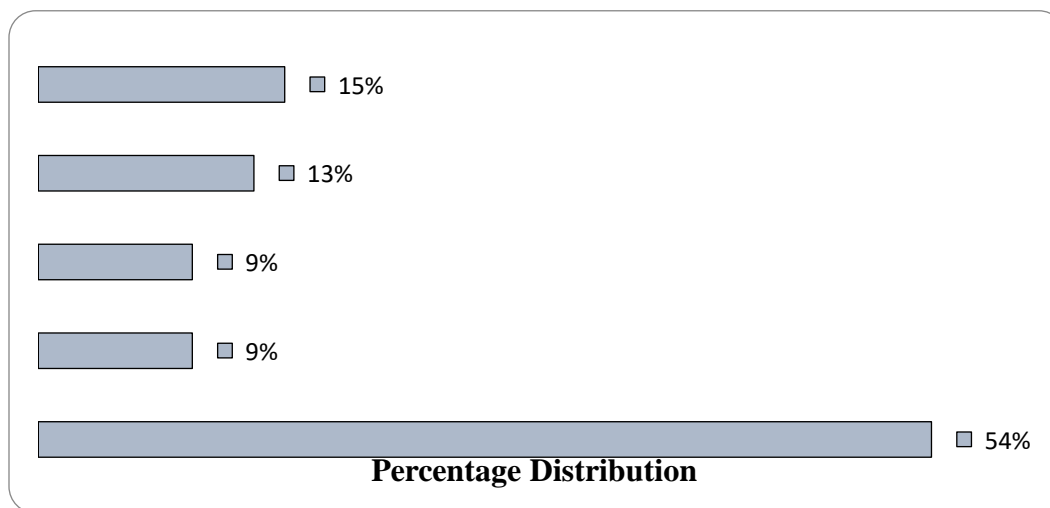
The researcher used mixed research design. The study was conducted in Africa Inland church found neighboring the Mukuru slum. Africa Inland Church is in South B Nairobi County in Starehe Sub-County. Majority of people visiting the church come from Mukuru Kayaba slums which have a population of around 500,000 thousand. The researcher used purposive sampling to select a sampling frame consisting of those members who have been divorced between the age of 20 and 50. The research used purposive sampling procedures as specifically sampling families which divorced. Stratified sampling is primarily used to ensure that different groups of population are adequately represented in the sample so as to ensure a level of accuracy when estimating parameters. The research used questionnaires; the unstructured and open ended questions were used as well as structured close ended questions to give respondents complete freedom to express their views. The findings were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed through use of tables and figures and results presented in tables, bar graphs, pie chart.



## 4.1 Results and Findings

### 4.1.1 Factors Leading to Divorce in the Church

The enquiry on the factors leading to divorce in the church invited a wide range of answers from the respondents. For a better or clear understanding, the responses were quantified and plotted as shown Figure 2.



Source: Field data 2015

Figure 2: Factors leading to Divorce in the Church

Unfaithfulness within families tops the reasons for divorce in the church with more than a half (54%) of respondents agreeing to it. The second most important factor was financial differences at (15%). While misunderstanding scored (13%) however, culture, drug and alcohol become last in the list scoring (9%).

Fifty four percent of the respondents in the church felt that unfaithfulness within the marriages is the main cause of divorce. There is infidelity, lack of trust and lack of respect among married couples that causes irreparable disagreements and form grounds for divorce. Some of the respondents also indicated that partners are not sincere from the start of marriage as their marriage is not anchored on Christian values. Others gave lack of faith in the marriages as contributor to infidelity. However, fifteen percent of the respondent felt that unmet expectations resulted to divorce, which may be avoided only when the married couples can only understand each partner's capability.

Due to financial difference marriages have ended up to divorce. Sadly thirteen percent of the respondents said that misunderstanding has contributed to the increase of divorce. Couples ignore the fact of openness to each other, which can bring sanity to the marriage life and assist the families and the church to address the high divorce rates. Different culture, drugs and alcohol respectively scored 9 percent. This shows that there are a few cases of drugs and alcohol abuse in the church and culture does not seem to be a very big issue in marriages.

The findings tally with the popular belief that it is a very common experience to find Christians in irregular marriage situation in African Countries. Most divorces occur among young partners. Divorce was not possible according to the customs of most African ethnic groups. Unfaithfulness and infidelity are some of the reasons why most of the wives are seeking divorce. The situation brings misunderstanding to the kin of the family and put all the blame to women as having caused the trouble. In relation to this study unfaithfulness according to Kisembo *et. al.*, (1998), is cultural right of men. Looking at the ecosystem theory, it is assumed that cultural men can have more women as opposed to women.

The study findings are consistent with O'Donovan's (2000) view as quoted in the literature review that unfaithfulness is the leading cause of Christian marriages today. The author argue that most Christian marriages are in frustrated or unhappy situation and that being a Christian does not guarantee happiness and fulfillment in marriages. However, the current findings contradict the provisions mentioned by Haussman, *et. al.*, (2010) as reviewed in chapter. These authors attribute the rising divorce cases to new marital arrangements where families are now educated and have moved from rural areas to cities. Han's boerkker in Kisembo (1998) pointed out that even though women take their husbands to courts, it should not be concluded that women are the initiators of divorce proceedings. It only proves that women are vulnerable and they need the courts to assist them in the distribution of family household. Usually, the local courts have no jurisdictions over Christian statutory marriage and this makes it less easy for Christian wives to sue their husband in court and that's why many married couples are reluctant to hold church marriages.

In most churches in Africa when there is a crisis in marriages, couples turn to their families for guidance and when this fail to work then the courts become the next option. The Mesosystem brings a platform to be used in solving marriage problems. The interaction between the church the courts and traditional lines makes an indirect outcome on the marriages which are on the crisis. Churches make the saving of marriages their primary concern however, the contribution of the church in counseling services and other activities in a wide range seem to be more judgmental. Legal divorce is easily obtained and this brings the conflict between the church and the courts. The attitude of the church towards divorced people is not positive. As noted in the data collection process the Christianity far from discouraging traditional ideas did actually enhance them. The church is in dilemma on how to make marriage couples to stay on within abusive marriages. (Kisembo *et.al.*, pg 196).

As noted in the survey when collecting data a numerous of traditional practice in marriage ideas is practiced. Though the church discourages these traditions, actually the environment church is in, has a great impact in once life. The ecological system theory holds that human beings encounter different environment throughout their life span which influences the behavior. This environment has influenced the church practices by accepting the payment of dowry before a ceremony can take place and other traditions. Viewing the church, it seems that it is in a dilemma on how to handle an abusive situation happening in married couples. The church should be a good listener to the couple's problems and be prepared to take responsibilities of reconciling the two positions for the purpose of avoiding or discouraging divorce. In view of this missionary antagonism it is not surprisingly that only a tiny percentage of Christians get married in the church in the first instance and that most marriages are a post factum.

In other areas the church tolerated customary marriage celebrations while insisting on the performance of church marriage ceremonies. Hansboerakker (in Kisembo *et. al.* 1998) agreed with the view of the respondents. The reluctance of Christians to get into Christians marriage ceremony

before doing the customary marriages has contributed to the church ceremony to hold very little meaning for those who take part. Church weddings or ceremonies have to go through in order not to incur the displeasure of the church authorities. However, one may wonder after the authorities have performed the Christian ceremonies in the church then follows all other sort of traditions. This is the mischief the church has not try to understand and solve. Looking at the in attendance, there is a big contrast between the church ceremony and the customary celebrations. People prefer to go to the customary ceremony as opposed to the church weddings. This is not different in the urban settings where this research was done. Africa Inland Church is at the urban centre of the city of Nairobi.

The study observed a wedding event from the day it was announced till the wedding day and its proceedings. Surprisingly much was not done; the Pre-marital session took three months plus the announcement of the weddings for three consecutive weeks then followed the wedding day. This is not enough preparation for the church to handle and prepare people who are getting into a life time relationship. The Microsystems environment serves as an experience of what the churches has been doing and seem not to be working. The church seems to pay little attention about the long lasting relationships. Instead, it only but officiate the marriage ceremonies. No wonder the high number of divorce and suffering in many people who are not divorced but cling on their marriages because of the church doctrines.

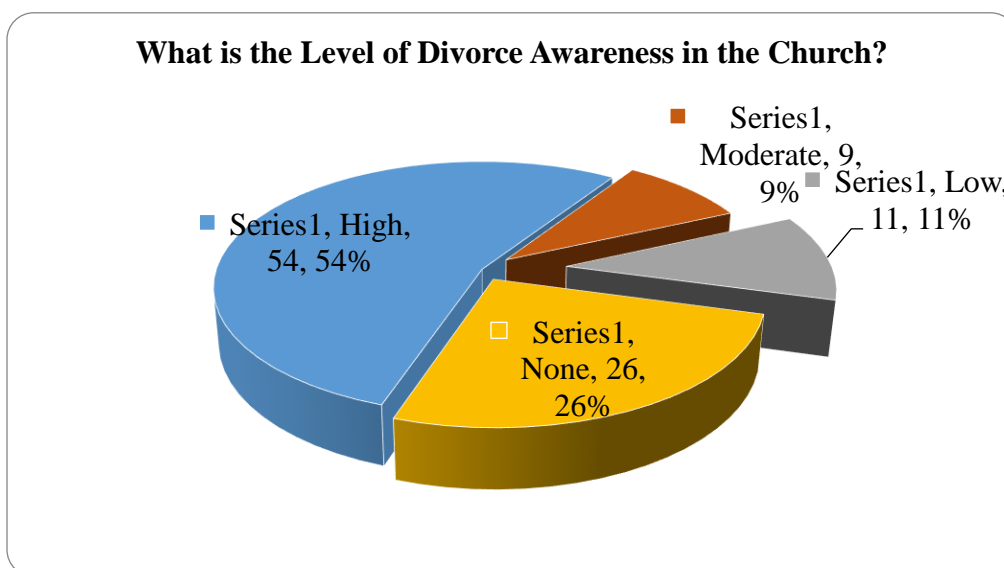
At the reception hall the seating setting of the two families give an impression that these are two different families. While the teaching of the church ceremonies gave an opposite assurance that Whatever God has joined man should not separate. This happen just few hours after the church ceremony. The two sittings blocks of chairs connected by a table in the centre signifies every things that happens in the reception has an air of stiffness and formality. Thus showing the church ceremony as an element in a whole complex of events and rituals which cater for different levels or aspects of urban social life in the church.

A large proportion of the respondents claimed full membership in the church and regular weekly attendance at the church. The churches possess active church congregations among which majority of members enjoy stable marriages characterized by fidelity and devotedness. Yet the fact remains that church marriages are more than a rule. Christians do not appreciate the relevance of church marriages to the Christian life. Young people who divorced suggested that Christianity does not mean marrying in church. The church ceremony seems to have been swallowed up in social mode of life which is merely modernized version of the customary social celebration. The respondents viewed church ceremonies and Christian marriages as folly. That is why the high number in today's celebrated marriages divorce.

#### **4.1.2 The Level of Awareness of the Type of Support Given to Members by the Church**

##### **Level of Divorce Awareness**

Figure 3 shows the findings of the level of divorce awareness. The respondents were asked to give their view on the level of awareness in the church. The question was meant to find out if the church members were aware of divorce issues and its impact.



Source: Field data 2015

**Figure 3: Response on the Level of Divorce Awareness in the Church**

From the Figure 3, it was found that 54% agreed that the level of awareness on divorce issue is quite high. Many of the divorced members come into conclusion that the church is in campaigns to make sure people in the church are aware of the divorce issues and its consequences. However 9% of the divorce members felt that divorce awareness is not crusaded enough while 11% are of the opinion that the awareness concerning divorce issues is low. 26% of the divorce groups in the church are not aware of any divorces awareness in the church. This concludes that majority of divorced members interviewed are in agreement that awareness on the divorce issues is high.

#### 4.1.3 Level of Support Given to the Divorced Members of the Church

All the respondents were asked to rate the type of support given to divorce members in the church. This question was aimed at assessing whether or not the church support victims of divorce among their congregation. Table 1 shows the findings.

**Table 1: Level of Support given to the Divorced members of the Church**

Level	Frequency	Percent
High	156	48
Moderate	54	17
Low	54	17
Poor	54	17
None	6	2
Total	324	100

Source: Field data 2015

From Table 1, it is illustrated that 48% of the divorce members felt that the church is supporting them in handling the divorce condition they are in. The church has come up with supporting programs and activities which bring all the divorced people together so that they may not feel lonely. Moreover (17%) moderate, (17%) poor and (2%) none believed that the church is not doing enough to support divorced people.

Basing on Table 1 of the result found that fifty four percent agreed that the level of awareness on divorce issue is quite high. Many of the divorced members came into conclusion that the church is in campaigns to make sure people in the church are aware of the divorce issues and its consequences. However nine percent of the divorce members felt that divorce awareness is not crusaded enough while eleven percent respondents were of the opinion that the awareness concerning divorce issues was low. Twenty six percent of the divorce groups in the church were not aware of any divorces awareness in the church. This concludes that majority of divorced members interviewed agreed that awareness on the divorce issues was high. As a matter of fact, few church members think it can happen to them.

In terms of whether the church was supporting members in relation to divorce, forty eight percent of the divorce members felt that the church is supporting them in handling the divorce condition they are in. The church has some supporting programs and activities which bring all the divorced people together so that they may not feel lonely. Though the church does not condone divorce, which is according to its doctrines, divorced people live among the church and find peace when they are in churches and seek guidance mostly in the leadership of the church. Moreover thirty six percent (moderate, poor and none) believe that the church is not doing enough to support divorced people. The church only focuses on the youth who are in the relationship and those that want to go into relationships. The church teaches marriage right before, during and after courtship so that couples could understand marriage and its implication. It is a belief that once the two are joined together then one has to be faithful and obedient to the doctrines of the church. The marriage is the priority which God blesses and from it comes fruitfulness as a new union is formed.

Majority of the church members who are divorced felt that the church should be responsible and stop being materialistic. The idea respondents had of Christian marriage was distorted. In all replies it was the legal consequences of Christian marriage, monogamy and indissolubility and not the nature of commitment that is emphasized. Christian marriage was God's law for Christians and the priest not the spouses. It is very common experience to find Christians in irregular marriage situation for those Christians who do not attend the church regularly (Wright as cited in Glenn, 2010).

Though the church possesses critical importance ascribed to marriage, many divorced people thought that by not doing a church wedding one has an opportunity to go to courts once the relationship is not working. Rather than abiding to Christians doctrines which even when the relationship is not working many of the couples go to the traditional ways to try and solve the issue. Church weddings are decisive element in acceptability for communion. The support system in the church is lacking some mechanism of how to deal with the divorce cases hence living the victims of divorce to suffer in silent in the church.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

This study has explained and described divorce among member of AIC church and the measures put in place to reduce it .The findings reveal that unfaithfulness is main ground for divorce among members of AIC church. This means that the church may have failed to offer adequate and necessary teachings on how to lead a Christian marriage, one that is free from divorce and other misunderstandings. There seems to be a miss-match between the level of awareness about divorce cases and implementation. The fact that there is a high awareness level about divorce only confirms the many cases among members of the church. However, it seems members are doing nothing about it. Very few members of the church, if any, believe it can also happen to them. The reality is that divorce can happen to any member of the church.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

There is need for the church to instill values for a Christian marriage. Although the church is often not directly to impose on society laws and customs it finds compatible with Scripture, it has a solemn duty to instill or teach members of the church and the society at large, what God also says about Christian union between husband and wife. Jesus' Word, "What God has joined together, let man not separate," needs careful, continued inculcation among members of AIC church. Specifically, there should be more emphasis on commitment and faithfulness. Once couples are committed to each other and find support in the community for their individual commitment was for the common good. The church teaches that, couples ought to know they must engage each other in activities that build the community, respect of marriage and glorify God. Equal respect and good communication between partners is recommended. It is the responsibility of the church and the community to care for families whose settings fall short of the values of security, parental love, equal respect and mutual values and this cannot be shifted to others.

The church should do more counseling to the couple after marriage as a continuous process. Members of the church should be practical and translate what they are taught into actions. The family and the church have an obligation to give education. It is the right for children to be natured to be morally upright from the tender age. This makes the family the first school of social living. In giving education, the family takes part in the development of the society. Moreover the state has to perform its fundamental task of supporting the family by having legal policy or principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized authority. Community based marriage skills should is also necessary to equip members of the church on skills for sustaining marriages. There is also need for Prayer Life in the Family and among members of the church. Parents should be prepared emotionally to cope with the challenges of life. This can be made possible by giving priorities to the families over life advancement. The parents should be good role models for their children by ensuring that family members are happy and live an upright life. As responsible parents and guided by the scriptures and church tradition they are able to prepare good future community members. The family that prays together stays together. Through prayer, couples are and will always be vigilant in renewing their love to one another and they will always remain chaste in living their marital commitments. Prayer life unites members and connects the family with God who gives divine wisdom.

## 7.0 References

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