

**PASTORAL CARE AND CHRISTIAN DIVORCE: A CASE OF THE BRETHREN IN  
CHRIST CHURCH (BICC) LOBHENGULA**

**By**

**HANDSOME MOYO**

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## ABSTRACT

The BICC Lobengula congregation served as the study population, from which 10 divorced congregants and their responsible pastor were sampled using purposive sampling technique. The problem of the study centred around the concern about the Church's response to the general upward trend in divorce rates globally, as revealed within the extensive literature review that was systematically carried out, following the three objectives of the study that are: to explore BICCZ's stance with regards to divorce; to identify challenges faced by divorcees at BICC Lobengula and to establish pastoral care strategies to help alleviate the identified challenges. Otherwise, for its theoretical framework, the study was guided by the Clinebell's Holistic Liberation-growth Model of Pastoral care and Counselling. As far as significance was concerned, the study identified the following: creating a body of knowledge, educational purposes, awareness and information for BICCZ leadership, and BICC congregants. The study also made use of: qualitative research as its research methodology and employed case study research; covering ethical research expectations. Data was obtained through observation, scanning of church records, review of related literature, and semi-structured interviews. A summative content analysis technique was used as a means of examining the collated data. Key findings of the study included the following, BICCZ extensively refers to Scripture in its understanding of the marriage and divorce, and as articulated in Article XVI of its Constitution, marriage is an inseparable union between husband and wife divinely instituted by God.; Whilst the majority of the respondents indicated that fellow congregants generally hold negative feelings about divorce, the remaining minority felt that congregants held mixed feelings. Common causes of divorce at BICC Lobengula listed from the most common to the least common were: infidelity, lack of affection, long distant marriages, in-law interruptions, faith differences, disrespect and financial squabbles.; Challenges that respondents face as a result of divorce are: stigmatisation, negative discrimination, loneliness coupled with difficulty in remarrying, depression, financial strain and emotional drain of now having to raise children as a single parent. The study recommends increased accommodation of divorcees within church programming; lengthier premarital counselling sessions; and refresher marital counselling for married couples.

**Key Words:** : Pastoral care, Christian divorce, Counselling, Brethren in Christ Church Lobhengula, Marriage, Remarrying

