

N B T S  
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EQUIPPING COUPLES FOR EFFECTIVE CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION AT ONA IGBALA BAPTIST CHURCH.

OGBOMOSO

A DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
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## ABSTRACT

This research was done to equip couples at Ona-Igbala Baptist Church, Ogbomoso for effective resolution of marital conflict. It was based on the need for marriage and family as the bedrock of the church, society and human civilization not to be allowed to disintegrate through incessant, unresolved and poorly handled conflict that are adversely affecting couples interpersonal relationships. It further aims to find out why marital conflict is rampant among the couples in the church, create awareness of the danger and effects of these, and then suggest possible solution to the problem to help the couples live with less conflict. It also emphasizes that couples need to realize the importance of their marriage relationship, become effective in handling marital conflict for them to become useful in their homes, church and society.

In order to carry out this project, biblical foundation was first of all laid while relevant, related literature and research work were consulted. Then a marriage and family enrichment manual was designed which contained six teachings meant to enlighten, inform, empower and equip couples in handling and resolving marital conflict constructively. The method used was pre-test and post-test questionnaire. The pre-test questionnaire was administered to the couples in attendance to assess their pre knowledge of marital conflict and its resolution before the implementation of the manual while post-test questionnaire was administered after the implementation of the manual to evaluate the impact of the manual.

Findings revealed that couples at Ona-Igbala Baptist Church, Ogbomoso were experiencing conflict due to many factors such as wrong concept of marriage, lack of understanding of personality differences and temperaments, sexual maladjustment, financial problem and the likes. The finding further revealed that marital conflict had several unpleasant effects such as hostility, confusion, interruption of normal relationship between couples, negative influence on children. It again showed that couples often resort to unhealthy handling of conflict like threat, nagging, fighting, withdrawal and even divorce. The findings showed that couples are grossly lacking in skills at resolving conflict constructively.

The project then came up with the recommendation that couples in the church should be brought to the constant awareness of the causes and evil effects of marital conflict through preaching, teaching, and bible study from pastors and church leaders. It is also recommended that couples should jettison unhealthy ways of handling marital conflict and embrace healthy ways to make them light to the world especially in their neighbourhood. It was also recommended that marriage and family enrichment be made a necessity like premarital counselling so that pastors and married couples will also take it very seriously.

## Conclusion

From this project, one can draw the following conclusions:

It could be concluded that God meant marriage relationship to be for the good of humans. It was established to bring two people (a man and a woman) together as helpful partners. Therefore, in order to minimise or be able to handle conflict that often manifest as husbands and wives live and work together, couples should know God's mind concerning marital relationship as expressed in the Bible. The love of God as expressed through Jesus Christ should motivate couples to live and sustain their love life not allowing conflict to erode this. Also, the reconciliation work of Jesus Christ in coming to reconcile man back to God and man to man should always serve as a constant reminder to the couples to always strive for prompt reconciliation of their differences or conflict in a non-threatening manner.

One can conclude that marital conflict like any other conflict in the world is inevitable or unavoidable. This means that conflict will occur among people outside the church as well as couples in the church. The essential thing therefore is how these conflicts are handled when they manifest. Christian couples should prepared and be ready to face this fact and not pretend about it but face it and always resolve their conflict constructively in order to be model to the world.

Moreover, it could be concluded from this study that marital conflict causes as well as its effects are very numerous and can spring up from a very ridiculous issue to a very serious one. Depending on how it is handled, trivial issues like the use of toilet, hanging of clothes can cause marital conflict and big issues like marital infidelity, financially difficulties could also spark off marital conflict. The emphasis, therefore, is that couples should not trivialize any issues or handle them with levity so as not allow them to become enlarged and then become source of regret and sorrow. Big issues too

like sexual infidelity should not be seen as beyond what could be resolved, that would then scatter marriage. However, balance and proper attitude to issues are essential whether on small or big issue.

From the study also, one can conclude that marital conflict more often than not always put marriage at risk if left unresolved or poorly handled. Incessant conflict and poorly handled conflict could never do any couples any good. Instead, the relationship will always be going through serious tension and may even cause health impairment of various types like high blood pressure, migraine, heart problem to the couples. A lot of unhappiness may also result. The growth of such marriage would then be retarded. Therefore, unhealthy ways of handling marital conflict like threat, shouting, emotional withdrawal, use of force or violence should be jettisoned by couples in the church. Instead, healthy ways of resolving conflict should be embraced.

Furthermore, one can conclude from the study that following wrong principles or unbiblical concepts of marriage is a sure way to marital failure and happiness. Wrong concepts of marriage that are found in the society like marriage without commitment, free love and very low cultural concept of marriage should not be followed by couples in the church. Even though Bible is not against culture, only positive aspects of culture that are in line with the word of God should be made use of by Christian couples. In all things, biblical principles or concepts that highly valued marriage and marital relationship and which rightly put marriage in the hand of God who is the author and sustainer of marriage should be the standard for inter-personal relationships among couples in the church.

Lastly, from the analysis of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires of the project, it could be concluded that the objectives of this project were achieved. For instance, through the implementation of the manual, not only were new knowledge.

sound informations and practical ideas that could aid them in resolving conflict disseminated but skills needed to do this were affirmed to have been rightly imparted and gained by the participants. Through the teaching of the manual, couple awareness of various marital conflict resolution styles were in no doubt. They indicated and strongly affirmed that henceforth they would not engage in any of unhealthy ways of handling conflict any longer rather they would always strive for a win-win / collaborating approach of conflict resolution employing various skills they have learned and gained through the project manual implementation.

### Recommendations

Based on this researcher's observations and findings from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The study revealed that many couples in the church lack adequate knowledge of causes and negative effects of marital conflict. It is, therefore, recommended that couples in the church should be brought to the constant awareness of the causes and evil effects of marital conflict through preaching, teaching, and Bible study from pastors and church leaders as the case may be.
2. The study revealed that couples in the church often handled conflict in unhealthy ways thereby putting their relationships and marriage at risk. It is, therefore, recommended that couples in the church should desist from handling conflict in an unhealthy ways rather should now embrace healthy ways of conflict resolution so that they would become model or light to those around them, in their neighbourhood, church and society at large.
3. It is revealed through this study that couples in the church are grossly lacking in personal understanding of themselves and of their spouses in term of personality

