

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF MARITAL CONFLICT, A
CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE: A PERSPECTIVE OF APOSTOLIC FAITH
MISSION CONGREGATIONS IN BULAWAYO**

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ABSTRACT

Reports from various institutions in Zimbabwe such as Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Judiciary services, Civil society organisations and Christian leaders show that the rate of marriage in Zimbabwe has remained unchanged while that of marriage conflicts and violence has drastically gone up. The study sought to investigate factors influencing marital conflict. The specific objectives of the study were to discover the various forms of marital conflict in families, To establish the major causes of domestic violence and conflict in the marriage, to discover how couples cope with marital conflict in the family, to establish if there is premarital and post-marital counselling at the church, to discover the number of churches that were aware of pastoral care and use it in their congregations. The first chapter presents introduction and background to the study, the problem statement. Chapter two presents theoretical models guiding the study as well as a review of related literature. Major themes of the study were extensively reviewed in chapter two. Literature suggested that marital conflict was a universal phenomenon, couples cannot be productive when they are not sound in body, mind and spirit. Chapter three presented the research methodology. The study took a mixed method design and data was collected through questionnaires and focus groups. The study was based on married couples in the AFM churches in the city of Bulawayo who were selected through simple random sampling. Data which was collected was analysed through SPSS software and content analysis. The findings of the study showed that the most common causes of marital conflict among church wedded couples in AFMZ Mhlangeni and Town circuits were money, in-laws, infidelity, conjugal related and children. The study revealed that majority of the couples had undergone pre-marital counselling and had been going through post-marital counselling. However, the frequency of pre-marital counselling was higher than post-marital counselling. The majority of the couple coped with the conflict through dialogue. This means they talked it over with their spouse to reduce the tension than the conflict brought. The study has observed that spouses generally disregard resolving conflict and thus recommended good communication between a husband and a wife.

Key Words: Marriage, Domestic Violence, Marital Conflict, Divorce, Counselling, Pastoral Care