EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: THE CATEGORY AND ROLE OF PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC COUNSELLORS IN CAPE COAST METROPOLIS OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper was to assess the guidance given by the Pentecostal and Charismatic marriage counsellors on effective communication in a Christian marriage in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. The paper also sought to find out the category (marital status, counselling experiences, offices held, and gender) of counselling functionaries in those churches. Thirty seven (37) marriage counsellors from forty (40) Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in the metropolis were selected for the study. It was a descriptive study where questionnaire was used to collect the data. Majority of the counsellors (91.9%) encouraged their clients to understand that effective communication has a major influence on the success of a marriage or family. However, many failed to take clients through some practical measures that enhance marital communication. For example, 62.2% of the counsellors failed to encourage couples to maintain eye contact during communication, and 56.8% failed to encourage couples to avoid interruption but wait till speaker end before speaking. Again, 56.8%, 54.1%, and 62.2% failed to encourage clients to refrain from bringing back old arguments; admit faults and refuse apportioning blames; and avoid defence to prove innocence respectively. The study also revealed that the counselling functionaries were mostly elders and deacons/deaconesses (64.8%) and males (62.2%). The study recommended to Christian organisations and churches to offer and encourage more females to take up counselling roles since some female clients may find difficulties to openly discuss certain issues with male counsellors. The need to promote the use of trained and certificated counsellors to conduct counselling in churches as well organising regular in-service training for them was also re-echoed.

Keywords: Effective communication, Christian Marriage, Christian Counsellors, Category of Christian Guidance and Counselling Functionaries

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Researchers on relationships agree that communication is the single most important factor for a successful marriage and family (Stuart (1980; Omeou, 2007b). Odukoya (2008) argued further that communication is the fuel on which the engine of relationship runs. Communication could be defined as the exchange of information between people, by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behaviour (Bloomsbury Publishing Public Limited Company (1999). According to Odukoya, there are two broad forms of communication. Olson and Defrain (2000) agreed with Odukoya. The two broad forms are verbal and non-verbal communication. It is very important to let body language depict the words one is delivering. Verbal and non-verbal communication should agree.

Odukoya mentioned that some common non-verbal ways of communication include facial expression, spatial behaviour, eye contacts, voice tone, attitude and body motions, as well as physical expressions such as hugs, kisses, and a pat on the back. According to Odukoya, experts claim that only 7% of information is transmitted through words, 32% of information is transmitted through voice tone and 58% transmitted through body language. Some researchers estimate that 65% of all face to face communication is non verbal (Olson & Defrain, 2000). It is therefore expedient for couples and Christian counsellors to take non-verbal communication as serious as verbal communication.

According to Odukoya, communication involves three aspects – what we say (choice of words), how we say it (manner, attitude, body language and tone) and when we say it (the timing). All the three factors must be carefully considered during communication.

Communication within any given system is essential. Olson and Defrain (2000) asserted that in
the family, even if a member withdraws, he or she is simply communicating that the family is not a safe, healthy or happy place to live. Systems provide information to their components on how the various parts of the system are functioning. Family systems therefore function successfully when important information is regularly exchanged among members (Olson & Defrain, 2000). Feedbacks are very significant for communication within given systems as well.

Feedbacks could be positive or negative. Positive feedback in families tends to create necessary changes in families whereas negative feedback tends to maintain the status quo (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993). Feedback could come either within family members or outside the family (Olson and Defrain, 2000). Active communication between couples, regarding all aspects of their family life is a major factor that influences marital satisfaction in general; and promotes harmony, cohesion and holistic development in families (Britten & Britten, 2006; Collins, 2007). Two cannot walk together unless they agree (Amos 3:3). According to Odukoya (2008), one way to enhance agreement in human relationships (marriages and families) is through active communication. Some measures that enhance marital communication have been researched.

### 1.1 Practical Measures to Enhance Marital Communication

Mace (1991) named patience as a very important communication enhancer. To improve communication, Stuart (1980) suggested the following. Partners should face and maintain eye contact as much as possible during communication. They should provide appropriate non-verbal feedback such as nod, smile, etc. They should also avoid interruption but wait till speaker ends; as well as avoiding unsolicited advice, comments and criticisms. Partners should also ensure their biases do not interfere with their listening skills; and learn to use “how”, “what”, “where”, and “when” questions instead of “why”.

Again, they should endeavour to use questions mainly for better understanding of the partner’s point of view but not to interrogate and fix blames. They should also take responsibility of their messages by using “I” statements and not “you” statements as much as possible. Stuart further advised partners to consistently praise each other for fulfilling their requests to at least communicate and be sure to respond to their partner’s request. Finally, Stuart stressed that each partner should clarify his or her understanding of what the other partner has communicate by restating what he or she has heard or seen; and ask the partner to confirm if his or her personal understanding of the other is correct. McFadden and Doub (1983) share similar views on the above issues. Britten and Britten (2006) added openness and truthfulness as important factors in communication. Listening has also been mentioned as another important communication enhancer (Odukoya, 2008).

Olson and Defrain, 2000 defined listening as the process of developing a full understanding of another person. People are prone to make quick judgements without critically listening. Christians are admonished to be quick to listen but slow to speak (James 1:19). Odukoya, (2008) opined that to desire to be heard by others but not ready to hear others is a symptom of selfishness and impatience. Listening is a significant skill that should be learnt (Odukoya, 2008). It should therefore not be assumed to be acquired naturally without effort.

Some essential listening skills suggested by Odukoya include: listening without interrupting; listening with interest and not boringly; listening totally and not selectively; listening without defending; listening sensitively; and listening with the entire body – eye contact, mind, ears, etc. Couples who adopt these effective listening skills are likely to improve upon their communication, and subsequently, marital satisfaction (Odukoya, 2008).

### 1.2 Practical Biblical Suggestions for Couples on Marital Communication

The bible is not silent on important communication enhancers. Some biblical suggestions for couples on marital communication include: respecting and loving each other without any domination (Ephesians 5: 22-25); transparency, confessions of faults and forgiveness (Genesis 2:25), and learning to be quick to listen but slow to talk (James 1:19). Christians are cautioned to be patient with their partners, for through patience, a ruler can be persuaded and a bone be broken (Proverbs 22:15).

Again, Mark 12:33 admonish spouses to treat each order as they would want to be treated in all things. It is therefore important to listen to one’s spouse as one wants to be listened to. Couples are also encouraged to admit faults and refuse apportioning blames when communicating (Genesis 8:8-19; Proverbs 20:6; 21:2). They are also to refrain from bringing back old arguments when they have been resolved earlier (Ephesians 4:26, 27; Philippians 3:12-14; Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 43:25).
Others include: offending not in words but letting speech be seasoned with salt (James 3: 2; Psalms 19:14; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6); learning to praise even in difficult times (Job 13:15); discerning the right timing (when to be silent and when to talk) (Ecclesiastes 3:1,7; 1 Samuel 25: 36-37); not always trying to defend one’s self to prove one’s innocence (Isaiah 50: 8); learning to understand that silence is wisdom (Proverbs 17: 27-28 ) and strength (Isaiah 30:15).

Again, partners should learn to give praise when a spouse does a good thing (Philippians 4:8); avoid the use of harsh words that stir up anger (Proverbs 15:1) or reckless words that could pierce like a sword (Proverbs 12:18). Moreover, couples must understand that gentle answer turns away wrath (Proverbs 15:1) but pleasant words are like honeycomb, that are sweet to the soul and healing to the bones (Proverbs 16:24). Couples must also understand that only fools answer before listening (Proverbs 18:13) and a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4). Stuart (1980) agrees highly with these biblical suggestions.

1.3 Category of Guidance and Counselling Functionaries in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches

One important topic that could be added to the ongoing discussions is the category of people who serve as guidance and counselling functionaries in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches of the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. One may wonder about their marital status, counselling experiences, offices held, and gender. Different denominations and nations have different views and guidelines on people permitted to counsel in churches.

Taking marital status for instance, while some believe that marriage counselling should be restricted only to married counsellors, others believe otherwise. Ogan and Ogan (2008) for instance asserted that it is ethically demanded that a Christian family and marriage counsellor must have a legally valid and an exemplary marriage. Some Christian organisations and churches are however not strict on marital status of marriage and family counsellors. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (2010) for instance did not mention marital status as one of the qualifications needed by a Christian marriage and family counsellor. Again, Essuman (2011) posited that Christian counselling could be performed by matured Christians, suggesting that as far as the Christian in matured in Christ, he or she can counsel would-be couples or couples regardless of the marital status.

Biblically, Apostle Paul gave some remarkable guidance on marriage and family even as a single man (1 Corinthians 7:1-17). Also, it popularly believed that Jesus Christ himself never married but gave important guidance on marriage and family life (Mathew 19:3-12). Today, it is a well known fact that Roman Catholic priests (who abstain from marriage) do provide marriage and family counselling services. It appears there are no rigid rules on the marital status of Christian marriage and family counsellors.

Pertaining to the counselling experiences of counsellors, Collins (2007) stated that experience is a major quality of the counselling profession that should never be taken for granted. Every profession has its own peculiar pitfalls or potential disasters which unsuspecting professionals fall into (Ogan & Ogan, 2008). Collins (2007) added that even though every counsellor will make mistakes, the more the counselling experience, on the part of the counsellor, the lesser the likelihood for mistakes, and the better the overall counselling process.

On the contrary, others especially in Pentecostal and Charismatic cycles are more likely to admit that any individual led by the Holy Spirit and can “rightly divide” the word of God could equally undertake marriage and family counselling. However, Ogan and Ogan (2008) is of the view that even though it is the church that can effectively save failing marriages and families, unfortunately, most people in the church do not have a comprehensive view of the origins of problems in marriages and families and therefore cannot completely solve them. The importance of experience in the counselling profession in general can therefore not be overemphasised.

Concerning offices held by Christian marriage and family counsellors, there is another sharp divide between different authorities and denominations. Some believe that any form of Christian counselling should be restricted to only ordained ministers. It is a well known fact that people have consulted the clergy for guidance on day to day issues of life over the ages (Antiri, 2004; American Association of Pastoral Counselors, 2010). Pastoral or Christian counselling has therefore been a traditional reserve for ordained ministers.

On the contrary, others (eg Essuman, 2011) believe that in some cases, matured Christians who are not ordained as priests, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers may have what it takes to counsel Christians and, in fact, do provide pastoral or Christian counselling services in churches,
directly or indirectly (Antiri, 2004). It appears with the growing numbers of congregants, the clergy get overburdened with taking care of the congregants’ social needs all alone.

It can be readily recalled that Moses himself received counselling from his father-in-law, Jethro, on how to effectively manage the Israelites when their spiritual needs became so numerous and demanding (Exodus 18:12-21). Moses was basically guided to get other able men to help him minister to the Israelites who consulted him to inquire from God, settle their disputes, and receive guidance on God’s law from morning to evening (Exodus 18:12-21). It appears the clergy today seem to be far less able to take care of themselves and to help others (De Vogel, 1986). It would therefore be expedient for the clergy today to seek support just like Moses did.

Concerning the gender of guidance and counselling functionaries, again different scenarios exist among different denominations. While orthodox and charismatic churches are relatively more liberal with allowing the services of females in leadership roles in churches, Pentecostals have relatively very traditional views on gender. Taking cues from certain biblical passages, women roles are usually conscripted either to the home or supportive to the males in churches (Walsh, 2010). In Ghana for instance, The Apostolic Church, Ghana and Church of Pentecost, which are two mainline Pentecostal churches, do not ordain females as priests yet. However, there are several ordained female priests in orthodox and charismatic churches in Ghana.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A US national survey involving 26,442 married couples revealed that happy couples were more likely (68%) than unhappy couples (10%) to agree that they were very happy with how they communicate with each other (Olson, Fye & Olson, 1999). Also, 86% of the couples agreed they have partners who do not understand how they feel. Again, while 78% wished their partners share their feelings more often, 75% said they were afraid to share negative feelings, which might affect their partners, and 67% claimed their partners give them silent treatment.

Furthermore, whereas 74% of the happy couples believe their partners tell them the truth, only 23% of unhappy couples believe so. Truth is therefore a remarkable variable for marital satisfaction. Most of the happy couples agreed that they do not make comments to put each other down. The happy couples were also less afraid to ask their partners for what they want; and found it easier to express all their true feelings. The situation was the direct opposite for most of the unhappy couples (Olson, Fye & Olson, 1999). From this study, it will not be far from truth to say that couples who communicate effectively, openly and freely are more likely to be happy than those who do not. The ability to properly communicate is therefore an essential skill couples must master in order to enjoy a close and fulfilling relationship (Olson & Defrain, 2000). From the above discussions, and based on the research (Ntreh, 2010), that many Christian marriages end up in divorce; it appears communication in most Christian marriages are rather ineffective. One may therefore wonder the category of guidance and counselling functionaries; and the kind of counselling Pentecostal and Charismatic marriage counsellors in Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana give to couples on effective marital communication during the usually mandatory premarital counselling sessions.

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of the study was to assess the marriage and family counselling services provided by Pentecostal and Charismatic churches of the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to assess the guidance given by the counsellors on effective communication in a Christian marriage. The study also sought to find out the category (marital status, counselling experiences, offices held, and gender) of marriage and family counsellors in those churches.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of counselling given by marriage counsellors on responsible communication in the Christian marriage?
2. What marital and counselling experiences do Pentecostal and Charismatic marriage counsellors possess?
3. What are the offices held by marriage and family counsellors in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches?
4. What is the gender representation of marriage and family counsellors in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches?

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study would serve as a guide to the practice of marriage and family counselling in churches. The study would also serve as a guide to churches, Christian organizations, and seminars to review their training programmes for counsellors to acquire the appropriate skills needed to meet the ever increasing, demanding and complex needs of
family and marriage counselling in the churches. The study would also add to the call for Christian organisations to recognise the need to provide regular in-service training for Christian counsellors, encourage the use of female counsellors, as well as setting up bodies to oversee and evaluate the activities of Christian counsellors regularly.

6. METHODOLOGY

The research design used for the study was descriptive survey. This design involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or answer research questions concerning the current status of a phenomenon (Debrah, 2003). It also aids the researcher to describe, observe and document an aspect of a situation as it naturally occurs (Polit & Hurgler 1995). The descriptive survey design was also recommended by Babbie (1990) for the purpose of making an accurate generalisation from a given sample to a population.

The usefulness of the descriptive survey for this type of research is supported by Gay (1987). Gay (1987) asserts that the descriptive survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. Surveys also enable the researcher to study more variables at one time; than is typically possible in laboratory or field experiments, and allows data collection in the real world environment (Nyarko, 2004).

The target population comprised all Christian counsellors in the 184 Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis as provided by the headquarters of the Ghana Pentecostal Council (Council of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches) and the Local Ghana Pentecostal Council of the Cape Coast Metropolis.

A sample size of 40 churches, representing 22% of the study area was selected. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990), in determining the sample size for a study, 10-15% of any population is justified for the sample. The simple random sampling procedure was used to select the 40 churches. According to Sarantakos (1997), this type of sampling gives all units of the target population an equal chance of being selected. The sample unit were selected by using the table of random numbers. However, the accessible sample size for the study was 37 out of the targeted counsellors of 40. This indicates 92.50% return rate and this was due to the fact that three of the counsellors travelled outside the study area and therefore could not traced be traced to collect their responses.

The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used because it is economical as far as time and funds are concern (Osuala, 2005). The items on the questionnaires were grouped into six sections with the first part dealing with the socio-demographic background information of the respondents. The rest of sections catered for each of the research questions of the main study.

Data collected were analysed through the use of descriptive statistics. Specifically, the data were analysed through the computation of frequencies and percentages. This was done with the use of the computer software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The nature of counselling given by marriage counsellors of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis on responsible communication in the Christian marriage

The responses given by the counsellors concerning responsible communication in the Christian marriage are shown in Table 1.

According to Omeonu, communication is arguably considered the single most important factor for a successful marriage or family. Communication is deemed as the fuel on which the engine of relationship runs (Odukoye, 2008). A US national survey involving 26,442 married couples revealed that happy couples were more likely (68%) than unhappy couples (10%) to agree that they were very happy with how they communicate with each other (Olson, Fye & Olson, 1999). It will therefore be expedient for marriage and family counsellors to actively engage clients in the techniques for effective marital communication.

Good communication in a marriage plays a very key role in the sustenance of the marriage. It is in this wise that counsellors are supposed to concentrate on ensuring that the couple are furnished with adequate information on good communication practices.

From Table 1, 34 (91.9%) out of the 37 counsellors encouraged their clients to understand that effective communication has a major influence on the success of a marriage or family whiles 3 (8.1%) did not do so. It can therefore be concluded that a whooping majority of the counsellors helped their
clients to appreciate the significance of effective communication on the success of a marriage or family. Researchers on relationships agree that communication is the single most important factor for a successful marriage and family (Omeonu, 2007b).

Table 1 also shows that, 22 (59.5%) of the counsellors encouraged their clients to choose their words carefully when communicating whereas 15 (40.5%) did not do so. It can again be concluded that majority of the counsellors helped their clients to appreciate the relevance of choosing words carefully when communicating with their spouses. It is documented that, gentle answer turns away wrath (Proverbs 15:1) and pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones (Proverbs 16:24). This finding is in line with the recommendation of Stuart (1980) which stated that partners should use polite and respectful words when communicating with each other. This finding also conforms to the biblical suggestion of “offend not in words but let your speech be seasoned with salt” (James 3: 2; Psalms 19:14; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6).

It can also be seen from Table 1 that 21 (56.8%) of the counsellors encouraged their clients to learn to discern the right time for communicating certain issues whiles 16 (43.2%) did not do so. Again, a greater proportion of the counsellors helped their clients to discern the right time for communicating certain issues. This finding also agrees with the biblical guidance on discerning the proper timing of communication (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7; 1 Samuel 25: 36-37).

Table 1 also shows that majority of the counsellors helped their clients to consider their attitude, body language and tone during communication. Specifically, 33 (89.2%) of the counsellors responded that they helped their clients consider the attitude, body language and tone during communication while 3 (8.1%) did not do so. According to Odukoya (2008), only 7% of information is transmitted through words, 32% of information is transmitted through voice tone and 58% transmitted through body language. She added that communication involves three things – what we say (choice of words), how we say it (manner, attitude, body language and tone) and when we say it (the timing).

Again, Table 1 revealed that, 34 (91.9%) of the counsellors counselled their clients to speak the truth to each other; 25 (67.5%) counselled them to avoid using silent treatment of each other when offended, and all of the counsellors, 37 (100%) encouraged their clients to be transparent to each other.

Table 1: Respondents Counselling Concerning Responsible Communication in a Christian Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Yes No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication has a major influence on the success of a marriage or family</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose words carefully</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discern the right time for communicating certain issues</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the attitude, body language and tone during communication</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak the truth to each other</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid using silent treatment</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face and maintain eye contact during communication</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid interruption but wait till speaker ends before speaking</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No partner has to dominate the other during communication</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be transparent to each other</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid defence to prove innocence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admit faults and refuse apportioning blames</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrain from bringing back old arguments</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with one issue at a time</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Proverbs 15:4, a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Britten and Britten (2006) also argued that openness and truthfulness are important factors that improve marital communication.

A critical look at Table 1 however shows that even though the counsellors generally helped their clients to appreciate the significance of responsible communication in the marital relationship, they failed to give them practical guidance on how to effectively communicate. For instance, as shown in Table 1, only 14 (37.8%) of the counsellors encouraged their clients to face and maintain eye
contact, as much as possible, during communication. Stuart (1980) suggested that to improve communication, partners should face and maintain eye contact as much as possible.

Again, only 16 (43.2%) counselled their clients to avoid interruption but wait till speaker end before speaking when communicating whereas a larger proportion (21, 56.8%) did not do so. It follows that majority of the counsellors did not counsel their clients (couples) not to interrupt each other but wait till one spouse ends before speaking. This finding does not conform to the suggestion of Stuart (1980) for partners to avoid interruption but waiting till speaker ends before speaking.

As shown in Table 1, more than half, 19 (51.4%) of the counsellors did not helped their clients to understand that no partner has to dominate the other during communication. From the Christian perspective spouses are not to dominate each other in any form (Ephesians 5: 22-25). Also, 23 (62.2%), 20 (54.1%) and 21 (56.8%) out of the 37 counsellors failed to help their clients to avoid using defensive words to prove their innocence always; admit faults and refuse apportioning blames; and refrain from bringing back old arguments respectively.

Finally, Table 1 also reflects that only 16 (43.2%) of the counsellors helped their clients to deal with one issue at a time when communicating while a larger number (21 56.8%) failed to do so. It can be concluded from the above observations that, generally, even though most of the counsellors responded that they helped their clients to appreciate that responsible communication has a major influence on the success of a marriage or family, a larger proportion of them responded that they fail to take clients through practical techniques or factors that facilitates marital communication.

Table 2: Respondents’ Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 2, out of the 37 counsellors who were involved in the study, 34 (91.9%) were married and 3 (8.1%) were widowed. Therefore, all the counsellors had a least experienced marriage life for some time in their lives. This finding corresponds with Ogan and Ogan (2008), who asserted that it is ethically demanded that a Christian family and marriage counsellor must have a legally valid and an exemplary marriage. In this case, majority of the counsellors were married and none was single.

Table 3 shows the number of years that the counsellors who served as respondents for the study have worked as marriage and family counsellors in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Table 3: Respondents’ Number of Years in Counselling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 5 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 3, out of the 37 counsellors who were involved in the study, 6 (16.2 %) have worked as counsellors below 5 years, 10 (27.0%) have counselled between 6 and 10 years, 20 (54.1%) have counselled between 11 and 15 years, while 1 (2.7%) had counselled between 16 and 20 years. In this case, a greater number, 20 (54.1%) of the respondents had serve as marriage and family counsellors between 11 and 15 years indicating that they have attained ample counselling experience. This finding is in accordance to Collins (2007) who stated that experience is a major quality of the counselling profession that should never be taken for granted. He added that the more the counselling experience, on the part of the counsellor, the better the counselling process.

Table 2 shows the marital status of the marriage and family counsellors in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Marital and counselling experiences Pentecostal and Charismatic marriage counsellors possess

Table 2 shows the marital status of the marriage and family counsellors in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Offices held by marriage and family counsellors in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis

According to Essuman (2011), Christian counselling is a special branch of pastoral care and it has been the reserve of ordained pastors. Essuman however asserted that many church workers and leaders are not ordained, yet, they may have what it takes to counsel Christians. Thus, at least in Ghana, people who are not ordained as
priests, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers do provide pastoral or Christian counselling services in churches, directly or indirectly.

Table 4 shows the offices held by marriage and family counsellors in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordained Minister</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon/Deaconess</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A look at Table 4 shows that, marriage and family counselling duties in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches were performed mainly by Deacons/Deaconesses. It shows clearly form Table 4 that only 10 (27.0%) of the counsellors were ordained ministers. Table 4 also shows that 8 (21.6%) of the marriage and family counsellors were Elders while 3 (8.1%) were congregants. It can be concluded that majority, that is, 16 (64.8%) of marriage and family counselling duties were performed by Deacons/Deaconesses or Elders, suggesting that marriage and family counselling in the churches were mostly not performed by ordained ministers. This finding agrees to a large extent with the observation of Essuman (2011) who posited that Pentecostals have very traditional views on gender and taking cues from particular views of certain biblical passages, women roles are tightly conscripted to the home. However, the percentage of the female counsellors is somewhat encouraging. This supports the findings in a study conducted in Latin America by Drogus (1994) which found out that women are generally being accepted to play leadership roles in churches even though hitherto, female participation is channelled into more supportive and traditionally accepted roles than those of leadership.

Table 5: Gender of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5, out of the 37 counsellors who were involved in the study, 23 (62.2%) were males while 14 (37.8 %) were females. Therefore, majority of the marriage and family counsellors were males. This finding agrees with the view of Walsh (2010) who posited that Pentecostals have very traditional views on gender and taking cues from particular views of certain biblical passages, women roles are tightly conscripted to the home. However, the percentage of the female counsellors is somewhat encouraging. This supports the findings in a study conducted in Latin America by Drogus (1994) which found out that women are generally being accepted to play leadership roles in churches even though hitherto, female participation is channelled into more supportive and traditionally accepted roles than those of leadership.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though most of the counsellors (91.9%) helped their clients to appreciate that responsible communication has a major influence on the success of a marriage or family, in a rather sharp contrast, majority of them also (81.1%) failed to take clients through practical techniques or factors that facilitates responsible and proper marital communication. Counselling on effective communications in a Christian marriage should be detailed and practical enough to enable couples to understand themselves properly during communication. Counsellors are also to resource themselves adequately through participation in training seminars and reading to handle their clients appropriately in the area of responsible communication in a Christian marriage.

Majority 34 (91.9%) of the marriage counsellors were married or widowed and therefore have marital experience which can help improve the counselling services. Also, larger proportions of the counsellors have counselled long enough to possess enough counselling experience.
For premarital counselling services to be effective and have an even more positive and lasting impact on couples after their marriage, churches are encourage to set up a governing body to evaluate and oversee the activities of the Christian marriage and family counsellors. Again, more females should be offered and encouraged to take up counselling roles in churches. It is highly likely that some clients, especially female clients, may find it difficult to openly discuss certain issues with male counsellors.

REFERENCES

